



OSTA

Ottawa Student
Transportation
Authority

Transportation Communication

OSTA continues to work with the Ottawa-Carleton District School Board (OCDSB), and Ottawa Public Health (OPH) to deliver safe transportation for bussed students during the COVID-19 pandemic. We thank you for your ongoing patience as we navigate these uncertain times and will continue to update parents throughout the summer and the beginning of the school year.

Parents can register for email notifications through the [OSTA Parent Web Portal](#) or follow OSTA on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#) for news, updates, safety tips, bus delays and cancellations.

Information Accuracy Affects OSTA's Planning

Are you moving? Your decisions, and school data, affect OSTA's accuracy when we plan routes. During these complex times, **it is critical that parents give their school the most accurate information AS SOON AS POSSIBLE** to avoid extended waiting for a transportation change in the fall. OSTA is anticipating increased operational pressures which will delay changes. Get your information in soon to be sure your eligible child has a spot reserved on a bus.

Joint Custody and Transportation to Two Homes - Renewals

RENEWAL Joint Custody Transportation Forms need to be submitted every year. Only one parent needs to complete the renewal form, providing there are no changes to the existing schedule, including access days and stop locations.

Renewal Joint Custody Forms must be submitted NO LATER THAN June 30th

NEW Joint Custody Transportation Forms, and any joint custody transportation changes, must be submitted **by June 1st**, and then, only if the request can be safely accommodated and there is room on the required vehicle.

The Application form and transportation schedule calendar can be found on OSTA's [website](#). Samples of how to fill out these documents are also included.

Empty Seats/Courtesy Seating – Possible Suspension

Physical distancing on yellow buses may continue to be enforced for the 2021/2022 school year. This impact would continue to significantly reduce available seating capacity and would mean a continued **suspension of the Empty Seat program** until such time as physical distancing on school buses is no longer required. We encourage parents to plan ahead and practice walking their children to school over the summer. Please check OSTA's [website](#) for information on Pedestrian Safety and Walk-A-Block. OSTA will resume the empty seat program as soon as it is feasible to do so.

Choosing to Drive? Let OSTA Know

Some parents and guardians may choose to drive their children to school in the fall, rather than letting them take the bus. **OSTA has an [online request form](#) for parents to opt out of transportation during COVID-19** to give those who really need transportation space on the bus. Opting Out of Transportation is only temporary. Parents and guardians of eligible students may request transportation be re-instituted by completing a Transportation Issues form at any time. All services are expected to resume to normal standards once the COVID emergency protocols have been removed.

Driver Appreciation Day – Thank You Cards

June 11 is OSTA's **Virtual Driver Appreciation Day**, a day in which we recognize and thank our many dedicated drivers and walking school bus (WSB) leaders for getting students to and from school every day. Help us recognize all drivers and WSB leaders this year, by sharing your thanks with us so your yellow bus, wheelchair bus, van driver or walking school bus (WSB) leader gets the recognition they deserve! For more information visit [OSTA's website](#).

OSTA Poster and Writing Competition!

Last year's poster and writing competition was a huge success and that's why we are running it again this year! OSTA wants to know how you stay safe on your way to school! Share your story, poem or artwork and you could win a prize!! Full contest rules and guidelines are found on our [website](#). The deadline for submissions is June 25, 2021.

School Zone Safety and Walk-A-Block

As parents and guardians decide how to get their children to school, we anticipate there will be an increase in car traffic around the school. We encourage students to walk to school as much as possible, but if walking isn't an option, we urge parents who drive their children to school to add **Walk-A-Block** to their routine. Try parking away from the school and walk the last block or two. This summer, take some time to plan your route by finding the five-minute walk radius around your school using google maps or check [OSTA's website](#) for your school's Walk-A-Block Map. By planning ahead, you'll get a jump start on your back-to-school planning!

Public Transit Training

Students who are new to public transit this year are encouraged to attend a virtual training session in August. The training session will have information on safety features of bus and train systems, using Travel Planner to find your stop and route, Presto cards and more!

Walking School Bus Volunteers

Teachers, parents, high school students and community members are welcome to apply to be a Volunteer Walking School Bus Leader to help elementary kids learn pedestrian safety and engage in active transportation for the following schools: St Rita CS and Georges Vanier. Free training and flexible schedules. [Volunteer WSB Leader Registration](#)