



# Walking School Bus Volunteer Code of Conduct

## Purpose:

The aim of this policy is to establish a common understanding of the standards of behaviour expected of all Walking School Bus (WSB) volunteers.

Both the Ottawa Student Transportation Authority (OSTA) and the Ottawa Safety Council (OSC) thank you for volunteering with the WSB Program. As we have stated throughout your screening process, you have been entrusted with considerable responsibility and we sincerely hope that your experience as a volunteer Walking School Bus Leader will be personally fulfilling and enjoyable. We expect that as an OSC volunteer, you will live up to the highest standards of conduct while acting on behalf the Ottawa Safety Council and abide by the policies and procedure outlined in the Volunteer Agreement and WSB Training Manual.

## Responsibilities and Commitments

As a Volunteer Walking School Bus Leader, you are responsible for the safe passage of students along your assigned route.

You have undertaken a serious commitment. Your primary duty is to provide an element of safety for the students walking to school on your assigned route. **The students (and their parents) rely on you to be present when expected and use your good judgment to get them to school safely.**

Volunteers are expected to address this responsibility with the care it deserves. By doing so, you will ease the concerns of the children, parents and motorists. You will undoubtedly become an important part of the neighborhood as well as the school community!

## General Expectations and Scope of Duties

As a Walking School Bus volunteer, you are expected to

- Arrive on time for your shift every day.
- Report for duty in all weather conditions unless notified by OSC of a cancellation.
- If you cannot make your shift (i.e., Due to illness/emergency) use proper procedure to alert the office so that a back-up may be arranged.
- Report potential walking hazards and hazardous situations to the OSC.
- Review and follow safe walking rules with the children on a regular basis:
  - Ensure children walk (not run) and stay with the group.



- Cross at intersections only (no jay-walking) and obey all traffic signs and signals.
- Check that shoe laces are tied and apparel is done up before walking.
- Encourage children to dress in weather appropriate attire.
- On route, refrain from performing other errands or stopping to visit with people.
- Refrain from bringing animals or children not registered along while you are on duty.
- Leave strollers, bicycles, scooters and skateboards at home.
- Report any problems or issues (including behavior concerns) to the Program Manager as soon as possible.

Your general duties consist of:

- Walking along a designated route and “collecting” students at WSB “stops”.
- Walking with students, in an organized fashion along a designated route.
- Preventing children from crossing the roadway when it is unsafe to do so.
- Assisting the students across roadways when there is an adequate gap in traffic.
- Ensuring students arrive to school safely.

### Training, Handbook and Support

Volunteer Walking School Bus Leaders undergo thorough training and agree to conduct themselves as per the guidance of their training, handbook and the Ottawa Safety Councils direction with respect to the list below. If you are ever unsure of something, the staff at the Ottawa Safety Council are available to answer your questions.

- |   |                                    |
|---|------------------------------------|
| - Expectations of Walking School Bus Leaders                        | - Professional Conduct             |
| - Basic Daily Procedures  | - Volunteer Disciplinary Procedure |
| - Administrative Procedures   | - Mandatory Equipment & Dress Code |
| - Safety Rules While on Route                                       | - Emergency Procedures             |
| - Walking School Bus Cancellation Procedure (I.e., weather-related) | - Incident Reporting               |
|   | - Appropriate Conduct with youth   |

### Scheduling and Communication

The Ottawa Safety Council places a high value on attendance and punctuality, and expects all volunteers to honour the commitments that they make. Being late for a walking school bus shift or missing a shift without notifying the office impacts the safety of the children who count on the Walking School Bus volunteers to walk them to school each day at a specific time.

Therefore, it is very important that volunteers communicate with the office as soon as possible when they may be late or not able to take a shift that they previously committed to, so that the Program Coordinator can arrange a back-up for them.



## Equipment and Dress Code

Wearing the appropriate equipment and footwear/clothing is important for yours and the students' safety. Students need to be able to spot authority quickly by looking for an easily-identifiable Leader.

**As a Walking School Bus Leader, OSC will provide you with the following:**

- OSC retro-reflective vest
- First Aid Kit (to be kept on your person)
- Yellow wind/rain shell (to be worn over winter attire in the wintertime)
- Cleats for winter walking
- Identification pouch and card

It is your responsibility to keep your OSC attire clean and in presentable condition and dress as per the *WSB Leader Dress Code and Appropriate Footwear Policy* and *Mandatory Equipment Policy*.

**Please note:** Equipment is property of OSC and must be returned once you are no longer volunteering with the Walking School Bus.

## Volunteer Duty of Care & Conduct

Students look to you as a role model of safety and authority. Volunteers are expected to conduct themselves towards students becoming of their position of influence and act in a highly professional manner.

This includes:

- 1) Refrain from eating or drinking while on route (NOTE: Water is acceptable in hot weather).
- 2) Refrain from engaging in distracting behaviors such as reading, listening to headphones and cell phone use that is not for emergency purposes.
- 3) Ensure that conversations with other persons are not taking your attention away from the safety of the group.
- 4) Gifts, sweets or treats given out need to be approved by the school faculty, Program Manager and parents of the students ahead of time.
- 5) Volunteers are strictly forbidden to transport children in their car (unless they are your own child) and approach/enter a student's home.
- 6) Volunteers are expected to uphold the confidentiality agreement while on and outside of their volunteer duties.
- 7) Smoking, illicit drug use and alcohol (as well as being under the influence or intoxicated while performing your duties) are strictly prohibited.
- 8) You must respect students, parents, school staff, and other Walking School Bus Leaders, and treat them in a dignified, responsible, patient, and tolerant manner. Refrain from discrimination or biased treatment of students, and respect individual differences.

Volunteers are expected to conduct themselves at all times as per the OSCs *Code of Conduct for the Protection of Children and Young People*, *Anti-Abuse Policy* and the *Duty to Report Child Abuse Policy*.



## Student Supervision and Behaviour Guidance

Managing a group of children in an unstructured environment may present some challenges. You have a responsibility to get your group of students to school safely and on time. As the WSB leader, you will need to be:

- Friendly and respectful
- Confident
- Aware
- Firm but fair
- Clear on your rules
- Motivating and encouraging
- Engaging and interactive

Walking School Bus volunteers are expected to use behaviour guidance techniques outlined in the *Student Discipline while on Route Policy and the Behaviour Guidance Techniques for WSB Leaders* guidelines in order to enforce discipline while on route.

## Emergency & Reporting Protocols

Your primary responsibility is all of the children in your care. If someone is injured or sick, do not leave the rest of the children, volunteers are expected to handle and report the incident as per direction in the *EMERGENCY PROTOCOL & INCIDENT REPORTING PROCEDURE*. Volunteers are not mandated to administer or hold first aid certification.

## I understand. . .

I acknowledge that I have read and understand the Walking School Bus Volunteer Leader Code of Conduct. Further, I agree to adhere to this policy. I understand that if I violate the rules/procedures outlined in this policy, I will be removed from volunteer duties at the discretion of the OSC

Volunteer Name: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

A copy of the signed document will be stored in your OSC volunteer file.