

Toronto District School Board

Policy P020

Title: **TRANSPORTATION OF STUDENTS**

Adopted: December 16, 1998

Effectuated: December 16, 1998

Revised: May 31, 2000; October 27, 2005; **June 29, 2022**

Reviewed: May 31, 2000; October 27, 2005; **June 29, 2022**

Authorization: Board of Trustees

1. RATIONALE

The Transportation of Students Policy (the “Policy”) supports the Toronto District School Board’s commitment to safe, reliable, and equitable transportation for TDSB students in accordance with the *Education Act*, Section 21 (2).

2. OBJECTIVE

- To establish the criteria for the equitable provision of student transportation and safety measures that will be taken.

3. DEFINITIONS

Active, Safe and Sustainable Transportation (ASST) refers to encouraging and supporting students and staff to find active ways to arrive to and from school every day by walking, cycling, use of mobility devices, and many other forms of human-powered transportation. The TDSB supports and promotes safe, active, and sustainable transportation and the Board’s charter reflects the principles of Ontario’s Foundation for a Healthy School (www.tdsb.on.ca/About-Us/Innovation/Active-Transportation-Charter)

Board refers to the Toronto District School Board, which is also referred to as the “TDSB”.

Board Property or “Board Premises” refers to any TDSB land, premises, location or thing at, upon, in or near which a student learns or an employee works.

Drivers refers to those employed as bus drivers by externally contracted bus operators to serve Toronto Student Transportation Group (TSTG) routes as well as the TDSB fleet of drivers based primarily at SunnyView Junior and Senior Public School “Sunny View”. This includes, TDSB drivers who are mainly serving special

education students at Sunny View, a congregated site. They will be distinguished as “TSTG drivers” and “TDSB drivers”.

Education and Community Partnership Programs (ECPPs) formerly known as Section 23 programs, refer to voluntary collaborative partnerships between Ontario district school boards and government-approved facilities such as children mental health agencies, hospitals or youth detention centres. District school boards provide the educational component (“Education Program”) while facilities provide the care and/or treatment.

French Immersion/Extended French Programs refer to French-as-a-Second-Language programs in which French is not only taught as a subject but also serves as the language of instruction in other subjects.

Provincial and Demonstration Schools refer to schools that are operated by the Ministry of Education and provide education for students who are deaf or blind, or who have severe learning disabilities.

TDSB refers to the Toronto District School Board, which is also referred to as the “Board”.

TDSB Vehicles refers to any vehicles owned, leased, or rented by the TDSB and operated by Board staff.

Toronto Student Transportation Group (Consortium) – refers to the Board partnership with TCDSB to operate Student Transportation through an arrangement called “The Toronto Student Transportation Group” or “the Consortium”. The purpose of this arrangement is to operate student transportation services more efficiently by sharing routes, which is intended to minimize costs and minimize the number of buses on the road. This arrangement is mandated by the Ministry of Education.

4. RESPONSIBILITY

The Director of Education holds primary responsibility for the implementation of this Policy.

Within the Director’s Office, the responsibility for the coordination and day-to-day management of the Policy is assigned to the Associate Director, Business Operations and Service Excellence.

5. APPLICATION AND SCOPE

This Policy applies to all TDSB employees, students, parents/guardians, drivers (TDSB and TSTG), service providers, and volunteers.

6. POLICY

6.1. Equity Principles

- 6.1.1. The principle of equity is foundational to student transportation at the TDSB. The Board acknowledges that Student Transportation plays a central role in providing equitable access to educational programming and will ensure that the transportation of students at the TDSB is in accordance with the Equity Policy (P037).

6.2. Valuing Indigenous Education

- 6.2.1. It is the goal of the TDSB to ensure that Indigenous students are not deprived of their rights, including the right to education as outlined in the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (inclusive of First Nations, Métis and Inuit). The TDSB recognizes the important role that student transportation plays in accessing educational programming and Indigenous Education and Language programming.

6.3. Transportation for Indigenous Students

- 6.3.1. The TDSB will provide transportation to all Indigenous students, consistent with the Voluntary First Nation, Metis and Inuit Self-Identification Policy (P077), who meet the distance criteria set out in Section 6.10 below.
- 6.3.2. The Transportation department will work with the Principal and/or Superintendent to support the transportation of Indigenous students, in any grade, where it is determined that transportation is a barrier that has impacted attendance for Indigenous students who would otherwise not qualify based on Section 6.10 below.

6.4. Transportation for Provincial and Demonstration Schools

- 6.4.1. The TDSB will provide transportation to students attending a Provincial or Demonstration School and who meet the distance criteria set out in Section 6.10 below.

6.5. Electronic Devices and Privacy

- 6.5.1. Where electronic devices, such as security cameras or other devices used to record or track, are utilized, privacy will be protected in accordance with appropriate legislation and TDSB Policies (e.g., Freedom of Information and the Protection of Privacy Policy (P094) and the Acceptable Use of Information Technology Resources Policy (P088)).

6.6. Staggered School Times

- 6.6.1. The TDSB may alter school start and end times to reduce the number of buses required to transport students. School start times are not to be altered by more than 30 minutes. School start and end times will not be altered unless the change results in a net reduction in buses.
- 6.6.2. Once it is determined that a school will not be served by student transportation services for the coming year, a principal may adjust their bell times by up to 30 minutes with the approval of their Superintendent, in consultation with the Transportation Department, and their school community.

6.7. Environment

- 6.7.1. In alignment with the Environment Policy (P028), the TDSB recognizes the impact that the provision of transportation has on the environment and will look to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by providing active transportation alternatives, efficient routing of buses and by exploring alternatives to GHG emitting vehicles.

6.8. Active, Safe and Sustainable Transportation

- 6.8.1. The TDSB supports the promotion and use of Active, Safe, and Sustainable Transportation.
- 6.8.2. The TDSB will collaborate with internal and external partners to facilitate the implementation of school travel plans and road safety education in keeping with the TDSB Charter for Active, Safe and Sustainable Transportation.
- 6.8.3. The TDSB will continue to invest resources to support Active, Safe, and Sustainable Transportation to and from school, through the installation of bike racks, providing pedestrian and bike safety skills material, the 'Routes to School Planner' maps for every elementary school and other related supports.

6.9. Emergency Changes to Policy Provisions

- 6.9.1. When there are unforeseen circumstances requiring immediate action, such as public health emergencies, extreme driver shortages, or other emergencies, the Toronto Student Transportation Group's (TSTG) Governance Committee may, after consultation with TDSB staff, enforce temporary changes to the provisions specified in the Transportation of Students Policy, including suspension of certain services, to ensure the safety of students and/or the continuity of service. The TSTG will notify the Board of Trustees and the school community as soon as possible to inform them of the changes.

6.10. Distance and Eligibility Criteria

6.10.1. Transportation services will be provided to all TDSB students attending regular programs and schools, based on the criteria outlined in the following table. Those who do not meet the distance or other eligibility criteria may still benefit from transportation resources related to transit safety and Active, Safe and Sustainable Transportation.

6.10.2. Eligibility:

Grade	Distance***	Transportation Hazards Considered?
Jk-5	1.6 km	Yes
Grade 6-8	3.2 km*	Yes
Grade 9-12	4.8 km*	No**

**TTC/Presto tickets provided as method of transportation support for eligible students from grades 6-12. TTC Tickets may be available for students due to undue/financial hardship.*

*** Generally, hazards are not considered for secondary students. However, they will be considered in exceptional cases.*

****Distance to be measured from closest public thoroughfare of the residence of the student to nearest public access to the school property.*

Note: Transportation is not provided for students attending programs under the Out of Area Admissions Policy (P013), even when distance is a factor.

6.11. Transportation for Special Education Programming

- 6.11.1. The TDSB will provide transportation to students placed by an Identification, Placement, and Review Committee (IPRC) to a Special Education Program and who meet the distance criteria.
- 6.11.2. Transportation will be provided, regardless of whether they meet the eligible distance criteria, for students who have a qualifying medical condition, approved accommodation or exceptional circumstances that require transportation support.
- 6.11.3. The TDSB will provide transportation to students who require offsite treatment to support the educational needs of the student, that is not offered in their home school and that is a Board approved program, for those who meet the distance criteria.
- 6.11.4. Transportation (TTC/Presto) will not be provided to Grade 9 to 12 Gifted Programs.
- 6.11.5. In order to ensure that there will be no safety or other related concerns due to a lengthy bus ride, the TDSB will not place any

student in a program or school where the transportation is likely to take more than 60 minutes (10 kilometers), one way, under normal travel conditions. Should exceptions be requested, they will be reviewed by the Special Education department in consultation with the Transportation department, in consideration of alternative sites, and the safety and wellbeing of the student.

6.12. Transportation for French Immersion and Extended French Programs

- 6.12.1. The TDSB will provide transportation for eligible elementary students attending French Immersion and Extended French programs, as defined in the French-as-a-Second Language Programs Policy (P080), and who meet the distance criteria set out in Section 6.10, with the exception as outlined above.
- 6.12.2. This transportation will either be by school bus or TTC tickets based on grade level.
- 6.12.3. Transportation (TTC) will not be provided to Grade 9 to 12 French Immersion and Extended French programs.

6.13. Transportation for Education and Community Partnership Program

- 6.13.1. The TDSB will provide transportation for eligible elementary students attending Education and Community Partnership Program (ECP) consistent with Section 190 of the *Education Act* and the “Ministry Guidelines for Approval and Provision of an Education and Community Partnership Program”, and who meet the distance criteria set out in section 6.10..
- 6.13.2. This transportation will either be by school bus or TTC tickets based on grade level.
- 6.13.3. Transportation will not be provided to Grade 9 to 12 French immersion, extended French.

6.14. School Relocation

- 6.14.1. Where an elementary school (JK-8) is relocating on a temporary basis due to an emergency, planned construction or other related move, students will be provided transportation where the distance from the new home school is in keeping with eligible distances in Section 6.10 above. For the purposes of relocation only, the qualifying distance for grade 6-8 will be 1.6 km. For students in Grade 6-8, who meet the distance criteria families will be consulted on the option of TTC or School Bus.
- 6.14.2. Childcare centres that are impacted by a school relocation will be considered when planning transportation services.
- 6.14.3. Where a secondary school (Grades 9-12) is relocating on a temporary basis due to an emergency, planned construction or

other related move, students will be provided TTC/Presto ticket support where the distance from the new home school is in keeping with eligible distances in Section 6.10 above.

6.15. Method of Transportation

- 6.15.1. Transportation is provided to eligible students in Junior Kindergarten to Grade 5 by school bus.
 - i. School-to-school transportation will be offered.
 - ii. Designated bus stop-to-school transportation may be provided as a result of an Identification, Placement and Review Committee (IPRC), with approved medical and/or accommodation reasons.
 - iii. Special Education students across Intensive Support Programs (ISPs) and/or congregated sites, will receive home-to-school transportation.
- 6.15.2. TTC tickets will be provided to eligible students as per Section 6.10, from Grade 6 through to Grade 12 upon parental /guardian request.
- 6.15.3. Grade 6 students will be deemed eligible for TDSB bus transportation if the most direct TTC route requires more than one transfer.
- 6.15.4. Taxi service may be provided for eligible students, with parent/guardian permission, for Board authorized medical or accommodation reasons.
 - i. Students at the primary level between junior kindergarten and Grade three utilizing taxi services must be accompanied by an authorized adult, or where no other suitable transportation is available and with written permission by the parent/guardian;
 - ii. Non-verbal students utilizing taxi services must be accompanied by an authorized adult.

6.16. Transportation for Summer Schools

- 6.16.1. Summer school transportation will be provided, either by school bus or TTC, for the following designated programs following the same distance criteria as outlined in Section 6.10:
 - i. Ministry-funded ECPP programs in treatment centres, hospitals, etc., that are an extension of the regular school year program;
 - ii. Programs offered by the TDSB for Special Education students;

- iii. Students attending credit programs who are eligible for school bus transportation for accommodation and/or exceptional circumstances.

6.17. Appeal Process

- 6.17.1. Parents may appeal the decisions regarding transportation. All appeals will be made to the Transportation Department. Further appeal may be made in writing to the Supervisory Officer responsible for transportation.
- 6.17.2. The Board will establish an appeal process to address: special accommodation requests, including requests related to compassionate circumstances, accommodations, exceptional needs, and/or financial hardship.

6.18. Safe Behaviour on School Buses

- 6.18.1. The Board is committed to the safety and well-being of students on school buses and will work with parents/guardians, principals, students, and drivers to promote safe behaviour and implement the Behaviour on Buses Procedure (PR557).

6.19. Empty Seat/Courtesy Seating Procedure on School Buses

- 6.19.1. The TDSB will provide empty/courtesy seating to students on school buses if there are seats still available after all eligible students have been accommodated. It is understood that empty/courtesy seats will not result in the addition of new buses and that an empty/courtesy seat may be withdrawn if the space is needed to accommodate an eligible rider.

7. SPECIFIC DIRECTIVES

The Director of Education is authorized to issue operational procedures to implement this Policy.

8. EVALUATION

This Policy will be reviewed as required, but at a minimum every four (4) years after the effective date.

9. APPENDICES

- NA

10. REFERENCE DOCUMENTS

Policies:

- Environment Policy (P028)

- Equity Policy (P037)
- Out of Area Admissions Policy (P013)
- Voluntary First Nation, Metis and Inuit Self-Identification Policy (P077)

Procedures:

- Transportation of Students Procedure (PR504)
- Behaviour on Buses Procedure (PR557)

Legislation:

- *Education Act*, section 21 (2)
- *Education Act*, Section 190