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Access to Education

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Help Keep Our Kids Safe—How to improve traffic conditions around our

Congestion around our schools is quickly becoming an unprecedented problem for both families and school neighbours. Both the Toronto Catholic District School Board and the Toronto District School Board want to ensure that each and every family has access to transportation related resources that will improve their quality of life. The trip to and from school can be an important part of the day setting the foundation for how students learn and contribute in the school environment.

Families may need different choices to ensure they have access to education.

As such the two Boards want to ensure that families are aware of the active and safe routes to school initiatives that promotes more active related transportation choices that will not only reduce traffic congestion around our schools but contributes to our children's physical health, translates into better air quality, and allows our children to explore and experience the neighbourhoods that we live in.

"Walking to school is an adventure and rite of passage that teaches children to become autonomous

Driving—Keeping Safety Focus

Some times you just have to drive. But there are options out there for our parents to minimize the impact to traffic generated around our schools. When students are older consider driving to a location near the school and letting the students walk the remainder of the way. This provides the student some physical activity while allowing you to avoid the more congested streets around the schools.
The biggest safety concern for students around schools is actually parent driving their children to and from school; fewer cars means a safer environment for everyone.

More students are injured going to and from school in cars then by any other means

➔ If you are driving or parking near the school be sure to follow all signage highlighting parking and stopping privileges. Be sure to maintain traffic laws, our children look up to our parents and we want to set a good example.

➔ Don't idle your vehicle, Idling contributes to poor air quality in the school zone, which negatively impacts student health.

➔ Don't be that distracted driver! Our children deserve your full attention.

Ask the Experts

CAA

Transit—Smart Commuting

Students in the City of Toronto have the benefit of accessing a transit system with connections to almost every area within our boundaries. The Toronto Transit Commission (TTC) operates over 1700 transit vehicles moving thousands of people ever day to and from their destinations. Like any other mode of transportation it is important that students understand how the system works and the safety features that are built into the system. Getting students comfortable with using the TTC is an important step in their development allowing them freedom of movement and the flexibility of accessing transportation depending on family needs.

The TTC is a safe and reliable transportation choice for responsible students

➔ When entering and exiting transit vehicles keep your backpacks in front of you to minimize possible contact with other travellers and avoid straps from getting caught in doors and railings

➔ Study the transit system before using and know what vehicles are going where so you depart at the correct locations. If in doubt—ask!

➔ There are a number of safety features in various transit areas including public telephones, security mirrors, intercoms, passenger assistance alarms , and station collectors and Transit enforcement officers on duty to assist you when needed.

Ask the Experts

TTC

Walking—Safe and Smart

If you live within a walkable distance we encourage you to get active and have your children walk to school. A number of schools have 'walking school buses' which allows your child to walk in groups along pre-arranged routes to school. Parent volunteers often lead these walking groups and provide a safe and interactive environment for our children to get to and from school.

Physically active children are healthier, more focused, and perform better at school.

Just like every other mode of transportation it is important that students learn how to safely walk to and from school.

➔ If there is a sidewalk, use it! Let parents or school staff know if the pavement is broken or missing so they can report it.

➔ If there are no sidewalks, walk facing traffic so that you can see oncoming cars.

➔ Watch for cars in driveways and laneways—they may not always see you!

➔ Only cross a street when it is safe to do so! Cross at intersections or crosswalks and obey Crossing Guard and Safety Patrollers if present.

➔ Don't assume that cars and trucks see you - always make sure vehicles have stopped even at lights or intersections before proceeding to cross.

➔ Don't be distracted! Put your electronic devices away so that you can be sure that you are able to see, hear, and interact with those around you.

Ask the Experts

Walk Toronto

Cycling - Safe and Quick

Just like walking; cycling to and from school provides students with an active mode of transportation that contributes to a students healthy well being. The City of Toronto has recently made a number of infrastructure changes to improve the conditions so that cycling is a valid mode of transportation. Young students are invited to use city sidewalks and bike paths to get to and from school. Older students, who understand the rules of the road will share the road with vehicular traffic or use dedicated bike lanes to get to and from their destinations. To be safe while riding the following safety tips are provided:

➔ Always wear a helmet! Protect your investment.

➔ Always make eye contact with pedestrians and drivers.

➔ Obey all traffic laws and follow posted traffic signs.

➔ Let then know you're there! Bike bells are best to alert approaching pedestrians and vehicles or those around a corner that you are nearby.

Bike trains promote a healthy and safe way to travel to and from school

Ask the Experts

Cycle Toronto

School Bus - Yellow means Safety

For those students that live to far away from school to walk or cycle the school bus is a safe and convenient transportation choice. The TSTG transports over 45,000 students each and every day from as young as 4 years old up to high school aged students. To check eligibility for the school bus please visit your school Boards transportation site to confirm transportation eligibility. The school bus is specifically manufactured with safety related equipment not found on other types of vehicles. High backed energy absorbing seats, shatterproof windows, a sliding chassis, and compartmentalization through seat placement are some of the safety items found on a school bus. The most critical safety feature on a school bus may not be in the construction of the vehicle but the process to ensure that young students are properly received at the departure point at the end of the day.

To ensure that each and every student is safely transported the following rules need to be addressed. School bus transportation requires participation from all our stakeholders to ensure the safety of our students.

➔ Be at the pickup point at least 5 minutes early; the bus is on a schedule.

➔ Wait for the bus in single file well away from the roadway until the bus comes to a complete stop. Then board the bus in an orderly fashion.

➔ Never attempt to retrieve anything from under the bus, notify the driver.

➔ Always cross in front of the bus if required to cross the street. Make eye contact with the driver and only cross once given the okay.

➔ If you are met at the end of the day ensure that you have a purple tag attached to your backpack so the driver knows and never get off unless you see who is to meet you.

➔ Participate in a 'Back to School Safely' presentation before you use the bus for the first time - you'll get first hand information on what to expect when using the school bus service including getting a ride on the bus .