

Parent Fact Sheet

Preparing your child to ride the school bus

Riding the school bus is a new experience for some children. The bus is a very safe way for your child to travel to and from school. In fact, school buses are the safest vehicles on the road. Most mishaps take place outside the bus. This fact sheet will provide you with practical tips to help you prepare your child to safely ride the school bus.

WHO MAY RIDE THE SCHOOL BUS?

Students who live further than the minimum walking distance, and live within the school's catchment area, qualify for transportation. For more information on minimum walking distances refer to your School Board's transportation policy.

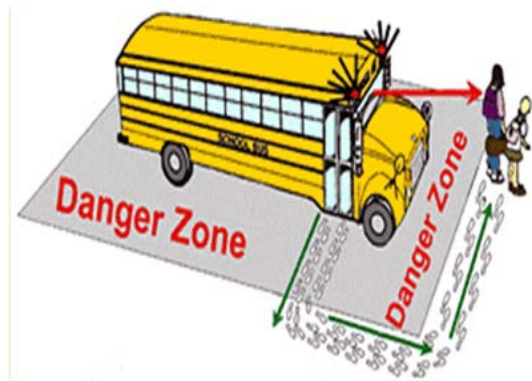
WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW?

Because central pick-up and drop-off locations are used, children have to walk from their home to the school bus stop.

- Your child's bus company will inform you of bus times and bus stop locations. Schedules are approximate, so students should be at bus stops at least five minutes before the designated time and not more than ten minutes before pick up.
- Most buses transport elementary, as well as, high school students for both the Catholic and Public school systems.
- All students must obey the rules of conduct on school buses. Riding on a bus is a privilege, not a right.

MEETING YOUR CHILD AT THE BUS

Parents are encouraged to accompany their child/children to the bus stop and to meet them in the afternoon. Parents/Guardians are responsible for their children before they step on the bus and once they get off the bus.



FIRST RIDER PROGRAM

The Association of Grey-Bruce Bus Operators offers the **First Rider Program** for young students throughout Bruce and Grey counties. There are several community locations with dates in June and August each year.

The **First Rider Program** is a **School Bus Safety Program** that introduces young children and their parents to school buses and school bus safety. The program is intended to be a fun learning experience. While open to all young students who ride a school bus on a regular basis, it is especially designed for children who will be riding the school bus for the first time in September. The program reviews bus safety rules and allows parents and children an opportunity to ask questions about school bus safety. As part of the program, parents and their children will also be invited to take a ride on a school bus.

Times and locations will be advertised on the Consortium website www.brucegreyschoolbus.ca.

SUBSCRIBING FOR SCHOOL CLOSURE AND BUS CANCELLATION & DELAY NOTICES

School closure and bus cancellations/delays are available on-line. Go to www.brucegreyschoolbus.ca and click on "Bus Cancellation Website". In addition, local radio/TV stations are notified with bus cancellations messages. Many radio stations post the cancellations on their own web sites.

You can also subscribe to receive email notifications when your child's school is closed or their bus is delayed or cancelled. Go to www.brucegreyschoolbus.ca and click on "Subscribe for Delays & Cancellations".

HOW WILL YOU BE NOTIFIED OF SCHOOL BUS ARRANGEMENTS?

Automated phone messages are generated around the 4th week of August each year which will tell you your child's/children's bus route number, bus stop location and pickup time. Messages are sent for each school and bus route. If you have 3 children attending the same school, riding on the same bus, you will receive only one phone message referring to all 3 children. You may receive other messages if you have other children attending a different school or assigned to a different bus. Questions? Feel free to contact the Transportation Consortium.

Elementary students will also receive a letter in June with an ID which will allow you to securely log into a site that will list your child's/children's transportation arrangements.

You are welcome to contact the route planner responsible for your school. A list of contact telephone numbers and email addresses can be found at www.brucegreyschoolbus.ca. You can also call 519-364-0605 ext. 244.

TIPS TO HELP MAKE YOUR CHILD'S BUS RIDE SAFE

You can help keep your child safe on the bus by sharing the following tips with your child:

At the bus stop

- arrive at the bus stop at least 5 minutes prior to pick up time
- stay back from the road until the bus stops, its lights start flashing and the door opens
- wait quietly in line when getting on and off the bus
- get on and off the bus one at a time
- wait your turn to get on the bus - don't push or shove
- always look both ways before crossing in front of the bus, make sure you can see your driver's face
- speak quietly to your friends and try not to raise your voice
- keep your pets at home - pets at the bus stop may distract children from getting on the bus

On the bus

- sit properly in your seat
- you can talk to your friends
- stay in your seat ~ never stand when the bus is moving
- keep books, knapsacks and bulky items on your lap
- do not eat on the bus
- keep arms and head inside bus
- obey the safety monitor

When you leave the bus

- look in all directions before you cross the street
- use your eyes and ears before you use your feet
- go straight home - don't make any stops along the way
- walk - don't run
- stay three metres (the length of a car) or more from the front of the bus, make sure you can see your driver's face

YOUR CHILD SHOULD REMEMBER

- their name, address and phone number
- their school and teacher's name
- their bus driver's name and route number

HELP KEEP YOUR CHILD SAFE

- Plan your schedule so that your child does not arrive at the bus stop too early - your child may be tempted to wander or get into mischief
- If it is dark on the way to or from the bus, make sure your child wears light coloured or reflective clothing to make sure he or she is visible
- Make sure your child knows what to do if he or she misses the bus - come back home or, if at school, report to a teacher - and never accept a ride from a stranger.

STUDENT BEHAVIOUR AFFECTS BUS SAFETY

The behaviour of each student on the bus directly affects the safety of others. Incidents of poor behaviour on the bus are reported in writing by the bus driver to the school principal. Depending on the seriousness of the incident, the principal may issue a warning to the student, speak to parents, suspend bus privileges or take other disciplinary action.

SAFETY INITIATIVES

The following safeguards will assist students during the first few weeks of school:

- **Bus Numbers** - Each school bus has a route number and it is posted in the front window and the door side of the bus. This helps the students to identify the bus.
- **Bus Stops** - Bus drivers will have a list of their students and their stops. The bus driver and older students will assist younger children in learning their stop.
- **School Bus Orientation** - Local bus companies assist teachers in familiarizing your child with bus routines and expectations. In September the bus routines will be taught and reviewed in class, and the bus company will consult with classroom teachers to offer workshops. (Also see First Rider Program)

TRANSPORTATION TO/FROM A CHILDCARE PROVIDER

If your child requires transportation either to or from an address other than your home address, please check with the school to confirm that the address is eligible. Transportation arrangements **must** follow the same schedule every day. Form #TCF-A007 (Transportation to/from a Childcare Provider) must be submitted before transportation is considered or approved. It could possibly take several days to a week to receive approval for alternate arrangement. Please plan accordingly.

TRANSPORTATION FOR JOINT CUSTODY

Transportation may be approved for joint custody if the student has a consistent schedule with custodial parents. Form #TCF-A008 (Transportation for Joint Custody) must be submitted before transportation is considered or approved.

SPECIALIZED TRANSPORTATION

Students with special needs may require specialized transportation. Parents/Guardians are asked to please contact the school principal for further details.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

To get information, call your local school or the Student Transportation Service Consortium of Grey-Bruce (519-364-5820).

Website: www.brucegreyschoolbus.ca

