



Policy Code – Version: T21 – V3

Policy Name: Accessible Transportation

Approved by motion of Board on

28/09/2015

Cross Reference

T10 – Stakeholder Responsibilities;

T14 – Transportation Services;

T15 – Transportation of Service Animals;

T18 – Transportation Eligibility

Related Forms

Request for Approval - Special Transportation

Accessible Transportation Request

Policy Statement

1. The OSTA shall provide transportation without the application of eligibility distances for students who are attending a designated school and whose needs on the grounds of physical, mental or emotional condition require alternate transportation.
2. The OSTA shall ensure that accessible school transportation services are provided for students with special needs in a manner that addresses their unique needs and ensures their safety.
3. The OSTA shall comply with all transportation requirements specified in the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA).
4. Where appropriate and practicable, the OSTA shall make every effort to provide integrated accessible school transportation services.
5. Accessible transportation is provided to all students who may have a long-term or short-term disability which impairs their ability to walk to a bus stop or use regular transportation, provided they submit a request accompanied by medical documentation showing that the nature of the disability renders accessible transportation necessary.
6. Such services shall be provided subject to the approval of the applicable member school board's Superintendent responsible for the placement of students with special needs, the school Superintendent, the OSTA's

representative Superintendent for the Member Board, or of the General Manager (or designate) of the OSTA.

Procedure

1. Long-Term and Short-Term Medical Condition/Impairment

Students

For students of OCDSB, the Superintendent of the school approves accessible transportation on a short-term basis

For students of OCSB, the Superintendent of Special Education and Student Services approves accessible transportation on a short-term basis.

Note: Additional transportation costs incurred for ad hoc transportation of students with short-term medical conditions must be approved by Superintendent of Member Board prior to implementation.

2. Special Therapy Clinics/Programs

The OCDSB approves the provision of transportation for OCDSB students enrolled in or entitled to be enrolled in schools in its jurisdiction to recognized clinics/programs as approved by the Learning Support Services Department, for the purpose of receiving therapy treatment not provided by the Board.

3. Summer School Programs

The OCDSB may provide transportation, through OSTA, for their students with special needs enrolled in summer school programs approved by the Board.

4. Bus Stop Locations and Drop Offs

Students with special needs who have been so identified by appropriate member school board personnel will be provided with pick-up/drop-off location as close to, and as convenient as possible to, the student's residence or caregiver location.

To ensure the safety of students with special needs, contracted operators and their drivers will deliver each student into the care of a responsible adult. In the event that a responsible adult is not available at home or school locations, transportation may be forfeit at the discretion of the Ottawa Student Transportation Authority.

Students in grades 9-12 with a disability may be dropped off without supervision with the written authorization by the parent/guardian at the school. With health and safety of the student in mind, the approval of the unsupervised drop off is at the sole discretion of the OSTA.

5. Joint Planning Meetings

The OSTA will hold annual joint planning meetings with the member board staff in charge of managing special education programs and students with special needs. The aim of joint planning is to address the transportation needs for special education programs prior to implementation and propose program arrangements supporting operational and financial effectiveness and efficiency.

6. OSTA Accessible Transportation Team

The OSTA Accessible Transportation Team consists of OSTA Transportation Coordinators, the Safety and Accessible Transportation Coordinator and the Assistant General Manager. Among other duties, the Accessible Transportation Team will:

- explore opportunities for route optimization and maximizing vehicle capacity usage across all zones
- report on costs incurred through alternate transportation arrangements,
- review trends of such costs and suggest recommendations for improvement in operational and financial effectiveness and efficiency,
- review operators' performance,
- review and recommend changes to policies and procedures, if necessary,
- manage outstanding issues regarding accessible transportation.

7. Special Equipment

The OSTA is responsible for safe transportation of students with special needs and will ensure that appropriate specialized equipment is used on contracted vehicles, if necessary.

It is the responsibility of member school board staff, parents, guardians and/or caregivers to assist physically/mentally challenged students or students using car/booster seats to and from the vehicle at pick-up and drop-off locations, and to secure students into and remove seat belts where students are transported using such equipment.

8. Graduated Plans for Transportation Integration

The provision of accessible student transportation services will include the development of an individual school transportation plan for each student who has a disability that affects their transportation to and from school. The plan will be developed by the OSTA and Boards Special Education Services in collaboration with the Transportation Provider, School and in consultation with the student's parents or guardians.

9. Bus Evacuations

The Ottawa Student Transportation Authority will require contracted service providers to develop and maintain policies and procedures for emergency evacuation to ensure that people with various disabilities, including those with service animals, will be safely evacuated from contracted vehicles in cases of emergency.

10. Inability to Accommodate

There are some cases where transportation services cannot be delivered in a safe manner due to a student's extreme behaviour or severe life-threatening medical condition. OSTA will work with the school principal and Superintendent in charge of special education and/or student services to devise the best plan possible to accommodate the student's needs. However, should various accommodation plans fail, and/or transportation of the student results in an unsafe environment for the student, the driver or for other passengers, OSTA reserves the right to terminate transportation services.

ACCESSIBILITY PLAN – ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

The following chart details the roles and responsibilities of the group identified in regard to students with the specified special need.

Special Need	Operator/Driver	Parent/Guardian	School Staff	Student	E.A.	Monitor As Required
Wheelchair	Ensure that students are transported safely according to needs. Follow Consortium Procedures for The Transportation of Special Needs Students. Contact dispatch in the event of emergency.	Advise school and Consortium of medical conditions and communicate any change on a regular basis. Help identify tools that may help driver and/or monitor while transporting their child. Advise driver, monitor and/or OSTA of any emergency health issues or concerns.	Advise Consortium and parents/guardians of any issues while at school during the day. Help identify tools that may help driver and/or monitor while transporting the student.	Follow vehicle rules. Advise driver and/or monitor of any emergency health issues or concerns.	Help identify tools that may help driver and/or monitor while transporting the student.	Sit with or near student. Monitor any issues or concerns that may arise during transportation. Notify driver in the event of an emergency.
Walker or Other Related Mobility Device to Support While Walking	Ensure that students are transported safely according to needs. Follow Consortium Procedures for The Transportation of Special Needs	Advise school and Consortium of medical conditions and communicate any change on a regular basis. Help identify tools that may help driver	Advise Consortium and parents/guardians of any issues while at school during the day. Help identify tools that may help	Follow vehicle rules. Advise driver and/or monitor of any	Help identify tools that may help driver and/or monitor while	Sit with or near student. Monitor any issues or concerns that may arise during transportation.

Special Need	Operator/Driver	Parent/Guardian	School Staff	Student	E.A.	Monitor As Required
	Students. Contact dispatch in the event of emergency.	and/or monitor while transporting their child. Advise driver, monitor and/or OSTA of any emergency health issues or concerns.	driver and/or monitor while transporting the student.	emergency health issues or concerns.	transporting the student.	Notify driver in the event of an emergency.
Ambulatory	Ensure that students are transported safely according to needs. Follow Consortium Procedures for The Transportation of Special Needs Students. Contact dispatch in the event of emergency.	Advise school and Consortium of medical conditions and communicate any change on a regular basis. Help identify tools that may help driver and/or monitor while transporting their child. Advise driver, monitor and/or OSTA of any emergency health issues or concerns.	Advise Consortium and parents/guardians of any issues while at school during the day. Help identify tools that may help driver and/or monitor while transporting the student.	Follow vehicle rules. Advise driver and/or monitor of any emergency health issues or concerns.	Help identify tools that may help driver and/or monitor while transporting the student.	Sit with or near student. Monitor any issues or concerns that may arise during transportation. Notify driver in the event of an emergency.
Epileptic	Ensure that students are transported safely according to needs. Follow Consortium Procedures for The Transportation of Special Needs Students. Contact dispatch in the event of emergency.	Advise school and Consortium of medical conditions and communicate any change on a regular basis. Help identify tools that may help driver and/or monitor while transporting their child. Advise driver, monitor and/or OSTA of any emergency health issues or concerns.	Advise Consortium and parents/guardians of any issues while at school during the day. Help identify tools that may help driver and/or monitor while transporting the student.	Follow vehicle rules. Advise driver and/or monitor of any emergency health issues or concerns.	Help identify tools that may help driver and/or monitor while transporting the student.	Sit with or near student. Monitor any issues or concerns that may arise during transportation. Notify driver in the event of an emergency.
Diabetic	Ensure that students are transported safely according to needs. Follow Consortium Procedures for The Transportation of Special Needs Students. Contact dispatch in the event of emergency.	Advise school and Consortium of medical conditions and communicate any change on a regular basis. Advise driver, monitor and/or OSTA of any emergency health issues or concerns.	Advise Consortium and parents/guardians of any issues while at school during the day.	Follow vehicle rules. Advise driver and/or monitor of any emergency health issues or concerns.	Help identify tools that may help driver and/or monitor while transporting the student.	Sit with or near student. Monitor any issues or concerns that may arise during transportation. Notify driver in the event of an emergency.
Deaf or Hard of Hearing	Ensure that students are transported safely	Advise school and Consortium of medical conditions	Advise Consortium and parents/guardians	Follow vehicle rules.	Help identify tools that	Sit with or near student. Monitor any

Special Need	Operator/Driver	Parent/Guardian	School Staff	Student	E.A.	Monitor As Required
	according to needs. Follow Consortium Procedures for The Transportation of Special Needs Students. Contact dispatch in the event of emergency.	and communicate any change on a regular basis. Help identify tools that may help driver and/or monitor while transporting their child. Advise driver, monitor and/or OSTA of any emergency health issues or concerns.	of any issues while at school during the day. Help identify tools that may help driver and/or monitor while transporting the student.	Advise driver and/or monitor of any emergency health issues or concerns.	may help driver and/or monitor while transporting the student.	issues or concerns that may arise during transportation. Notify driver in the event of an emergency.
Developmental	Ensure that students are transported safely according to needs. Follow Consortium Procedures for The Transportation of Special Needs Students. Contact dispatch in the event of emergency.	Advise school and Consortium of medical conditions and communicate any change on a regular basis. Help identify tools that may help driver and/or monitor while transporting their child. Advise driver, monitor and/or OSTA of any emergency health issues or concerns.	Advise Consortium and parents/guardians of any issues while at school during the day. Help identify tools that may help driver and/or monitor while transporting the student.	Follow vehicle rules. Advise driver and/or monitor of any emergency health issues or concerns.	Help identify tools that may help driver and/or monitor while transporting the student.	Sit with or near student. Monitor any issues or concerns that may arise during transportation. Notify driver in the event of an emergency.
Autistic	Ensure that students are transported safely according to needs. Follow Consortium Procedures for The Transportation of Special Needs Students. Contact dispatch in the event of emergency.	Advise school and Consortium of medical conditions and communicate any change on a regular basis. Help identify tools that may help driver and/or monitor while transporting their child. Advise driver, monitor and/or OSTAT of any emergency health issues or concerns.	Advise Consortium and parents/guardians of any issues while at school during the day. Help identify tools that may help driver and/or monitor while transporting the student.	Follow vehicle rules. Advise driver and/or monitor of any emergency health issues or concerns.	Help identify tools that may help driver and/or monitor while transporting the student.	Sit with or near student. Monitor any issues or concerns that may arise during transportation. Notify driver in the event of an emergency.
Blind or Low Vision	Ensure that students are transported safely according to needs. Follow Consortium Procedures for The Transportation of Special Needs Students. Contact dispatch in the event of emergency.	Advise school and Consortium of medical conditions and communicate any change on a regular basis. Help identify tools that may help driver and/or monitor while transporting their child. Advise driver, monitor and/or OSTA of any	Advise Consortium and parents/guardians of any issues while at school during the day. Help identify tools that may help driver and/or monitor while transporting the student.	Follow vehicle rules. Advise driver and/or monitor of any emergency health issues or concerns.	Help identify tools that may help driver and/or monitor while transporting the student.	Sit with or near student. Monitor any issues or concerns that may arise during transportation. Notify driver in the event of an emergency.

Special Need	Operator/Driver	Parent/Guardian	School Staff	Student	E.A.	Monitor As Required
		emergency health issues or concerns.				

ACCESSIBILITY PLAN – LOADING AND UNLOADING

The following chart details the loading and unloading procedure for students with the specified special need.

Special Need	Loading	Unloading
Wheelchair	<p>When operating a lift to load a passenger with a wheelchair on highways, country roads, city, town or village streets (unless otherwise directed by the Police or OSTA) the driver must:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Put the 4-way emergency flashers on as you approach your stop. Ensure unit is stopped in a safe position for the pick-up. Ensure the parking brake has been applied (most ramps will not operate if park brake is not applied). Check that passenger is ready to be loaded onto lift. Check traffic and then activate overhead alternating lights and stop arm as you exit the vehicle (if equipped). Open lift doors and secure them. Deploy and lower the lift and undo the lift safety belt. Back onto lift with wheelchair and set brakes, secure lift safety belt. If power chair be sure to use low gear and turn power off. Keep one hand on the wheelchair and use the other hand to operate the controls. Inform the passenger you are raising the wheelchair lift. Ensure that as you raise the lift the front plate on the lift folds up and locks into position and the power cable is clear of any pinch points. Raise the lift to its fullest extent (level with vehicle floor). Release brakes on wheelchair and load passenger into the vehicle positioning the wheelchair into a tie-down position and reapply brakes. If power chair, use low gear and turn power off. Exit the vehicle and stow the ramp and close doors. Enter the vehicle and turn off the overhead alternating flashing lights and stop arm. Secure the wheelchair with the Q-strait 	<p>When operating a lift to unload a passenger with a wheelchair on highways, country roads, city, town or village streets the (unless otherwise directed by the Police or Transportation Department) the driver must:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure unit is parked in a safe position for the pick-up. Put on 4-way emergency lights. Ensure parking brake has been applied. Go to the wheelchair passenger and remove lap belt, shoulder belt, front 2 floor Q-straits, rear 2 floor Q-straits, and hang up belts. Position the wheelchair to unload, set brakes, if power chair make sure the power switch is off. Check traffic, when ready activate overhead alternating red flashing lights, exit the vehicle and open lift door and secure it. Deploy the lift to floor level. Go back inside the vehicle and push the wheelchair (if power chair turn on power and put in low gear) onto the lift. Set the brakes. If applicable turn off power. With one hand on the chair and the other hand on the control, lower wheelchair to ground level, (remember communicate with your passenger so that he/she knows they are going down). Release brakes and undo the lift safety belt and push the wheelchair (if power chair turn on power and set in low gear) off the lift. A parent/guardian, family member must know that they have to meet you so that you immediately upon unloading can pass the wheelchair from your hands to theirs. If there is not a person to meet the passenger, call dispatch, do not leave the passenger alone. Secure lift safety belt, raise and stow the lift into the vehicle and close the doors. Return to vehicle and turn off your overhead alternating flashing red lights.

Special Need	Loading	Unloading
	<p>system.</p> <p>SECUREMENT</p> <p>Securing Wheelchair Passengers</p> <p>Note: Each wheelchair must be restrained and made secure as it is loaded onto the vehicle. There shall not be more than one wheelchair loose or free at anytime the vehicle is being loaded.</p> <p>Position the wheelchair, centered and square to the floor anchor points so that the restraint belts will attach to the chair and floor at approximately a 45 degree angle. The smaller front pivoting wheels on the wheelchair should be pointing straight ahead.</p> <p>Note: The chair and passenger must always face forward in the vehicle.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apply the wheelchair brakes (manual), or turn off the power (electric chair). • Attach the front belts (narrow type) by connecting the large hook to a solid frame member of the chair and connect the opposite end (flat hook) of the belt to the floor anchor point. Pull the belt through the clamping mechanism until all the slack is removed and the belt is snugly attached to the wheelchair. The rear belt clamps will provide the final tensioning of the front belts. Attach the loose end of the belt to the Velcro patch above the clamp. • Attach the rear belts by connecting the chair hook to a solid frame member, as close to the point where the wheelchair back and seat cushion meet. Attach the floor hook at the opposite end of the belt into the floor anchor point. <p>Note: Attach the belts only to a solid, welded frame member on the wheelchair. Do not attach the hook to the wheels. Some chairs may come equipped with bolt-on anchor points or sling-straps, which are acceptable. Do not, under any circumstances, cross belts over each other.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • With the buckle open, pull the loose end of the belt until snug. While holding the loose end with one hand, close the clamp lever down until it securely locks into position. Connect the loose ends of the belts to the Velcro patch to keep the excess belting off the floor. • Check that all the belts are tight and the wheelchair is secure and that it does not have any back and forth or sideways movement. • To attach the lap belts, pass the loose ends of the lap belts around the occupant and downward toward the rear tie-down belts through the gap between the side panels and seat cushion or the gap between the seats cushion and the back rest of the wheelchair. Connect the belt ends to the pin connectors on the rear tie-down belts. <p>Note: The lap belt should be positioned as low as possible over the occupant's pelvic area and adjusted as tightly as possible. Ensure the belt</p>	

Special Need	Loading	Unloading
	<p>is not twisted.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To attach the shoulder belt, connect the loose end of the belt to the pin connector on either the left or right side of the lap belt. The shoulder belt should be attached to the connector pin of the lap belt depending on which side of the vehicle the wheelchair is located. Use the right side pin if the wheelchair is on the left side of the vehicle and the left side pin if the wheelchair is on the right side. Again adjust the shoulder belt as snugly as possible, making sure the belt does not rub on the occupants neck area. <p>Note: The shoulder belt should lie across the mid-point of the shoulder and travel upward and rearward from that point to ensure that downward force is avoided. Also note that lap and shoulder belts should not be held away from the occupant's body by wheelchair components or parts such as the wheelchair armrests or wheels.</p>	
<p>Walker or Other Related Mobility Device to Support While Walking</p>	<p>When operating a lift to load a passenger with a 4 point walker on highways, country roads, city, town or village streets (unless otherwise directed by the Police or OSTA) the driver must:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Put the 4-way emergency flashers on as you approach your stop. b) Ensure unit is stopped in a safe position for the pick-up. c) Ensure the parking brake has been applied (most ramps will not operate if park brake is not applied). d) Check that passenger is ready to be loaded onto lift. e) Check traffic and then activate overhead alternating lights and stop arm as you exit the vehicle (if equipped). f) Open lift doors and secure them. g) Deploy and lower the lift and undo the lift safety belt. h) Back onto lift with walker and set brakes (if applicable), secure lift safety belt. i) Keep one hand on the walker and use the other hand to operate the controls. j) Inform the passenger you are raising the lift. k) Ensure that as you raise the lift the front plate on the lift folds up and locks into position and the power cable is clear of any pinch points. l) Raise the lift to its fullest extent (level with vehicle floor). m) Release brakes on walker (if applicable) and load passenger into the vehicle to the assigned seat. n) Secure walker to wall of vehicle. o) Exit the vehicle and stow the ramp and close doors. p) Enter the vehicle and turn off the overhead alternating flashing lights and stop arm. 	<p>When operating a lift to unload a passenger with a 4 point walker on highways, country roads, city, town or village streets the (unless otherwise directed by the Police or Transportation Department) the driver must:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Ensure unit is parked in a safe position for the pick-up. b) Put on 4-way emergency lights. c) Ensure parking brake has been applied. d) Position the walker to unload on lift, set brakes (if applicable). e) Check traffic, when ready activate overhead alternating red flashing lights, exit the vehicle and open lift door and secure it. f) Deploy the lift to floor level. g) Go back inside the vehicle and help the passenger with the walker onto the lift. Set the brakes (if applicable). h) With one hand on the walker and the other hand on the control, lower walker to ground level, (remember communicate with your passenger so that he/she knows they are going down). i) Release brakes (if applicable) and undo the lift safety belt and walk off with the walker. j) A parent/guardian, family member must know that they have to meet you so that you immediately upon unloading can have someone meet the walker. If there is not a person to meet the passenger, call dispatch, do not leave the passenger alone. k) Secure lift safety belt, raise and stow the lift into the vehicle and close the doors. l) Return to vehicle and turn off your overhead alternating flashing red lights.

Special Need	Loading	Unloading
Ambulatory	<p>Do not use the loading ramp unless authorized.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communicate with the passenger. Ask what help he/she needs. Allow time for response. • Let the passenger set the pace. If the passenger is unable to respond, indicate clearly what you are going to do and what you expect the passenger to do. • If an offer of assistance is declined, stay close by and be ready to assist if circumstances warrant. Secure walking aids in a safe position within reach of the passenger, i.e. crutches. • Follow behind the ambulatory passenger when going up the steps. • Alternate your steps with those of the passenger. In this manner, your feet will be firmly planted and you will be able to give maximum assistance and support while the passenger takes their step. 	
Epileptic	Students load unassisted and are seated unsecured.	Students unload unassisted.
Diabetic	Students load unassisted and are seated unsecured.	Students unload unassisted.
Deaf or Hard of Hearing	<p>Students load unassisted and are seated unsecured.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communicate with the passenger. Ask what help he/she needs. Allow time for response. 	Students unload unassisted.
Developmental	<p>Students load unassisted and are seated unsecured.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communicate with the passenger. Ask what help he/she needs. Allow time for response. 	Students unload unassisted.
Autistic	<p>Do not use the loading ramp unless authorized.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communicate with the passenger. Ask what help he/she needs. Allow time for response. • Let the passenger set the pace. If the passenger is unable to respond, indicate clearly what you are going to do and what you expect the passenger to do. • If an offer of assistance is declined, stay close by and be ready to assist if circumstances warrant. Secure walking aids in a safe position within reach of the passenger, i.e. crutches. • Follow behind the passenger when going up the steps. • Alternate your steps with those of the passenger. In this manner, your feet will be firmly planted and you will be able to give maximum assistance and support while the passenger takes their step. 	
Blind or Low Vision	<p>Do not use the loading ramp unless authorized.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communicate with the passenger. Ask what help he/she needs. Allow time for response. • Let the passenger set the pace. If the passenger is unable to respond, indicate clearly what you are going to do and what you expect the passenger to do. 	

Special Need	Loading	Unloading
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• If an offer of assistance is declined, stay close by and be ready to assist if circumstances warrant. Secure walking aids in a safe position within reach of the passenger, i.e. crutches.• Follow behind the passenger when going up the steps.• Alternate your steps with those of the passenger. In this manner, your feet will be firmly planted and you will be able to give maximum assistance and support while the passenger takes their step.	