



Document Category:	Policy Statement
Document Name:	Exemptions to Distance-Based Transportation Eligibility
Approved By:	Board of Directors
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1. Policy Scope

This policy applies to all parents/guardians and their students within the Southwestern Ontario Student Transportation Services service area.

2. Policy Statement

Eligibility for student transportation is distance based. Southwestern Ontario Student Transportation Services (“**STS**”) may, from time to time, establish exemptions to the distance-based eligibility criteria in certain circumstances.

Student safety when travelling to and from a school site or to, from and at a school bus stop is the responsibility of parent/guardian and not STS or its member school boards. While STS may establish exemptions from distance based criteria, it is and remains the responsibility of the parent/guardian to assess what mode of transport and travel route to school is suitable for their child/student and to choose from, and if applicable provide, the available option(s).

3. Policy Action Items

STS engaged a traffic engineering firm to assist STS in developing guidelines to determine if an exemption from distance based criteria will be provided. These guidelines:

- Reflect engineering principles recognized by transportation agencies and authorities;
- Contemplate the use of readily available data from applicable municipalities and, in certain circumstances, site visits;
- Are predominantly data-driven.

These guidelines also reflect the following principles:

- ✓ Active student travel should be encouraged to support the physical and mental benefits for students of all ages;
- ✓ Pedestrian controls, including crossing guards, are the responsibility of the municipality;
- ✓ All students under the age of 11 should be supervised by a parent/guardian/designate;
- ✓ It is assumed that all students age 11 years and over are capable of navigating traffic conditions independently. The parent/guardian/designate is responsible for confirming this determination and if they hold an alternative view are responsible for making other arrangements;
- ✓ Distance-based exemptions are not provided if a feasible alternative route that does not exceed the overall distance eligibility criteria exists, even if it is not the most direct route; and



- ✓ The provision of crossing guards is a municipal responsibility. Exemptions from distance criteria are not necessarily decided based on whether or not there is a crossing guard. The presence of an adult crossing guard improves conditions sufficiently such that a distance-based exemption will not be provided based on that crossing.

Reversal of Exemptions

Improvement in infrastructure and other factors may lead to STS determining that certain exemptions from distance based criteria are no longer warranted. In such circumstances, affected families will be provided a minimum of 90 days written notice that transportation based on those exemptions will no longer be provided.

4. Forms

There are no forms associated with this policy.