



# FIRST TIME RIDER SAFETY BOOKLET FOR PARENTS AND STUDENTS

This booklet has been created to assist parents/guardians who have children riding the school bus for the first time.

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**Student Transportation Services of Central Ontario (STSCO) welcomes all Students and their Parents/Guardians who are new to School Busing.**

Riding the school bus is a new experience for many kindergarten and elementary aged students.

It is important that parents also learn all the school bus safety rules so they can help their children prepare to ride the school bus.

Follow us on X (formerly Twitter) @stsko\_ca

Or check out our website:

[www.stsco.ca](http://www.stsco.ca)

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# FIRST RIDER PROGRAM



## Welcome First Riders and Families

### First Rider Safety Program:

An education and awareness program designed to familiarize young children, their parents/guardians and caregivers with school buses, and school bus safety.

A bus ride with on board instruction and a safety video are all part of this informative and fun safety program.

We offer the program in late August with sessions at various locations across our jurisdiction.

We encourage all parents/guardians and caregivers to bring their children and elementary aged siblings to participate in the program, whether you're in the walk zone or eligible for transportation.

### How do I find out my transportation information?

1. To see if your child is eligible for transportation visit our website and click on "[Can I Ride a Bus?](#)"
2. Once eligibility for transportation is confirmed, click on the "[Parent Portal.](#)" If you haven't done so already, create an account using the email address you gave the school when you registered your child.
3. Verify the email address (verification email will be sent to the email used to create the account).
4. **New this year, [Opt-In](#),** select your student and register for transportation if your child will be using transportation.
5. Log into the "[Parent Portal](#)" and view your child's tentative bus information for the upcoming school year, available early August.



# YOUNG STUDENT DROP OFF PROTOCOL



STSCO

LAST NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ INITIAL: \_\_\_\_\_

SCHOOL: \_\_\_\_\_

SCHOOL #: \_\_\_\_\_

PM STOP: \_\_\_\_\_

PM ROUTE#: \_\_\_\_\_



## WALKING TO/FROM THE BUS STOP

Parents/guardians are ultimately responsible for the safe conveyance of their children to and from the bus stop location.

Junior Kindergarten to Grade 3 Students must always be accompanied to and from their bus stop location by a parent/guardian/caregiver.

Know your pickup time in the morning and always arrive at your bus stop at least **10 minutes** early. The bus driver has many students to pick up and cannot wait for you if you are late.

**Remember, “we wait for the bus, the bus does not wait for us.”**

All Junior Kindergarten to Grade 3 students must be met at the bus stop at the end of the day by a parent/guardian or caregiver. Please arrive **10 minutes** early. The student will remain on the route if there is not an adult there to meet them.

The Young Student Drop Off Protocol has been implemented by the School Boards and STSCO to enhance the safety of Junior Kindergarten – Grade 3 Students.

As part of the protocol, all Kindergarten students will receive an identification tag that will help the bus driver identify the student’s bus route, bus stop location and school.

Please ensure that your child is wearing this important identification tag.

The tag should be attached to your child’s school backpack.

## AT THE BUS STOP:

Wait for the bus at your designated stop location.

Stand in a safe place off the roadway.

Wait for the bus to come to a complete stop before approaching.

If you need to cross the street to get on the bus, always wait until the bus has come to a complete stop. Watch for the flashing red lights to start and the stop arm to come out. Look at the bus driver and wait for the drivers signal that it is safe to cross the street. When the driver gives you the signal to cross, continue to watch out for traffic as you cross the street.

# RIDING ON THE SCHOOL BUS

Riding a school bus is very safe. However, the most critical moment for student safety is when students are outside of the bus just prior to boarding or when they are getting off the bus at the end of the day.

It is important that children understand the danger zone around a school bus.

The **DANGER ZONE** is the area that is within **3 metres** all around the outside of the school bus.

The most critical areas are in front of the bus and behind the bus because the driver cannot see students in these areas. The bus tires are also dangerous, and children should stay away from them.

## BUS ROUTE NUMBERS

All STSCO Bus Routes have an assigned number. This number will be displayed in the front window of your bus.

It is important that you know your child's Route Number not only to ensure your child is boarding the correct bus each day, but you will also need to know the number when you check for delay or cancellation alerts on our website.



If children drop anything within the danger zone as they are getting on or off the bus, they should not try and pick it up, they should tell the bus driver they have dropped something.

**REMEMBER:** Never reach under the bus or go near the tires if you drop something while getting on or off the bus.

## Bus Route Numbers/Names

Your assigned Bus Route may service multiple schools. It is important that your child knows the name of their school.

Teach your child the name of their school so they can tell the bus driver.

It's also a good idea to visit the school before the first day so your child will recognize it when they get off the bus in the morning.

Some children will transfer buses, so it is important they know the route numbers and/or animals associated with the bus. Routes are given names (animals/insects with pictures) to provide visuals to children to make it easier for younger students to recognize their bus.

# RIDING THE SCHOOL BUS

- Go directly to your seat and sit quietly without blocking the aisle.
- Talking is permitted but should be done quietly so the driver can focus on the road; no shouting or yelling.
- Always sit with your back in the seat, facing forward with your feet forward to avoid injury in the event of an accident or sudden braking.
- Never distract the bus driver.
- Listen to the bus driver and follow their instructions.
- Do not eat or drink while riding the school bus.
- Do not open the school bus windows without permission from the driver.
- Nothing goes out the windows including body parts or litter.
- Keep your hands to yourself.
- The bus is considered an extension of the classroom; concerns regarding conduct on the bus should be directed to the school principal.

## Picking Up Your Child

Parents/Guardians, you must be at least **10 minutes** early for the drop off time at the end of the day.

When your child is getting off the bus, do not stand away from the bus in groups or wait in the car. After the bus stops, approach the bus door to receive your child. This will ensure that your child makes visual contact with you before getting off the bus.

## **“Stay On The Bus, Kids Are Safe On The Bus”**

**Here are some key safety tips that you should review with your child about getting off the bus at the end of the day.**

### **When do I get off the bus?**

- All students are assigned to a specific bus stop location. Help your child become familiar with their bus stop location so they know exactly when to get off the bus. (i.e. is there a special landmark along the bus route that will help your child remember when they are getting close to their bus stop location?)

### **What if I am not sure I am at the right bus stop location?**

- Do not get off the bus, stay on the bus and tell the bus driver that “I am not sure this is my bus stop.” Always remember, **STAY ON THE BUS, KIDS ARE SAFE ON THE BUS.**

### **What if there is no one at the bus stop at the end of the day to meet me?**

- Do not get off the bus, stay on the bus and tell the bus driver “I don’t see anyone at the bus stop to meet me.” Always remember, **STAY ON THE BUS, KIDS ARE SAFE ON THE BUS.**

**If your child is unsure about anything while travelling on the bus, they should STAY ON THE BUS and tell the bus driver.**

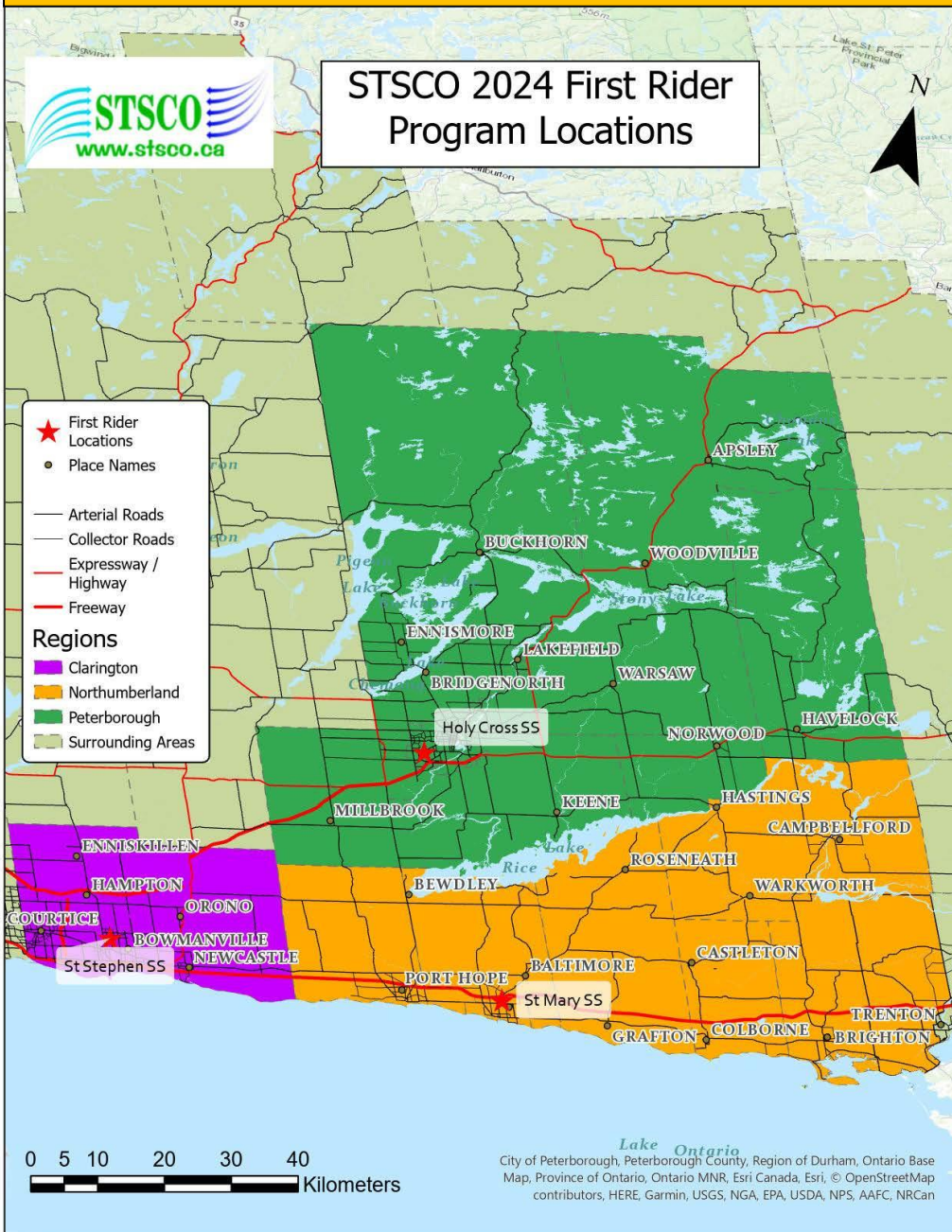
**Always remember, STAY ON THE BUS, KIDS ARE SAFE ON THE BUS**

# INCLEMENT WEATHER

STSCO works closely with our bus operators during the winter months to determine if it is safe to offer transportation on inclement weather days.

When it is necessary to cancel school bus transportation due to inclement weather conditions or forecasted inclement weather, STSCO will cancel transportation by region or municipality or individual routes. Transportation may be cancelled due to inclement weather in one of these regions, or more.

STSCO provides transportation to schools in 3 regions: Peterborough City/County, Northumberland County, and The Municipality of Clarington.



## Inclement Weather Cancellations

We know cancelling the buses is disruptive to families, but we are always putting the safety of our riders first.

Have a backup plan in case of inclement weather for alternative travel or childcare. Cancellations are for the whole day. Schools are usually open on inclement weather days, but should the need arise for school closures this would be communicated by your school board.

We suggest subscribing to alerts through the [Parent Portal](#) on our website. This way you will be emailed direct alerts regarding your route.

## Cancellation/Delays

If for some reason there is a cancellation or delay unrelated to weather, it will also be posted to our website under cancellation/delays, click on **View Alerts**.

