

Transportation

Purpose of the Standard

To provide details of the Board's transportation policies to the Ministry and to the public.

Transportation providers must, in all respects, meet the requirements of federal and provincial legislation, regulations and standards governing student transportation using vans, school buses and public transit. They must also comply with relevant Ministry of Education requirements and Board policies and procedures governing student safety and transportation.

The Ottawa Student Transportation Authority (OSTA) is responsible for the provision and administration of all Ottawa-Carleton District School Board (OCDSB) transportation services.

The [OCDSB Policy P.127.TRA](#), Ottawa Student Transportation Authority, establishes the authority of the OSTA to act as the Board's agent with respect to the provision of transportation services to students of the OCDSB. Outlined in this policy the OCDSB recognizes the Ministry of Education requirement for the provision of safe, effective and efficient student transportation services through a consortia delivery model. Delivery of transportation services is detailed in a Service Level Agreement (SLA). The OCDSB has responsibility for service standards to be included in the SLA including but not limited to: eligibility standards based on distance address and program; bell time changes of more than 10 minutes; and accessible transportation for students with special needs. Through this policy the OCDSB delegates authority to its representatives on the OSTA Board of Directors to create policies and procedures as required to fulfill the service requirements, as well as other elements required to maintain the OSTA organization.

Information about OSTA may be found on their website at [Ottawa Student Transportation Authority](#). More specifically, the following OSTA policies relate to the provision of accessible transportation:

- [T10 Stakeholder Responsibility](#)
- [T14 Transportation Services](#)
- [T15 Transportation of Service Animals](#)
- [T18 Transportation Eligibility](#)
- [T21 Accessible Transportation](#)





- [T22 Transportation for Students in a Joint Custody Arrangement and Living in Two Homes](#)

The Board encourages the integration of students with special education needs with other students in regular programs as much as possible. This is also true in transportation, where students with special education needs may be assigned to yellow bus or public transit, with accommodations. In the event integration is not possible, the Board agrees to provide specialized/accessible transportation for students with special education needs for whom the Board has received an acceptable medical certificate and/or the Learning Support Services Department has determined that regular transportation is not the best option for a student given the nature of the student's disability or safety concerns.

Under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA), individual school transportation plans are required for students with disabilities to ensure that accessible and appropriate transportation services are provided to them. To request specialized transportation, a Student Request for Accessible Transportation and Personalized Accessibility Plan form must be completed in consultation with the parent(s)/guardian(s) of students with disabilities. Requests for students with disabilities must be approved by the Board's Learning Support Services Department. Medical requests should be directed to the school principal for approval by the school's Superintendent of Instruction. In addition, transportation operators must comply with all AODA requirements.

The OCDSB [Procedure PR.686.SCO, Use of Service Animals for Students](#) outlines the process for developing a transportation plan that includes the transportation of service animals.

To ensure the safety of special needs students, drivers shall deliver each student into the care of a responsible adult. Should any student require assistance getting on, or off the bus, such assistance must be provided by the parent(s)/guardian(s) or school personnel. In the event that a responsible adult is not available, the driver shall report this to OSTA.

Older students in grades 9-12 are exempted from this requirement providing the parent/guardian has given written permission to OSTA, and the school concurs the student does not require supervision when on their own.

For some students with special education needs it may be most appropriate for transportation to be provided separately from other students. School teams carefully consider these circumstances and document a request for solo transportation on the





Student Request for Accessible Transportation and Personalized Accessibility Plan form. These requests require approval from the Superintendent of Instructions or the Manager of Learning Support Services.

A Transition Plan ensures steps are being taken to help the student develop the necessary skills to return to group transportation, whether riding with other students in a van, or taking mass transportation on yellow bus or public transit. Each student's ability to access transportation is reviewed annually.

Any special equipment used to ensure the safety of the student while being transported must be properly fitted for the size, weight and/or age of the student. Parents / guardians and school staff are responsible for ensuring the equipment is securely fastened. Parents / guardians must approve the use of any such equipment such as a buckle guard, a harness, car seat, booster seat, etc.

Students in specialized program classes in schools outside their home communities, as supported by Board policy, may be provided transportation without reference to distance units. Students residing within 800m from their designated school may be assessed for their ability to walk to school, with support, on an annual basis. The Board provides transportation for special needs students enrolled in the Summer Learning Program and Education and Community Partnership Program (ECP). Students attending Provincial or Demonstration schools are transported by the Board. Provincial and Demonstration schools are operated for students who are deaf, blind, or deaf-blind, or who have severe learning disabilities, which may include attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD).

Drivers must complete a Vulnerable Sector Check and participate in sensitivity training and other specialized training when dealing with students with special needs. The OCDSB actively supports and participates in any region-wide school vehicle safety committee or initiatives with a view to improving the uniformity of school bus safety procedures and to assisting school bus drivers to improve their management of students.

