



August 3rd, 2021

Dear Transportation Families

We are once again are faced with some unknowns as we look forward to start the 2021-2022 school year. We've identified four specific pieces of information that you should know prior to the school year starting.

1. PHASED-IN START FOR STUDENT TRANSPORTATION IN SEPTEMBER 2021

To start the 2021-22 school year, the [Toronto Student Transportation Group](#) (TSTG), which provides bus services for the TCDSB and TDSB, will once again be implementing a phased-in start for student transportation to ensure that students with special education needs are prioritized and receive bus service beginning the first week of school.

From September 9 to September 14, 2021 – only students with special education needs who ride in mini-buses, mini-vans, taxis, and wheelchair accessible vehicles, excluding those in the gifted program, will be provided with student transportation. Schools that are currently relocating will also be provided full service starting on the 9th.

Starting September 15, 2021 –all other eligible students will be provided with student transportation, unless there is a significant driver shortage or other unforeseen issues related to COVID-19.

Given the continued school bus driver shortage across the province, this phased-in approach provides TSTG with additional time to identify and address any potential start-up issues, and helps to ensure that when full transportation services are in place, they are running as smoothly as possible. A phased-in approach was used by TSTG to begin the last school year and resulted in a successful start for student transportation without the typical back to school delays and issues.

2. COVID HEALTH AND SAFETY PROTOCOLS ON SCHOOL BUSES

Clarity from the Ministry of Education regarding COVID-19 health and safety protocols for student transportation for the upcoming school year is expected in the coming weeks. The current set of transportation related protocols to address Covid concerns are located on our [transportation web site](#). Protocols may include information about self-assessments, mask requirements for drivers and students, accommodations for students with special education needs, assigned seats, enhanced cleaning, hand sanitizer, windows/ventilation, etc.



3. EMPTY SEAT POLICY

Once again, each of the Boards have modified their empty seat plan for this school year to help promote physical distancing on school busses, as well as to help the TSTG and bus operators effectively plan bus routes and seating arrangements in line with the COVID-19 health and safety precautions. Please visit your respective School Boards to learn the changes implemented for this program.

4. GETTING IN TOUCH WITH TSTG FOR QUESTIONS/MORE INFORMATION

All parents/guardians with children who take the bus to school are encouraged to sign up for the [Student Transportation Parent Portal](#) to access important information and updates. The Transportation portal is currently closed but will re-open on August 16th, 2021. The Parent Portal gives parents/guardians access to transportation information specific to their children, including route number, stop location, times and bus company contact details.

Parents/guardians or staff with questions may call the transportation office temporary call centre start-up number at **647-790-3829** or email transportation@torontoschoolbus.org.

Schools will re-open the week prior to school start and any changes can be communicated directly to your school who will provide the transportation unit with the updates.

Wishing everyone a continued safe and enjoyable summer.

Regards,

Toronto Student Transportation Group