



November 6, 2017

**TO PARENTS AND GUARDIANS:**

**THE TRANSPORTATION OF STUDENTS DURING INCLEMENT WEATHER**

Winter is fast approaching and there may be times when the weather will disrupt school bus and special vehicle transportation. The Upper Canada District School Board is working cooperatively with Student Transportation of Eastern Ontario (STEO), bus contractors, and our coterminous Board to ensure that our approach to transportation during these times is coordinated and planned with the safety of students in mind.

STEO receives up-to-date information regarding local weather and road conditions from Pelmorex/The Weather Network. Decisions concerning the cancellation of school bus and special vehicle transportation are made cooperatively based upon this information. Unless otherwise announced, schools will remain **open** for students and staff, even if transportation is cancelled. If transportation services are cancelled in the morning, transportation services will also **not** operate in the afternoon.

Announcements regarding the cancellation of school bus and special vehicle transportation will be broadcast starting at 6:15 a.m. on your local radio station.

Alternatively, parents/guardians and students can verify if buses are cancelled by accessing:

1. STEO's website at [www.steo.ca](http://www.steo.ca) and visiting the "View Bus Delays & Cancellations" link.
2. UCDSB Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/UCDSB> and Twitter feed (@UCDSB).
3. Parents registered with "My Family Room" will receive bus cancellations through their preferred communication; email, text message, or telephone. Parents simply need to contact their school(s) to register for a UCDSB "My Family Room" account.

Please **do not call** the bus companies as the radio and website reflect the most accurate information.

Winter weather conditions can change suddenly. If roads become impassable during the school day or they are judged to be risky, students will be kept at school until either their parents/guardians can pick them up or it becomes safe to resume school bus transportation.

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### **Fog**

Occasionally, regardless of the time of year, fog patches occur. Fog greatly increases the risk that motorists may collide with a stopped vehicle or with a student in the process of crossing a road to board the bus. Consequently, bus drivers have been instructed not to stop in fog patches where visibility is significantly reduced. If students are not picked up due to foggy conditions, the bus driver will provide the names of those students to the school principal upon arrival at the school. **(We recommend that you do not permit your child to wait for the bus if visibility is significantly reduced by fog.)**

### **Blocked Roads**

Occasionally, a road may become blocked and, as a result, the bus may be unable to service sections of a route. If this occurs, upon arrival at the school, the bus driver will communicate to the school principal, the name of each student who was not picked up.

Please be reminded that you are responsible for your child's safety prior to boarding the school bus and following drop off. You are encouraged to ensure that your child has access to your home or to an approved alternative home where he/she can go in the event that the bus is unable to service your section of the route.

### **Mechanical Breakdown**

The possibility of a mechanical breakdown of a school bus or special vehicle always exists. This is a particular concern during the winter. Please ensure that your child is dressed warmly enough to cope with the potential loss of heat due to a mechanical breakdown on the bus. If mechanical failure occurs, alternative transportation will be arranged as soon as possible. If this occurs, the bus may be late picking up your child in the morning or returning him/her home in the afternoon.

### **Parental Responsibility**

STEO strives to ensure the safe transportation of children to and from school. While it is each parent/guardian's responsibility to ensure the safety of their child(ren) up to boarding of the school bus, **you always have the right to keep your child(ren) at home if you feel it is too risky to have him/her transported by bus.**

Your support and cooperation are appreciated as we approach another winter.

Sincerely,

Stephen Sliwa  
Director of Education  
Upper Canada District School Board