

Welcome to Toronto District School Board Busing

For students eligible for Toronto District School Board (TDSB) home to school transportation or school to school/designated stop to school transportation.

You will find this brochure useful whether this is your first experience with busing or your child has been bused to school before.

In this brochure, you will find:

- general information on what to expect from your bus service
- an overview of those involved in student transportation and their responsibilities

Terms Used in This Document

Stop refers to the pick-up and drop-off location of your child.

Program School refers to the school your child attends and is being bused to and from.

VAN refers to a 20 - passenger bus.

Big Bus refers to a 72 - passenger bus.

Bus Carrier refers to the bus company transporting your child.

Learning About Your Child's Busing for VAN and New Big Bus Riders

You will receive a confirmation letter in the summer, when your busing application has been approved. The letter lists the carriers responsible for busing your child, what their phone numbers are, and your child's stops.

NOTE: If your child is traveling on a VAN, you should also receive a phone call from your child's bus driver before school begins to indicate the time your child will be picked-up or dropped-off.

Learning About Your Child's Busing for Existing Big Bus Riders

Big Bus route information is posted at the program school the week prior to school beginning in September.

Your child may have a different driver from a different bus company each way, either going to school or returning from school. Drivers and routes may also change during the school year.

Who is Involved in the Busing Process?

The Program School is the primary contact for parents regarding transportation, including:

- communication between you, the TDSB, and the bus carriers
- informing the Student Transportation Department if there is a change in contact information or your child's special needs
- ensuring children get on and off the buses at school safely

Bus Driver qualifications include having and maintaining a valid bus driver's licence, first aid certification and training in EpiPen use for allergic reactions. They are expected to have the correct route information and to follow the TDSB's safety regulations. All bus drivers and taxi drivers have criminal background checks.

The Bus Carrier has a contract with the TDSB and is responsible for:

- training drivers
- assigning drivers to routes
- ensuring the bus is clean, properly equipped and maintained
- providing drivers with up-to-date route information
- providing substitute/temporary drivers when needed
- letting you know if VAN students are delayed 20 minutes or more, and **informing school staff if Big Bus routes are delayed**

The Student Transportation Department at the TDSB:

- determines which students get bused
- chooses bus carriers
- establishes routes and bus schedules, including stop locations
- informs school staff of route numbers
- decides when bus service should be cancelled due to bad weather or other situations
- provides input into bus driver training
- arranges bus safety workshops for schools

You as Parents:

- provide the school and bus carrier with any necessary medical information about your child
- provide the school and bus carrier with accurate contact information in the event you must be reached
- keep note of your child's route numbers, bus carrier name and phone number, and a contact person and phone number at the program school

Have bus carrier information with you at all times, either on a card you carry in your wallet, or programmed into your cell phone. Write the information on the back of this brochure.

To prepare your child for bus travel you should discuss the following with your child:

- rules for how to behave on the bus and at the bus stop
- what to do if the route includes stops at another school
- how drop-off/pick-up at a school-based child care is handled

To help your child stay safe you should:

- know your bus driver's name
- include the name and phone number of the caregiver on the transportation application
- have your child at the stop five minutes prior to the pick-up time and make sure that your child is properly supervised while waiting
- ensure a responsible person is there five minutes prior to the drop-off time to meet your child

You should also make plans for unusual situations and be sure your child knows what to do if:

- they miss the bus (it is your responsibility to get your child to school for the school's start time)
- the bus does not come
- the caregiver is not at the bus stop when your child arrives (in this case the child should advise the driver and not leave the bus)

How will behavioural concerns be addressed?

- The bus driver will report any behavioural issues with bused students to the program school.
- School staff, parents and the driver will work collaboratively to find solutions.

Where can I address my concerns about busing?

- Staff at the program school may redirect you to Student Transportation to address concerns such as bus safety, drop-off/pick-up, length of travel time, number of students on the bus, late buses, or issues with the route.

What busing-related resources are available?

- Principals may request a bus safety presentation to be given to students or the Transportation Safety Officer may arrange for such a presentation. Speak to your Principal about the workshop coming to your school.
- Schools have access to route information and passenger lists.
- Safety rules are posted on the TDSB Student Transportation website and can be found in print form in the program school office.
- School staff may offer suggestions to assist bus drivers with strategies for behavioural issues, particularly concerning children with special needs.
- Parents/caregivers at your bus stop can work together to build a support network and promote safety.

For concerns and/or questions, please call Student Transportation at (416) 394-6189 or visit our website at www.tdsb.on.ca > Parents and under Key Information click Transportation.

Frequently Asked Questions and Answers

Q. Who do I call if my child is not going to be on the bus?

A. Call the bus carrier and your program school depending on your school protocol.

Q. How do I find out if the bus is cancelled due to weather or a local emergency?

A. Check www.tdsb.on.ca. Local radio and television news will also report cancellations.

Q. How can I be sure my substitute driver has been informed of the medical needs of my child?

A. You should inform substitute drivers about your child's medical issues.

If your child's medical issues change during the school year, be sure to inform the driver and the bus carrier.

Q. What do I do if I haven't received my letter or a call from a bus driver by the end of the summer?

A. Remember that only students approved for VAN transportation or those "new" to Big Bus transportation (JK/SK) receive a letter. Contact your program school a week before the start of school. You may also contact the Student Transportation Department in August. Big Bus route information should be posted on the front door of your program school.

Q. How can I find out if my child can go inside a school designated as a stop location for drop-off/pick-up to wait for the bus, get out of bad weather, or use the washroom?

A. Contact school staff at that site to ask if students can stand inside the entranceway. Students should not be using the washroom at a pick-up or drop-off location since no supervision is provided.

Q. What will happen if my child repeatedly does not obey bus rules?

A. The bus driver will inform staff at the Program School. Your child may be suspended from riding the bus. Please refer to the Student Transportation website for the Behaviour on Buses Procedure.

Q. Can I ask for my child to be bused to a child care separate from the school?

A(i). French Immersion, Gifted and students attending regular programs are offered school-to-school transportation. Your child may be bused to/from a child care centre if the centre is at an existing stop on the existing route used by your child. Stops will not be added.

A(ii). Special Education students may be bused to/from a child care centre address if it is within a reasonable distance from the program school. The Area Transportation Supervisor will make this determination.

Q. If my issues can't be resolved at the program school, who do I go to next?

A. If issues seem unresolved after making every effort at your program school, get in touch with the Area Supervisor or the Manager of the TDSB Student Transportation Department.

If you still find no resolution, and you feel strongly that a serious concern continues to be insufficiently addressed, you can contact your local School Superintendent.

Parents may appeal decisions regarding transportation through the TDSB Student Transportation Department. Further appeals may be made in writing to the appropriate Supervisory Office responsible for transportation who will forward it to the Appeal Committee.

For more detailed information please go to the TDSB website: www.tdsb.on.ca or contact staff at your program school.

My Child's Busing Information

Program school and phone number:

Principal's & Vice-Principal's names:

Bus carrier name and phone number for AM route:

Bus carrier name and phone number for PM route (if different):

Route numbers for AM:

PM:

Driver's name AM:

PM:

Pick-up site and time:

Drop-off site and time:

This brochure has been developed in a collaborative effort by the Parent Busing Group and TDSB Student Transportation.



WELCOME TO SCHOOL BUS TRANSPORTATION

