

**TO:** OCDSB Secondary and Intermediate School Principals, VP and Office Administrators

**FROM:** Vicky Kyriaco, General Manager/CAO

**DATE:** June 10, 2019

**RE:** **Transportation Services for 2019-2020 School Year**

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As the end of another school year rapidly approaches, please note of the following information regarding transportation services for the 2019-2020 school year. We encourage you to include any of this information in newsletters or correspondence to your school community. Feel free to share OSTA's website address: [www.ottawaschoolbus.ca](http://www.ottawaschoolbus.ca).

### **2018-19 Student Transportation Information:**

Route information will be available to parents as of **August 19, 2019** via the online Parent Portal. Schools may have access to some routes prior to this date, through the school web portal or via OSTA's website link to the Parent Portal Log In.

Student Transportation Information can also be found using the [Bus Stop Finder](#) located on the main page of our website, which will link to the **"BusPlanner - Parent Portal"**. The parent must enter the student's last name, birthdate, school and grade in order to access route and stop information.

The **"Stop Finder"** feature returns bus stop and route information for eligible students who are assigned to regular yellow school bus or small school purpose vehicle service, or for students who are assigned to OC Transpo Service.

OC Transpo route schedules will also be made available through the OSTA website or can be found directly through the OC Transpo website at [www.octranspo.com](http://www.octranspo.com). More information on routes to specific schools can be obtained on OC Transpo's Quick Planner under High Schools and Middle Schools.

### **Small School Purpose Vehicles (Vans)**

The driver responsible for the route will contact each family directly prior to the first day of school.

### **Students with Special Needs – Requests for Accessible Transportation**

Each student requiring special accommodation for transportation, based on a physical, cognitive or emotional disability, should have a "Request for Accessible Transportation" form

completed by their parents, signed by the Principal and forwarded to the Spec Ed department. The Spec Ed department will then send the form to OSTA with any appropriate comments that would help us meet the student's individual needs. Learning Support Services approves these requests.

Any requests for short- or long-term accommodation for medical conditions also require the *Request for Accessible Transportation Form* signed by the parents and the principal, and then forwarded to for approval. A medical note or certificate indicating what needs are being accommodated is required. Please note that accommodation of needs for transportation should also be reflected at the school. These requests are approved by the Superintendent.

For example, if a student cannot walk x number of meters to school, then should the student be running around in gym, at recess, or during extra-curricular activities? Principals are encouraged to work with the Superintendent to determine how the student's needs should be accommodated in these cases.

This year, OSTA will be flagging students with specials needs who reside within 800m of the school to determine if the student is able to walk to school. The determination of the student's abilities will be made in collaboration with the student, the parents, the school and the LSS department.

### **Transportation for students in a joint custody arrangement and having two homes**

OSTA has developed a new policy & procedure to deliver transportation services to students in a joint custody arrangement and having two homes. An application process and other requirements need to be met for parents to receive this service, and the homes or daycares in question must meet all other eligibility requirements. The deadline for new applications or changes to existing applications for September start up transportation was June 1.

**Renewals** of current schedule calendars (no other changes) are due **June 30**. All other applications will be reviewed after September 15, and prior to October 1.

More information can be found on our website:

<http://www.ottawaschoolbus.ca/policies-procedures/variable-transportation-for-students-in-a-joint-custody-arrangement-and-having-two-homes-copy/>

### **Applications for Empty Seat Availability – NEW DEADLINE**

Students who had been approved to access service under the Seat Availability provision for 2018-19 will need to **re-apply** for service for the 2019-20 school year. The ***“Application for Access to Empty Seats on School Bus Vehicles”*** form is available on the OSTA website at <http://www.ottawaschoolbus.ca/policies/empty-seat-provision> and should be sent to OSTA directly. The deadline for applications to be reviewed in October is **September 20, 2019**. Applications will continue to be received throughout the year and a wait list will be maintained.

**We ask that parents and school staff NOT put students on the bus prior to assignment to a bus route, for the students' own safety.**

## **Transportation Information During the Summer Months**

Please note that the Ottawa Student Transportation Authority will be open during the summer months from 8:00am to 4:30pm, Monday to Friday.

**OCDSB** parents should contact OSTA directly during the summer months if they have questions about transportation or changes to their children's address or caregiver information.

## **OC Transpo Presto SmartCard System**

Many students in grades 9-12 will be assigned an annual Presto pass and must register and replace their own cards (if necessary). A user guide and online information will be made available for students and staff upon distribution of the passes.

Presto passes for students in grades 7 and 8 will continue to be managed by OSTA and should NOT be registered. Any high school students with special needs or students requiring financial assistance may receive assistance from OSTA providing their school sends us the appropriate request for transportation forms. These Presto passes should NOT be registered. OSTA's updated Public Transit T7 policy and procedure are available online.

Presto School Board Passes will be delivered to schools the second week of August. Schools may begin distribution at their earliest convenience and we encourage them to provide computer access so that students may register their cards immediately upon receipt.

**Please encourage students to TAP their cards on the bus**, whether they board at the front or via the rear doors on any bus, every time. This helps OC Transpo and OSTA assess the number of riders and the number of buses we need to manage loads on particular routes. More buses means fewer overloads and less waiting for another bus for our students.

## **Transportation Information During the Fall**

In September, parents should be advising schools directly of any changes to student home address. Please remind parents that OSTA will require a minimum of three business days to implement a change to transportation services, longer for transportation to two homes in a joint custody situation. During the month of September, we ask for your assistance in advising parents of new transportation information, due to the volume of changes processed through OSTA at the busy start-up period. You may also direct them to the online Parent Portal [www.ostabusplanner.ottawaschoolbus.ca](http://www.ostabusplanner.ottawaschoolbus.ca).

## **Students with Life-Threatening Medical Conditions**

Please be reminded that one **CLEAR** copy of the "**Life-threatening Medical Condition Emergency Transportation**" forms must be submitted to OSTA by **September 30** of each year for all students who may require the emergency administration of epinephrine auto-injectors, metered-dose asthma inhalers or other emergency medical attention during transportation to or from school. These forms will be processed and sent to the school bus operators. Forms are not to be given directly to the driver or transportation provider by

parents and/or guardians or school staff. It is crucial these forms are sent in at a timely manner so that drivers can respond to emergencies effectively.

### **Driver Recruitment**

You can help with the driver shortage by distributing the Driver Recruitment Flyer to your school community. This is a great part-time job for stay-at-home parents, retired grandparents, and newcomers looking to get into the workforce. Free training available.

I trust this information will be of assistance to you as you wrap up your school year. Thank you, in advance, for sharing this information with your school staff and school community. Should you require any clarification on any item, please contact Blyth Helman, Assistant General Manager [blyth.helman@ottawaschoolbus.ca](mailto:blyth.helman@ottawaschoolbus.ca) or me at [Vicky.kyriaco@ottawaschoolbus.ca](mailto:Vicky.kyriaco@ottawaschoolbus.ca).

Have a great summer!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Vicky Kyriaco', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Vicky Kyriaco  
General Manager/CAO  
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