

Late Bus Webpage – NEW!

There's a new feature on the Student Transportation website that should be very helpful to all yellow bus riders. By making this website your homepage, or a favourite, you will have information on issues that may affect your yellow bus route.

Starting January 5, 2009, the new late bus reporting webpage will show you any routes which have been reported as being late. The displayed information is coming directly from the bus company and is updated constantly throughout each school day. The information is provided for regular, special curb service and noon hour yellow bus routes. The information is so current that it will automatically refresh every five minutes, so keep checking for the latest details. In the event that there are system-wide cancellations or specific route cancellations, this information will also be available on the webpage.

Visit the Student Transportation website at <http://transportation.epsb.net>.

Parents' Guide to Yellow Bus Service

In order to keep all stakeholders informed, Student Transportation has developed an information brochure to provide an overview of what parents, students and schools need to know about busing.

The brochure includes information on topics such as:

- bus passes
- route design and changes that are made to existing routes
- safety and stop locations
- regular yellow, kindergarten and special education needs busing.

The *Parents' Guide to Yellow Bus Service* is available at <http://transportation.epsb.net> under *Publications*.

School Bus Safety

42,000 students in Edmonton and Calgary receive provincially funded transportation. According to

Transport Canada, buses are considered to be one of the safest modes of transportation compared with other methods of transport. Although Alberta currently has high standards for school bus safety, the province has provided 10 recommendations that continue to improve on safety.

The recommendations, which will be most relevant within the City of Edmonton, include:

- Retrofitting buses with reflective tape. The use of reflective tape on the side and rear is required on school buses manufactured on or after March 31, 1998. All school buses prior to that manufacture date would be required to install the reflective tape.
- Make the 'S' endorsement mandatory within one year of being licensed to drive a bus. The 'S' endorsement is a 16 hour training course that evaluates drivers based on written tests, a pre-trip bus inspection and an on-road driver assessment.
- Develop consistent hiring criteria for drivers. Due to the acute driver shortage, Alberta Transportation is recommending the provision of funding to the industry marketing initiative as well as standardizing hiring criteria to recruit qualified and skilled drivers.
- Invest in annual training. This would allow carriers to continually improve driver skills, especially during the winter months when there is a higher frequency of collisions. Alberta Transportation is currently developing a Commercial Driver Profile program that will include Class 2 drivers.
- Develop a standardized route risk assessment checklist. This checklist would be designed to ensure that all areas of the Province are applying best practices concerning the safety of routes.
- Develop a comprehensive communication plan. This plan would be prepared by Alberta Transportation and Alberta Education to increase awareness about school bus safety and to help ensure all drivers are aware of existing laws related to sharing the road with school buses.

Source: Alberta Government – A Report on School Bus Safety in Alberta

Safety Tip

Ensure that alternate arrangements are in place for your child in the event that the bus is missed, is late or does not arrive.

Learn more about bus safety at <http://transportation.epsb.net>. Choose *Safety* under *Quick Links*.

Respect your Neighbourhood

When waiting at a designated stop, students should:

- wait in an orderly fashion, well back from the side of the road;
- respect private property and keep noises to minimum at the bus stop;
- don't litter;
- behave responsibly at the bus stop, while on the bus and while getting on or off the bus; and
- treat fellow riders with respect and courtesy.

Busing and Winter Conditions

Make sure that your child is properly dressed for the weather conditions. Watch out for loose clothing, lengthy scarves and drawstrings – potentially hazardous items for bus travel. Our Bad Weather brochure, which provides many important details about bad weather safety, is available on our website at <http://transportation.epsb.net> under *Publications*.

Federal Tax Credit for Transit Passes

Parents who have purchased ETS passes for their children can claim a non-refundable tax credit on their income tax returns. The credit applies only to the purchase of public transit passes and does not apply to the purchase of yellow bus passes. The credit took effect July 1, 2006.

Parents will require a receipt to substantiate the amount that was paid. Schools will issue receipts twice a year – the first for September through December and the second for January through June. It is also recommended that parents retain the transit passes as further backup.

Please check the Canada Revenue Agency website at <http://www.cra.gc.ca> for more information.

Need More Information?

Visit the Student Transportation website at <http://transportation.epsb.net> for information about both ETS and yellow bus service within the District. Get comprehensive maps of designated receiving schools, as well as maps of transportation areas for Alternative Program sites. Use the **Find a School Tool** to find your designated receiving school.

Coming soon to SchoolZone!

The next issue of Student Transportation News will be made available to you through SchoolZone. Be sure to check us out online at <https://schoolzone.epsb.ca>.

Student Transportation supports schools in their instructional focus by ensuring that our students are transported in a safe and timely manner and arrive ready to learn.

