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## STUDENT TRANSPORTATION



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*School bus safety starts at home — every day*

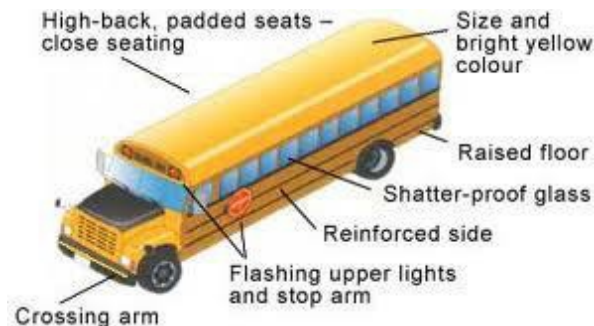
Dear Parents/Guardian and Students,

The South Shore Regional Centre for Education transports over 5900 students everyday. In order to ensure a safe and efficient transportation system, it is everyone's responsibility to promote safety procedures that exercise care, caution, good manners, and consideration for other people. With this in mind, general information concerning school bus transportation is included in the following pages.

School bus safety starts at home. Parents or guardians are responsible for supervising their children to and from the school bus. Parental supervision at their bus stop would in the large part eliminate any accidents from happening at the school bus stop. Please, always accompany your P-2 child to and from their bus stop. If you wish, you may sign a waiver that will allow us to release your child at their bus stop without a parent/guardian present.

If, as parents or students, you have any problems concerning transportation in your area do not hesitate to call the transportation office at 902-541-8252. We would be pleased to assist you.

Denise Crouse  
Operations Coordinator  
902-541-8248  
dcrouse@ssrsb.ca



## Information to be shared with children

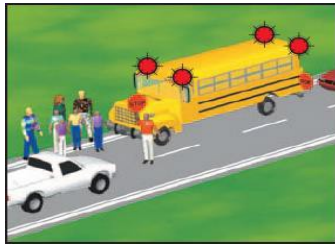
### What can a parent do about school bus safety?

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#### A Parent Checklist

✓ Commit to accompanying your P-2 child to and from the school bus stop everyday

✓ Talk with your child regularly about school bus danger zones.



✓ Practice looking left, right and left again with your child before crossing all intersections and driveways.

✓ Make sure your child can be easily seen; attach reflective material to their backpack.

✓ Store everything in your child's backpack and ensure it is securely closed. Never let your child carry anything that can be dropped near or under the bus. Ensure your child's teacher is insisting on the same.

✓ Remind your child regularly to never pick up anything near or

under the bus without asking the driver what to do first.

✓ Have your child leave home in plenty of time to eliminate the last minute dashes that cause accidents, especially in inclement weather. Always arrive at the bus stop 5 minutes prior to pick-up time.

✓ Wait for your child on the same side of the street as the bus stops. Do not make your child cross the street to get to you. Children often forget pedestrian safety rules when they see their parent.

✓ Support appropriate school bus behavior. Teach your child their driver is the leader of the school bus safety team. Work with the school and driver if disciplinary problems are reported.



## Bus Stops

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- The transportation office pre-assigns students to bus stops. You can apply for a different bus stop and our staff will check to ensure the requested bus stop adheres to all regulations, policies and procedures.
- Please ensure your child is familiar with the bus stop location prior to his/her first day.
- The bus route number is posted on the door side of the bus on the hood.

## Arrival at bus stop

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Be on time for the bus. Leave home early. Walk quickly. Arrive 5 minutes before bus pick-up time. You can wait for the bus...the bus cannot wait for you! We do our utmost to stay on schedule.



On your way, cross the street where safe to do so. If there aren't any sidewalks, walk on the left facing cars. Never run into the street or road. Always look left and right and left again to make sure no cars are coming when you cross.

Stay away from the street when waiting for the bus. Always wait for the bus in a safe place. Be safe that there is space between you and the passing cars. Don't play tag or run around, but stand quietly at the stop and wait for the bus to come. If other students are waiting at the bus stop, get in line without pushing or jostling. While waiting for the bus, do not damage or trespass onto private property. Do not play on snow banks.

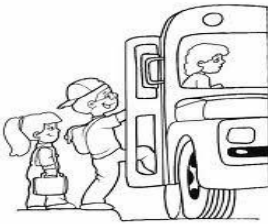


## Boarding the bus

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Line up in a single file in front of the bus door, at least 2 metres from the bus.

Wait until the driver opens the door before approaching the bus.



Wait your turn. Board the bus quickly without crowding or pushing. Always use the handrail - this could save you from falling off the steps and into the road. Make sure you watch where you are stepping.



A seating plan will be in effect. Please remain seated and facing forward.

## Student behavior on the bus

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Once you are on the bus, sit down right away. Please sit in your assigned seat. Keep your items on your lap or under the seat. Laws require the aisle to be kept clear at all times.

Follow all directions and safety procedures the first time they are given by the driver. Any behavior that distracts the driver is a serious hazard to the safe operation of the bus, and jeopardizes the safety of all passengers.



When you are traveling on the bus you may talk quietly with the people near you, but do not yell.

The bus is neither a cafeteria nor a place to discard refuse. If you are hungry, eat at home or at school. Eating on a bus can be very dangerous due to the possibility of choking.



Never stick your hands, arms, head or feet out of the windows. Waving with an arm outside of the bus is dangerous.

Do not touch the emergency door or exits or any part of the bus equipment.

## Getting off the bus

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Always remain seated until the bus has reached its destination and comes to a complete stop.

Don't push or shove while getting off. When you stop at school, let your classmates in the front of the bus get off first.

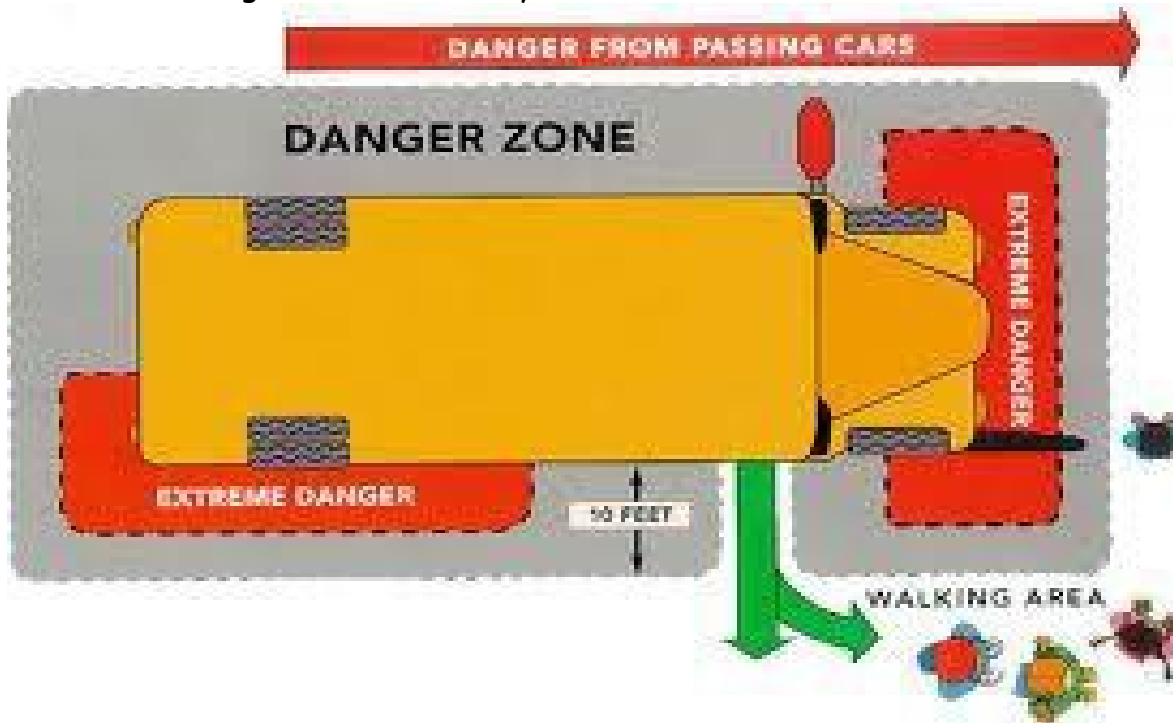
Always use the handrail.



## Walking away from the bus

If you are not crossing the street, step directly away from the bus.

Do not walk alongside the bus at any time!!

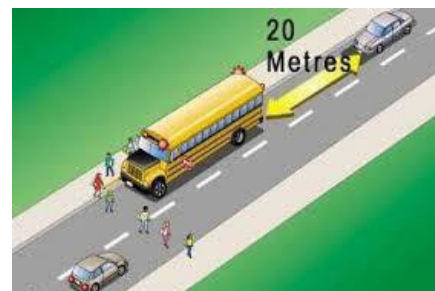


If anything falls underneath or in front of the bus, leave it - do not try to get it. Step away from the bus and talk to the school bus driver.

## Crossing the street

Always wait at the curb, walk in front of the crossing gate so the driver can see you. Cross at right angles, not diagonally. Never cross the road behind the school bus.

- Wait for the drivers' signal before crossing.
- When crossing the road you should always look left and right and left again.
- Walk across the road, do not run.





- If anything falls underneath or in front of the bus, leave it – do not retrieve it. Step away from the bus and talk to the school bus driver.
- Parents: Please wait for your child on the same side of the street as the bus stop. Do not make your child cross the street to get to you. Children often forget pedestrian safety rules when they see their parent. When accompany your child, please reinforce the importance of our safety team by always waiting for and following all driver instructions.

## Parent Information

### Bus evacuation drills

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To increase student safety, school bus evacuation drills are practiced twice per school year. Front, rear and split evacuations are practiced and safety equipment and proper use is explained.



### Special requests, friends, special stops, notes, etc.

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School bus drivers are not authorized to grant any parental requests, all requests must be made in writing to the school administration. Students wishing to go to another designated stop other than their own must bring a note signed by parent or guardian to the school administration and they will approve the request and make sure the driver receives their note with the school administration's signature on it. All students have one morning and afternoon permanent stop, all others require a note.



## Carry-on items on the school bus

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Items being carried on by students are limited to small articles that can easily be stored within the student's personal space (i.e. carried on the student's lap or stored under the seat occupied by the student). Law requires the centre aisle to be kept clear. Please refer to SSRCE Policy #360 for complete details.

Hockey sticks, curling brooms, ringette sticks, skis, snowboards or other similar items are not allowed. Skates and skateboards will be allowed only if carried in a canvas bag. Sports balls must be carried in a bag. Large school projects are not permitted onboard the bus.

## Musical instruments

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Due to safety regulations, large musical instruments are not permitted onboard the bus. Other smaller instruments must be in a case and able to fit safely on the student's lap or along side the student, but cannot obstruct the aisle. Please refer to SSRCE Policy #360 for complete details.



## Assertive discipline

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Students in the South Shore Regional Centre for Education who ride buses are subject to rules and regulations designed to provide safe transportation to and from school. Our professionally trained school bus drivers will explain to students what behavior is expected and what consequences will occur if they do not adhere. Prior understanding leads to increased school administration and parental support when problems occur. Please reinforce with your child that their driver is the leader of the school bus. Work with the school and driver if disciplinary problems are reported.

**Instructions for School  
Bus Passengers**

## Rewards

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Positive rewards take the form of frequent praise and recognition from the driver to the students.

- Our drivers will greet students as they enter the bus with a few pleasant nods.
- Our drivers will praise students who are well behaved as they exit the bus.

Positives make students look forward to their ride on the bus.

## Frequently asked questions

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Parents often have questions related to school bus transportation, whether about something as vital as safety or as commonplace as a forgotten pair of mittens on the bus. In order to be responsive to the needs of parents, the Transportation Department has assembled a list of frequently asked questions and how your children are safely transported to and from school each day. Should you have any questions that are not addressed in this list, please feel free to contact us at 902-541-8252.

### Who should I call if the bus does not arrive on time?

Parents are first asked to make sure that the buses are operating and not cancelled due to poor weather conditions. We ask that your child be at the bus stop five (5) five minutes prior to the scheduled arrival time. Buses running 15 minutes late will be announced on the radio and twitter. All buses are equipped with GPS, so we know where all our buses are located. Arrival delays could be caused by weather and road conditions, road construction/repairs, traffic delays and mechanical problems.

### What are the hours of the Transportation Department?

The transportation office hours are 7:30 am until 4:30 pm every school day.

### Will my child have the same driver every day?

Your child may have different drivers between the morning and afternoon bus routes. However, they will be consistent in those routes from

day to day, with the exception of sick leave, leave of absence and employee turnover.

#### [Can the driver stop at my house to pick up or drop off my child?](#)

Drivers are not permitted to adjust routes, times or stops. School bus transportation service is provided in accordance with provincial regulations that assure that there are not more than 3 stops in 1.6 kilometers, and according to policy there is a minimum of 300 meters between each stop. Within these guidelines, every effort is made to improve route efficiency. Bus stop requests can be made using the bus stop request form in Policy #310 and forwarded to the Transportation Analyst, who establishes all new bus stops. Requests for new bus stops for primary students are checked during July and August. If you have not heard from our office regarding your request, by the third week in August, please phone 902-541-8253.

#### [What happens if a parent doesn't meet his/her P-2 child at the bus stop?](#)

Upon reaching the bus stop, the driver will radio Dispatch and we will try and contact you with the information provided on the registration sheet. If we are unable to contact you, your child will be returned to the school and you can pick them up there.

#### [Seat belts](#)

In 2007, Transport Canada introduced regulations for new school buses. The regulations require that all school buses after that date be equipped with up to 8 integrated seats on the bus. These integrated seats are for the use of students who weigh less than forty pounds. As your child is a Primary student, they may qualify for an integrated seat. School Administration will weigh your child during the first few weeks of school to determine whether they are required to use an integrated seat. Parents, guardians or older siblings will be shown how to buckle our Primary students into the seat belts, as our drivers are not permitted to do so. A member of the school team will adjust the seatbelts to ensure proper fit in the afternoon at school dismissal.

Only notes received from your child's physician or school stating that they have reached 40 pounds will be accepted. We cannot accept phone calls or emails from parents stating this information.

## School closures due to inclement weather:

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The decision to cancel or change bus transportation and/or school schedules is taken very seriously, and we appreciate that changes like these have an impact on your family. Safety is always our first priority. Decisions to cancel or change bus transportation and/or school schedules before the start of the school day are announced around 6 am.

The decision is made by the Regional Educational Director after review of all available information provided by the Coordinator of Operations. It is a decision that is taken very seriously and is made following discussion and



consultation with:

- ❖ The SSRCE's Operations Coordinator, who personally travel on roads very early in the morning evaluating road and weather conditions;
- ❖ The staff of the Nova Scotia Department of Transportation

and Infrastructure Renewal;

- ❖ Weather forecasting services including Environment Canada and AMEC Weather Information System
- ❖ Provincial highway cameras; and
- ❖ Individual school bus drivers.

Any changes due to road or weather conditions, or other unforeseen circumstances, are announced in several ways:

- ❖ Twitter: follow @SSRCE
- ❖ Radio: CKBW, Country 100.7 and CBC
- ❖ Facebook
- ❖ SSRCE website

### Back road closure plans:

Back Road Closure Plans are developed for some SSRCE buses. These plans will most often be used during winter and spring months when road conditions are poor. Local media are contacted when back road closure plans are in place and a notice will be posted on the front page of our website and twitter. For reference, individual back road closure plans are available on our website. When back road closure plans are in place, drivers will pick-up and drop-off at the back road closure plan location, regardless of whether road conditions improve throughout the day.

