

## STS NEWS UPDATE October 15, 2021

**School Bus Safety Week is October 18-22, 2021.** This is an excellent opportunity for school communities to recognize the importance of safe school bus practices, especially given all the changes that were put in place this fall as a result of the pandemic.

Southwestern Ontario Student Transportation Services will actively promote school bus safety on social media all next week. Join the conversation using #BusSafety21. Be sure to tag us in your posts.

Each year, our elementary schools look forward to a visit from Buster the Bus for the little ones and the excellent junior intermediate program for grades 4 – 8. Intertrain, the company who delivers the in-school safety program, once again will deliver a fully on-line school bus safety program for this school year. As always, the program is free to schools. Intertrain will be contacting each school shortly, if they have not already, to make booking arrangements.



**School Bus Driver Appreciation Day is Wednesday, October 20, 2021.** School bus drivers and bus attendants are very proud of the work they do. They also were affected by Provincial shutdowns as a result of the pandemic. For the the 2021-22 school year, bus drivers returned to their jobs simply to help kids get to school each day. This is truly worth of a celebration!



**Southwestern Ontario Student  
Transportation Services**

mybigyellowbus.ca  
Tel No: (519) 649 1160

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We hope that your school will consider small gestures of recognition for your school bus drivers and bus attendants on that day. In previous years schools had students make cards and posters. No matter whether your gestures are small or grand, they are greatly appreciated by the bus community.

We appreciate that school bus safety is a critical part of our daily jobs and thank you at the school level for all you do. Please do not hesitate to contact us to discuss school bus safety week and how you can contribute to the celebrations.





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**STS NEWS UPDATE  
October 4, 2021**

**School Bus Driver Shortages**

Southwestern Ontario Student Transportation Services (STS) advises that a shortage of school bus drivers is having an impact on school bus operations in the City of London and Middlesex, Oxford and Elgin Counties, similar to many other regions in Ontario.

Parents and guardians are asked to prepare alternate transportation arrangements in the event of school bus service disruptions due to bus driver shortages.

In the event of school bus route cancellations, the contractors will post the cancellations to the website as early as possible, per the normal practice. Families can choose from the following sources to find out about service disruptions:

- Check [mybigyellowbus.ca](http://mybigyellowbus.ca) frequently – make it a regular part of your morning and afternoon routine.
- Download the **BusPlanner Delays** app and subscribe to your student's bus run for push notifications.
- Subscribe for emails in the Parent Portal at [mybigyellowbus.ca](http://mybigyellowbus.ca)

If a school bus route does not have a permanent driver and there is an insufficient list of supply drivers, the route could be cancelled for multiple days. In such instances, STS will provide special notification to the parents/guardians of the students assigned to the affected run(s).

STS is working with the bus contractor to try to minimize impact on students. Bus contractors continue to recruit and train school bus drivers. If you or someone you know would like an opportunity to work part time and support your community by helping kids get to and from school safely each day, [call the local branch of the bus contractor near you.](#)

We appreciate your patience and understanding during this unprecedented time.



## STS NEWS UPDATE September 2, 2021

### **Possible Bus Driver Shortages**

Like many other school districts throughout the province, school bus contractors servicing the London District Catholic School Board and Thames Valley District School Board have experienced Bus Driver Shortages in the past. School Bus Contractors have shared that due to active recruitment in the area, they are not experiencing many shortages at this time. Due to continuing changes related to the COVID-19 pandemic, conditions could change with very short notice to families and schools. In the event of possible service disruptions, please see below information about communications of school bus service disruptions. Schools will remain open due to School Bus Driver Shortages, so we ask that families have a backup transportation in place.

Parents should always be prepared for service disruptions and should be checking our [Bus Delays and Cancellations Page](#) on a regular basis.



### **Free BusPlanner Delays App**

STS has in place the BusPlanner Delays App. This is a free download in both the Apple and Android App Stores. Instructions on how to download and use the app can be found [here](#).





## **STS NEWS UPDATE**

### **August 31, 2021**

As we prepare for the upcoming school year there are a few items that require your attention:

#### **Parent Portal**

The [Parent Portal](#) is now open on the [mybigyellowbus](#) website. Families who registered for transportation must login and check their transportation details.

**The first day of school is Tuesday, September 7.** STS will continue to make routing changes to address bus loads right up to the start of school – check the Parent Portal the weekend before school starts to confirm pick up times.

**To set up a Parent Portal account, follow the [instructions](#). There are also [troubleshooting tips](#)** in case you encounter any difficulties.

Bus routes normally take a while to settle over the first couple weeks of September and we expect this year will require even more time for routines to be established. Please be patient with your bus driver as everyone adapts to the changes required for the fall.

Buses may run off schedule or late for many reasons during the first few weeks. **Download the [BusPlanner Notifications App](#) to receive notifications about your bus sent to your smartphone to stay informed.** You will need to know the Bus Run number from the Parent Portal before you set up the app.

If you do not have access to the internet, the school can provide your transportation information over the phone. School offices are open now.

#### **Face Masks**

**Face masks or face coverings must be worn on vehicles for students in Kindergarten – Grade 12.** Parents/guardians or caregivers who assist students to and from special needs vehicles must also wear a mask. The full [policy](#) is posted online.



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## **Possible Bus Driver Shortages**

Parents and guardians are asked to prepare for school bus service disruptions. Unfortunately, it is possible we may experience some driver shortages in our service area. The reality of driver shortages means route cancellations will be unavoidable in some cases.

We recommend that you check our website in the morning and afternoon and download the BusPlanner Delays app to stay up to date.

## **Need help?**

Please note, due to the many changes required to address COVID 19, we are experiencing an extremely high volume of calls and email contacts.

Please check out our [website](#), [Twitter](#) feed and [Facebook Page](#) for information and self-serve wherever possible.

READ – Frequently Asked Questions

<http://www.mybigyellowbus.ca/uploads/faqcovid.pdf>

READ – [Ready to Roll](#) STS Operational Plan for Resuming School Bus Service

Once you have reviewed all the sources of information listed above, if you still need help, contact our [office online](#) or by phone at 519-649-1160.