



Policy Code – Version: T9 – V2	
Policy Name: School Bus Safety	
Approved by motion of Board on	25/01/2016
Cross Reference T6 – Life-Threatening Medical Conditions; T11 – Stop Locations; T12 – Student Bus Monitors; T13 – Student Discipline on Contract Vehicles; T14 – Transportation Services	
Related Forms	

Policy Statement

1. The Ottawa Student Transportation Authority believes that parents/guardians, caregivers, school staff, contracted vehicle operators and students share in the responsibility for the safety of students when travelling on vehicles contracted to provide transportation to member school board students, and shall provide information as to safe behaviour and expectations of students while being transported on contracted vehicles.
2. The Ottawa Student Transportation Authority shall require that:
 - all contracted and subcontracted vehicle drivers obtain First Aid/CPR, and Asthma and Anaphylaxis response training and maintain their certification therein;
 - all contract 48 to 72 passenger school bus vehicles be “High Visibility” configuration of a flat, snub-nose, or sloped-hood design by the 2012-2013 school year;
 - annual driver safety workshops are conducted by contracted operators; and
 - buses providing services to member school board students undergo regular and mandatory safety checks each school year.
3. The Ottawa Student Transportation Authority shall support and participate in an annual School Bus Safety Awareness program for first-time school bus riders.

4. The Ottawa Student Transportation Authority shall support school Principals in the coordination of ongoing school bus safety education programs and bus evacuation drills in cooperation with the vehicle operators servicing their school. Such programs will include information concerning safe and proper conduct while embarking, riding, and disembarking school vehicles.

Procedure

1. Schools will provide OSTA with information regarding the nature of any allergies or life-threatening conditions any individual student may have, as well as the location of any special equipment needed to treat the condition should the student require assistance. This includes an auto-immune epinephrine injector (epi-pen) or a metered-dose inhaler (puffer).

OSTA will transmit this information to the Operator, who will then transmit this information to the driver of the student in question.

2. As part of continuous efforts to ensure the highest school transportation safety standards:
 - a) The Ottawa Student Transportation Authority will ensure the ongoing review of all school vehicle routes to minimize the need for students to cross in front of their school vehicle where possible, while maintaining operational efficiencies and priorities;
 - b) principals and school bus drivers will be required to enforce safe student practices in the vicinity of school buses; and
 - c) schools and school vehicle carriers will be required to conduct school vehicle evacuation drills at least once annually, each school year.

3. Transporting Equipment On School Vehicles

- a) In the interests of the safety of all passengers, only certain equipment is allowed on school vehicles, subject to the following conditions:
 - Musical equipment must be transported in cases only, and should be kept on the student's lap whenever possible;
 - Ice skates must be kept on the floor at the student's feet and carried in a sports bag or tied together with the blades covered;
 - Skis and ski poles are not permitted on a regular home to school bus.
- b) Dangerous or disturbing items such as alcoholic beverages, tobacco, controlled drugs and substances, animals (excluding approved service animals), birds, explosives, firearms, or water pistols are not permitted on school vehicles.

- c) Parents or guardians are expected to transport bulky items such as projects or sports equipment taken to or from school. In cases of dispute, the final decision rests with the school bus driver.
- d) The school vehicle is considered an extension of school property therefore member school board policies and accompanying procedures apply.

4. Student Bus Monitors

Student Bus Monitors may be assigned to vehicles to support school bus safety in accordance with the OSTA's "Student Bus Monitors" policy and Administrative Procedures outlined therein.

5. Expectations of Passengers

Students must conduct themselves in a safe and appropriate manner at stop locations and while travelling on school vehicles. For their own protection, students must observe the following safety rules of conduct when on or around school vehicles:

a) At the Bus Stop

Students should:

- i. recognize that a danger zone exists in the immediate vicinity of school vehicles;
- ii. organize and adequately secure their belongings before leaving home;
- iii. arrive at their designated pick-up point five (5) minutes prior to the scheduled time;
- iv. not abuse, damage, or litter private property in the vicinity of school vehicle stop locations, while waiting for their school vehicle
- v. wait in an orderly fashion well back from the road;
- vi. if they must cross the street to board the vehicle, look in both directions to make sure that it is safe to cross and wait for the driver's signal. Students should stay at least 8 to 10 paces in front of their school bus when crossing, and continue to check for oncoming traffic and signals from their vehicle driver;
- vii. if it is not necessary to cross the street to board the vehicle, line up in single file and when the bus is stopped, board it in an orderly fashion using the handrail when signaled to do so by the driver.

b) On School Vehicles

Student passengers are expected to:

- i. walk directly to their seats and sit down;
- ii. remain seated until ready to leave the school vehicle;

- iii. respect all equipment on the vehicle. Students will be held responsible for any willful damage;
- iv. not use obscene language on school vehicles;
- v. not use or carry tobacco, alcohol, or drugs on school vehicles;
- vi. refrain from eating and drinking on the school vehicle;
- vii. keep books and parcels on their lap;
- viii. keep aisles and emergency exits clear at all times;
- ix. not talk to the driver while the school vehicle is in motion and ensure their behaviour does not distract or disturb the driver. If listening to portable radios or similar device, students should use headsets;
- x. help to maintain a clean vehicle by using the containers provided for any debris;
- xi. observe absolute quietness when approaching a railway crossing when travelling on school bus vehicles;
- xii. in the case of a road emergency, remain seated in the bus unless directed to do otherwise by the driver;
- xiii. open windows only with the permission of the driver and ensure that they keep their hands, feet, arms, and heads inside the school vehicle;
- xiv. not throw objects inside the school vehicle or out the windows;
- xv. promptly obey the driver's directions (or in cases of emergency, the direction of the Student Bus Monitor, if one is present on the school vehicle);
- xvi. not touch emergency exits, or any other school vehicle equipment, except in the case of genuine emergency; and
- xvii. follow the driver's instructions at all times.

In order to ensure student safety as much as possible, students may be required to sit in a specific seat on the vehicle, as directed by the driver or school Principal.

c) Leaving the School Vehicle

Students should:

- i. have their belongings organized and adequately secured before arriving at their stop;
- ii. remain seated until the bus comes to a full stop;
- iii. walk to the front of the bus in single file and use the handrail while exiting, leaving the bus in an orderly fashion;
- iv. get off the bus only at their designated stop unless permission is otherwise granted by the Principal;
- v. move away from the bus recognizing the danger zone in the immediate vicinity of the bus;

- vi. once exiting the bus, if a student's laneway is directly beside the door of the bus, continue up the laneway; or, if it is necessary to cross the street, walk forward along the sidewalk (or side of road if no sidewalk) for 8 to 10 paces, then when the bus driver indicates that it is safe, proceed across the street while continuing to look both ways for oncoming traffic; or, if it is necessary to walk toward the rear of the bus to get to a laneway, remain on the sidewalk (or side of road if no sidewalk, or in a laneway) in line with the door and at a safe distance from the bus (3 paces away) until the bus has pulled away, then continue along the sidewalk (or side of road if no sidewalk) to the laneway; and
- vii. wait for the driver to signal and then cross the road after looking both ways.

The foregoing is not intended to be a complete and final list of the rules and recommendations for school vehicle safety. Further rules may be established as required by the Ottawa Student Transportation Authority, in consultation with vehicle operators and member school board personnel.

- 6. Matters of student discipline while at stop locations and while travelling on school vehicles will be dealt with by school Principals in accordance with member school board policies and the OSTA's "*Student Discipline on Contract Vehicles*" policy.