

## **Frequently Asked Questions**

### **1. How do I find out about bussing arrangements for my children, if I have just moved to the area?**

At the time you register your child at the school, you will be given a Student Transportation Request Form to complete. This form can also be downloaded from our website. The form will be signed by a school official, where required, and then forwarded to RCJTC for completion. The form, once completed by RCJTC, will be returned to you with the details and if eligible for transportation, the bus number, stop location, pickup and drop off times. Transportation will not be provided until approval has been given from RCJTC, therefore alternate arrangements may have to be made in the interim.

### **What would the procedure be if my children already attend a school in the area and we are moving locations?**

You can call our office and if the new location is within the school zone, we can make the changes usually within two business days.

### **2. How do I find out if my child's bus is cancelled or delayed because of weather conditions?**

The [www.rcjtc.on.ca](http://www.rcjtc.on.ca) website has been chosen by the RCJTC to be the designated website to broadcast interruptions to transportation services and emergency school closures from all areas in the county of Renfrew. Media outlets obtain this information from the RCJTC website.

### **3. What should I do if my child does not get off the bus at home in the afternoon?**

If your child does not get off the bus at their designated stop in the afternoon, you should call the school to ascertain whether or not your child got on the bus at the school or if your child is still at the school. Next you should call the transportation provider and the dispatch will check with the driver to see if your child was on the bus or if the student is still on the bus. As well, you could call the RCJTC. It is imperative that at all times, you ensure that the school and the RCJTC have updated home, sitter and emergency contact information.

**4. What is the distance that a student is expected to walk to school or to a bus stop and do all JK students receive bus stops at their door?**

Where roads are municipally maintained, passable and where cul-de-sacs (of adequate size to safely accommodate a vehicle turnaround) are accessible, transportation may be provided for pupils residing more than:

	<u>To/From School</u>	<u>To/From Stop</u>
Jr. Kindergarten and Sr. Kindergarten	0.5 km (0.3 mile)	0.5 km (0.3 mile)
Grade 1 to 6	1.6 km (1 mile)	1.6 km (1 mile)
Grade 7 to 12 (rural)	1.6 km (1 mile)	1.6 km (1 mile)
Grade 7 to 12 (urban/developed)*	2.5 km (1.55 mile)	2.5 km (1.55 mile)

\*usually posted 60 km/hour or less

- As set out by the RCJTC non-transportable zones.
- Identified safety hazards, as set out by the RCJTC, may reduce the distance
- All pick up and drop off stops will be established by the RCJTC.

**5. Does the RCJTC office close at the end of June like a school?**

The RCJTC office is open year round. The summer months are ideal planning months as regular schools are closed. We encourage parents to contact us during the summer months rather than the very busy last weeks of August or first few weeks of school.

**6. If I have a safety concern about my child’s bus driver, who should I contact?**

If you have a concern regarding student behavior on the bus, you should contact the school. The bus is considered an extension of the classroom and the Principal of the school is responsible for the student behavior issues.

If you have a concern regarding other incidents on the bus, including the bus driver, you should contact the transportation provider. Parents should at all times know the bus number and transportation provider of their child(ren)s’ bus.

**7. I am unhappy with my stop location and want it changed. How do I change the stop location? Can the bus driver change a stop location or add a new stop to the bus route? Who is responsible for my child on the way to and from the bus stop?**

The parent/guardian is responsible for the safety and conduct of the child(ren) on the way to and from the bus stop and while they are waiting at the bus stop, both in the morning and the afternoon. Concerns can be registered with RCJTC staff, but it is indeed a parental responsibility to get children to the stops.

Any request for a change to a stop location or for the addition of a bus stop must be submitted in writing to RCJTC. After reviewing the request, the RCJTC will decide whether the request will be approved or denied, and notification will be given to the person making the request. All stops must be authorized by RCJTC so that we can maintain accurate bus route information.

**8. If my spouse and I are separated, is it possible for my child to ride from both my house and then my ex-spouse's house on different days?**

RCJTC does accommodate joint custody and/or sitter situations. If both parents and/or sitter live within the school's attendance boundary, you may be eligible for dual transportation. You would need to complete Section B and/or C on the Student Transportation Request Form. The arrangement would need to be consistent and long term. (i.e. week about Monday to Friday for joint custody) It is also possible, for example, to have a child picked up at a sitter location and dropped off at the home location and similarly picked up at the home location and dropped off at the sitter location. Each request is unique and will be evaluated individually.

**9. If my child has lost his/her bus riding privileges to and from school, may he/she catch another bus at a different bus stop?**

No. When a student loses their bus riding privileges, they are not allowed to ride on any bus. They are also not allowed to ride buses for field trips and to sporting events. Students are expected to attend school during the loss of riding privileges and parents/guardians are responsible for their transportation to and from school.

## **10. Why are there no seat belts on school buses?**

Very few injuries happen in school buses. Instead of requiring seat belts, school buses are designed and constructed differently from passenger cars. School Buses protect passengers through "compartmentalization", a design that includes:

- Seats with high backs.
- Seats filled with impact absorbing material.
- Seats placed closed together to form compartments.
- Strong seat anchorages.

Studies have shown that adding seat belts to the current seating configuration of a school bus can increase the chance of head and neck injuries. For a seat belt to be effective, it must be worn correctly, snug and on the upper thighs. Because school vehicles carry passengers from the very young to high school students, if seat belts were used, they would need to be readjusted and their use monitored. A seat belt not worn correctly may cause serious injuries.

The premise of the design called compartmentalization, backed by vast amounts of continuing research, is that if a collision were to occur, these special compartments would absorb the impact dispersing it throughout the entire body as opposed to solely the head and neck.

If students are not seated forward and properly in the seat, injury could occur upon accident or sudden braking. We ask that all students sit properly, facing forward while on the school bus.

## **11. My child has a long bus ride. Why can't he/she have a snack or a drink on the ride home from school?**

Eating and drinking are not allowed on the bus for safety reasons. A child could choke on a piece of food and with the high seat backs and noise on the bus, the driver may not be aware of the situation until it is too late. Leftover food and drink not only causes a mess, but can attract bees and wasps. Some students have a very severe reaction to bee stings and to some foods such as peanut butter. It is less risk for everyone when the no eating and drinking rule is adhered to.

**12. Would it be alright if my child took his/her pet rabbit to school on the bus?**

No. Unfortunately pets are not allowed on the school bus. The main reason is a liability issue if someone is bitten or scratched by the animal. Secondly, some children are allergic to certain types of animals. Finally, if the pet escapes from its' cage or container, it would create a distraction for the driver causing a major safety concern. Parents/guardians must make alternate arrangements for pets to be transported to and from school.

**What are rules about equipment on the bus?**

Any equipment/items must be held on the student's lap, items cannot be left on the floor or in the aisle. When items are placed on the floor, they can block the aisle, and there is the risk of those items sliding. Items held on the lap should not be too large that they prevent students from sitting at seat capacity, Gr JK – 6 at 3 students /seat and Gr 7 – 12 at 2 students/seat. There is also the provision that items should be encased or protected i.e. to prevent round objects from rolling, to prevent sharp objects from cutting, to prevent objects from breaking, etc.