



November 15, 2018

TO PARENTS AND GUARDIANS:

THE TRANSPORTATION OF STUDENTS DURING INCLEMENT WEATHER

Winter is fast approaching and there may be times when the weather or road conditions will disrupt school bus and special vehicle transportation. The Upper Canada District School Board is working cooperatively with Student Transportation of Eastern Ontario (STEO), local bus companies and our coterminous Board to ensure that our approach to transportation during times of inclement weather is planned, coordinated and communicated with the safety of students in mind.

STEO receives up-to-date information regarding regional weather and road conditions from MeteoGroup – a global weather advisor. Decisions concerning the cancellation of school bus and special vehicle transportation are made cooperatively based upon this information and on the input of a team of weather captains across the region of service. Unless otherwise announced, schools will remain **open** for students and staff, even if transportation is cancelled. If transportation services are cancelled in the morning, transportation services will also **not** operate in the afternoon.

Announcements regarding the cancellation of school bus and special vehicle transportation will be broadcast by your local media outlets, starting at 6:15 a.m.

Alternatively, parents/guardians and students can verify if buses are cancelled by accessing:

1. STEO's website at www.steo.ca and clicking on the link "Bus Delays or Cancellations."
2. STEO's free APP for you Apple or Android device. Use the access code STEO.
3. STEO's Parent Portal for updates on delays and cancellations, specific to your child's transportation. Sign up at www.steo.ca under Parent Login.
4. STEO Facebook or on Twitter @steo_news.
5. UCDSB Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/UCDSB> and Twitter feed @UCDSB.
6. Parents registered with "My Family Room" will receive bus cancellations through their preferred communication; email, text message, or telephone. Parents simply need to contact their school(s) to register for a UCDSB "My Family Room" account.

Please **do not call** the bus companies directly, as the STEO website will reflect the most accurate information.

Winter weather conditions can change suddenly. If roads become impassable during the school day, or if they are judged to be risky, students will be kept at school until either their parents/guardians can pick them up or it becomes safe to resume school vehicle transportation.

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Fog

Occasionally, regardless of the time of year, fog patches occur. Fog greatly increases the risk that motorists may collide with a stopped vehicle or with a student in the process of crossing a road to board the bus. Consequently, bus drivers have been instructed not to stop in fog patches where visibility is significantly reduced. If students are not picked up due to foggy conditions, the bus driver will provide the names of those students to the school principal upon arrival at the school.

We recommend that you do not permit your child to wait for the bus if visibility is significantly reduced by fog.

Blocked or Impassable Roads

Occasionally, a road may become blocked or impassable and as a result, the bus may be unable to service sections of a route. If this occurs, upon arrival at the school, the bus driver will communicate to the school principal, the name of each student who was not picked up.

Please be reminded that you are responsible for your child's safety prior to boarding the school bus and following drop off. You are encouraged to ensure that your child has access to your home or to an approved alternative location where she or he can go in the event that the bus is unable to service your section of the route.

Mechanical Breakdown

The possibility of a mechanical breakdown of a school bus or special vehicle always exists, but is of particular concern during the winter. Please ensure that your child is dressed warmly enough to cope with the potential loss of heat due to a mechanical breakdown on the bus. If mechanical failure occurs, alternative transportation will be arranged as soon as possible. If this occurs, the bus may be late picking up your child in the morning or returning him or her home in the afternoon.

Parental Responsibility and Discretion

STEO strives to ensure the safe transportation of children to and from school each and every day. While it is each parent/guardian's responsibility to ensure the safety of their child(ren) up to their boarding of the school bus, **you always have the right to keep your child(ren) at home if you feel it is too risky to have him/her transported by bus.**

Your support and cooperation are appreciated as another winter approaches.

Sincerely,

-original signed-

Stephen Sliwa,
Director of Education,
Upper Canada District School Board.