



Southwestern Ontario Student Transportation Services

www.mybigyellowbus.ca
Tel: 519-649-1160

Revised August 27, 2020
Release Date: August 25, 2020

Frequently Asked Questions – Bus Service During COVID 19

What steps have been taken to lessen risks on the buses?

Buses are shared spaces that are used by multiple students each day. Risk-mitigation controls are multifaceted to provide multiple layers of protection. These include:

- *PPE for bus drivers and bus attendants*
- *Enhanced cleaning protocols on board the bus after morning and afternoon routes and between runs in high touch areas*
- *Mandatory masks for student in kindergarten through grade 12 unless they are medically exempt*
- *Public messaging to parents for hand washing prior to boarding and sending hand sanitizer with your student*
- *Parents must perform a mandatory daily health check before sending their students to the bus stop each day and keep ill children home.*
- *Hand sanitizer will be available on board upon request*
- *Decreased ride times on board the vehicles wherever possible*
- *Decreased the number of riders assigned to each bus*
- *Development of seating plans by the school to have students seated siblings or in cohorts where possible.*

Can the bus driver refuse to let my student on the bus if they will not wear a mask?

Some students may be unable to wear a mask for medical reasons and may have an exemption on file with the school.

Masks are mandatory for students in grades 4 – 12 by provincial order. Therefore, if a student fails to wear a mask on the bus, the driver may refuse them.

Masks are also mandatory for kindergarten – grade 3 as a local policy decision. For safety reasons, bus drivers will not leave younger students behind.

Masking makes our community better. We appreciate your participation in this initiative.

Read the [policy document](#) for full information.

I registered but my student no longer needs the bus. What do I do?

Email registration@mybigyellowbus.ca and we will remove your student from the bus list. You can always re-register later if your needs change.

My student was going to be on-line for September but now will be attending in person. What do I do?

Complete a [Bus Registration](#) form as soon as possible. We will do our very best to arrange school bus service, but parents should be prepared to make alternate transportation arrangements until transportation can be coordinated.

I missed the registration date of August 14 for bus service. What do I do?

You can submit a bus registration form for your student, but transportation will not be in place for September. Please make alternate arrangements in the intermission.

STS anticipates that late registrations will be processed in late September with transportation commencing in October.

How do I find out my student's bus stop and bus times?

You need to set up a [Parent Portal](#) account at mybigyellowbus.ca. Detailed instructions are available on the website [here](#).

My student is going into Kindergarten and I don't have their student identification number yet. How can I get that?

Check out [How to Find Your Student ID Number](#) on our website. We will mail this information out the week of the 24th, but you may wish to find this information out sooner.

I do not have internet access to set up a Parent Portal account. How do I find out my student's bus information?

Please contact the school office when it reopens; they can provide your transportation details through the school transportation portal.

I want to request a change to my student's bus stop. What can I do?

Because of the number of structural changes to routes, bus stop locations and bus capacity for September, there is a blackout period for change requests this fall. You may submit a request in October, once the routes have stabilized.

My student is a remote learner, but I registered them for a seat on the bus. Will they be assigned to transportation?

No. Since the student is not attending school in person, they will not be assigned a bus seat. Since capacity on the vehicles is reduced, every seat will be assigned to someone who requires transportation to attend school.

If my student goes back to school during the year, can they be assigned to a bus then?

Your student must apply for a bus seat when you switch them back to in-person learning. Please note, there may be a wait list in these circumstances depending on bus capacity.

Each school board established timelines for entry points back to in-class learning. Check with the board. Submit your Bus Registration form to STS at the same time as you submit your request to switch models.

How to I switch my student between the remote and in person learning models?

Contact your school board for this information as the boards have certain times during the year where this will be allowed. If your student needs transportation, you must complete a bus registration request at the time you notify the board of your intent to switch your student between learning models.

How many students will be assigned to each bus?

The Ministry of Education's most recent guidance document sets out that buses may run at close to normal capacity to support a full return to school 5 days per week.

However, STS is working diligently to load buses to two per seat with the seat behind the driver left empty wherever possible. This would mean an actual load of 46 students per bus. Please note we are still working with the school boards to get updated student data, and the number of students assigned to each vehicle is still changing.

How will the seating plan be created?

The schools will create seating plans for the buses, grouping students in families and cohorts wherever possible. Generally, kindergarten students will sit near the front with grade 8's at the back. There will be two students per seat in most cases. Siblings will be assigned to the same seat and depending on the grades of the students, that could mean three to a seat.

Bus bench seats will be numbered.

My school shares the bus with another school. Are we getting our own buses?

The existing routing strategies with shared bus runs have not changed. Through seating assignments, LDCSB schools will be assigned to the door side of the bus and TVDSB schools will be assigned to the driver side of the bus.

In cases where there are multiple schools on board at the same time, the schools will work together to develop a plan to keep students together on board.

Are you providing bus tags to Kindergarten students this year?

Yes. The bus tags will be provided to the students at the school. STS is not distributing them by mail this year.

How frequently will buses be cleaned?

Buses will be cleaned after the morning and afternoon routes using disinfectant. Between runs, high touch areas like the handrails and tops of seats will be cleaned also.

Students should not leave any garbage on the bus.