

TIP SHEET

Preparing your kindergarten child to ride the school bus

The Peel District School Board and the Dufferin-Peel Catholic District School Board operate a joint transportation system that provides busing service for thousands of students each year.

Riding the school bus is a new experience for kindergarten children. This fact sheet will help you prepare your child to safely ride the school bus.

Who may ride the school bus?

Kindergarten students who live more than one kilometre from the school qualify for transportation.

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 school 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.
- Sometimes bus drivers can't enter new subdivisions because of construction activity. In this situation, you are responsible for taking your child to the nearest bus stop.
- Kindergarten is a half-day program. Children in the morning program ride the bus to school with older children from other elementary grades, but on their trip home there are only kindergarten children on the bus. Children in the afternoon program ride to school with other kindergarten children, but on their trip home they ride with older children.

Meeting your child at the bus stop

You are responsible for your children before they step on the bus and once they step off the bus.

If no one meets your child at the bus stop at noon, the bus driver is required to take the child back to school. You can excuse your child from this practice by writing to the principal indicating that your child may walk home unsupervised. Kindergarten students returning home from the afternoon program do not have to be met. They usually get off the bus with older students, and the bus driver cannot monitor whether or not each child is being met by a parent or caregiver. It is your responsibility to make sure your child gets home safely.

Special safety features

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

Name tags

The school will give nametags to kindergarten students identifying their school, bus run and bus stop location. This ensures children get off the bus at the right place. Please make sure your child wears the nametag during the first few weeks of school or until you are confident the child is familiar with the bus stop.

Bus numbers

Each school bus has a run number posted in the window.

Bus stops

Bus drivers will also call out the name of each bus stop to help children get off the bus at the correct stop. Please make sure your child knows the name of the bus stop.

Safety video

In early September, all kindergarten children view a bus safety video. The video presents the basic safety rules of riding a bus. Kindergarten teachers supplement the video with classroom instruction.

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

- Stay back from the road
- Wait quietly in line when getting on and off the bus
- Stay back until the bus stops, its lights start flashing and the door opens
- 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
- Speak quietly to your friends and try not to raise your voice
- Keep your pet 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

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

Things to remember

- Your name, address, and telephone number
- Your school and teacher's name
- Your bus driver's name

You can 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. The bus driver reports incidents of poor behaviour on the bus in writing 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.

Kindergarten orientation

Included in this package is an invitation for you and your child to attend the Young Rider School Bus Orientation on Saturday, August 23.

For more information

For more information about busing, contact your school principal or one of the following transportation offices:

- South Area 905-890-6362
- Central Area 905-890-0614
- North Area 905-890-6000/1-800-668-1140

For more information on school bus safety, call the Canada Safety Council at (613) 739-1535 or visit the school bus safety web site at www.elmer.ca.