



**August 25, 2020**

**Service de Transport de Wellington Dufferin Student Transportation Services prepares for back to school.**

Planning for school bus service for September is close to being finalized and is dependent on the final plans from the [Upper Grand District School Board](#), [Wellington Catholic District School Board](#), [Conseil Scolaire Catholique MonAvenir](#), [Conseil Scolaire Viamonde](#), and the [Dufferin-Peel Catholic District School Board](#). Please click the links (above) to see the latest entry plans from each of our Partner School Boards including staggered entry schedules.

**To date, STWDSTS has taken the following steps to prepare for the new school year:**

- Implemented an “[Opt-Out](#)” Form for students who are eligible for transportation but don’t plan to ride a school vehicle this September.
- Supplied “Parking Maps” to schools to help decrease congestion around the school and in surrounding neighbourhoods.
- Hosted multiple meetings with bus companies to discuss safety practices for the coming school year.
- Ordered PPE for bus drivers and attendants (masks & face shields) to ensure adequate supply for bus company workforce.
- Ordered sanitizer and disinfectant for enhanced cleaning of the vehicles.
- Met with public health officials to review the STWDSTS operational plan.

STWDSTS is finalizing routes for the fall. Bus stop locations as well as pick up and drop off times may change. Therefore, families should not assume their bus will be the same as last year. In fact, all families should expect that transportation details will change and should verify the transportation details for their student through the Parent Portal.

The [Parent Portal](#) is tentatively planned to open on **Monday August 31, 2020** for families to check the transportation details and schedule for their child. As the routes will be highly subject to change this year, we recommend that families check their transportation schedule when the portal opens, and again the weekend before school starts. This **NEW** Parent Portal, is where families will create an account and add multiple students to one profile, creating an easier end-user experience. Families will be able to get school vehicle delay/cancellations by email and can download the app so that notifications are sent directly to their smartphones.

**Transportation Letters**

In years past, letters have been mailed to families of children that are newly registered (JK-SK or students from outside of the province). With the complexities of this year’s start-up we will not be mailing letters. Therefore, we are advising **ALL** parents to login to the [parent portal](#).

**Parents should know:**

- Parents must perform a health check on their student each day before they board the bus. Parents must keep their students off the bus if they feel unwell. Instructions on performing health checks can be found here [Ontario's COVID-19 website](#).
- School bus stop locations are not supervised and maintaining physical distancing at bus stops is the responsibility of the student and caregivers.
- A school bus is a shared space and strict physical distancing is not possible while on board.
- Bus drivers will be wearing masks and face shields when students get on and leave the bus.
- Students are required to wear a face covering while on any school vehicle unless an exemption is approved through school board protocols.
- To support contact tracing, students may only use their assigned bus stop, bus run and seat on board.
- Parents should discuss appropriate bus behavior and etiquette with their student before school starts.
- The [First Rider Program](#) is moving online this year, and It provides first time riders and their families with an introduction to school bus riding procedures and safety through a videotape presentation. Please watch the program as a family and discuss the safety messages with your child.

Late August is a very busy time for transportation, and this year is expected to be exceptionally busy. STWDSTS is committed to ongoing communications with families as we prepare for September. Should you have any questions regarding school vehicle transportation, please call us at 519-824-4119 or 1-888-292-2224.