

Q&A from Webinar August 31 2022

GENERAL

Q: Can you please share the links that were in the 'chat' as well as the Walking Readiness checklist from Peel Police?

A: Absolutely! The **Walking Skills Checklist** can be found on Page 4 and 5 of this guide:
<https://www.walkandrollpeel.ca/projects/pdf/walk-roll-to-school-guide-for-parents.pdf>

Other helpful links include:

- Walk and Roll Peel: <https://walkandrollpeel.ca/>
- Region of Peel Environmental Education: <https://peelregion.ca/environmental-education/>
- Student Transportation of Peel Region: <https://www.stopr.ca>
- Peel Children's Safety Village: <https://www.peelpolice.ca/en/safety-tips/childrens-safety-village.aspx>
- Toronto and Region Conservation Area: <https://trca.ca/peel-active-transportation/>
- City of Mississauga School Walking Routes: <https://mississauga.ca/schoolroutes>

Still have questions?

Contact Student Transportation of Peel Region (STOPR) at 905-890-6000 or 1-800-668-1140 for bussing-related questions. Contact teachgreeninpeel@peelregion.ca for all other questions related to walking and rolling to school.

SCHOOL RULES

Q: What is the check in and check out time at school?

A: School bell times are specific to your school. You may be able to find this information on the school website; if not, please contact your child's school to find this information.

Q: Is there a day care at my child's school? If there is one how do I apply for it?

A: Some but not all schools have a daycare centre on-site. Please contact your child's school to inquire whether there is a daycare centre on site, and if so, how to apply.

Q: My child is a new kindergarten student, I did not get any chance to see the school. Can I accompany my child to their class on the first day?

A: Rules for visiting your child's class are specific to your school. Please contact your child's school to find this information.

Q: I was hoping to get some communication regarding my child's class teacher, and all the things a new kindergarten student and parents must know. Can I get some info on the above?

A: Classroom teacher assignments and instructions for the first day will be shared by your school. If you have not already received this information, please contact your child's school to find this information.

CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

Q: Is it advised for JK age children with severe development delays to walk to school?

A: This will depend on your child and their abilities. If you have specific health-related concerns about your child's ability to walk to school, it is advised that you speak with your child's doctor first.

Generally speaking, walking is a healthy activity and children can benefit greatly from the opportunity to walk to or from school on a regular basis. Children in JK may not be developmentally ready to walk to school on their own, and it is recommended that young children be accompanied by an adult or a responsible older child until they are ready. If you're unsure of your child's readiness to walk to school on their own, you can use the **Walking Skills Checklist** found on Page 4 and 5 of this guide to help with your decision: <https://www.walkandrollpeel.ca/projects/pdf/walk-roll-to-school-guide-for-parents.pdf>

Q: What are the options for young children (JK) with special needs and we live a 40 min walk from school?

A: As a first step, check to see whether your child is eligible for transportation by school bus by visiting <https://businfo.stopr.ca/TransportationEligibility>. If your child is not eligible for transportation by school bus and you would like to travel by an active mode with your child, you may consider driving partway and walking the last 5 to 10 minutes to school, together.

SCHOOL BOUNDARIES

Q: How many kilometres are the kids allowed to live from their home school?

A: Every school has its own boundary and there are no restrictions for how large a boundary can be. Once you live a certain distance from your home school, you may become eligible for transportation by school bus. To see your school boundaries, and to check whether you are eligible for transportation by school bus, visit <https://www.stopr.ca>.

STRANGER SAFETY

Q: Can you share tips on how to teach a child about 'stranger danger' as they become older and potentially going to walk to school on own? Or even now (age 4 child).

A: In 2019, TRCA did a webinar and Peel Children's Safety Village did a segment to "stranger danger" and personal safety. This segment of that webinar can be viewed here:

<https://youtu.be/Qy4O6YcFRd0?t=1413>

DISTANCE

Q: If my child is not eligible to go on the bus but we live 20 minutes walking, what options do we have? He is still 7 years old and walking alone so far is not an option for us right now.

A: If your child is not ready to walk this distance on their own, but you would still like the opportunity for them to travel by an active mode to school, you have a few options.

You might see if there are any other families in your child's school who live nearby and are interested in walking together; you might be able to take turns being in charge of pick up and drop off.

If this is not an option, or you prefer to be the one to accompany your child to school, you could try to walk or roll one day a week as a starting point. Pick a day and plan your morning routine to fit in the walk to school; it might be easier and more enjoyable than you expect.

You can also try driving partway and walking the last 5 minutes to school- either walk together, or drop your child off to walk the final 5 minutes on their own.

If you try and find you simply can't walk in the mornings, try doing it in the afternoon when there are less time pressures, even if this means parking 5 or 10 minutes away from the school, and walk back to the car together.

TRAVELING INDEPENDENTLY

Q: How old does a child need to be before they can travel on their own to school?

A: There is no specific age at which a child can travel independently; it depends on the developmental readiness of your own child, the complexity and difficulty of the route they must travel, and on your comfort level as a parent. Many schools also have rules about young children needing to be met by a parent or caregiver at pick-up.

The **Walking Skills Checklist** is a useful tool to help assess your child's readiness to travel on their own, and can be found on Page 4 and 5 of this guide: <https://www.walkandrollpeel.ca/projects/pdf/walk-roll-to-school-guide-for-parents.pdf>

WINTER TRAVEL

Q: In the winter; when there are school buses cancellations- these are due to unsafe driving conditions. Would there be something similar for walking to school conditions when unsafe due to weather or is it just up to your own discretion?

A: While school bus cancellations happen from time to time due to potentially unsafe driving conditions in winter, full school closures due to winter weather are very rare in Peel Region. When in doubt, you can check your school website and/or contact your child's school.

There are some guidelines to help determine whether or not winter weather is safe for walking to school; for example, Extreme Cold Weather Alerts issued by Environment Canada include recommendations for how long you can safely be outside before risk of frostbite. Otherwise, safe winter walking includes some additional considerations to help you make the best judgment call. Think about:

- Is the route we need to travel cleared of ice and snow? If not, take extra precautions to avoid slips and falls, or choose a different route that is cleared.
- Will there be large snow banks that block clear views for pedestrians and drivers? If so, make sure to exercise extra caution when crossing the street, to make sure that approaching drivers can see you and will have enough time to stop, if needed.
- Do we have the appropriate clothing to stay warm and dry? Wet or exposed skin can lead to risk of frostbite and hypothermia in very cold weather, or in less extreme cold, to simply being uncomfortable. There are many places to buy new and used winter clothing, or even to get clothing for free from other families whose children have outgrown their winter clothes. Ask around in your community for ideas of the best places to get winter clothing.

SCHOOL BUS

Q: Do I need to register for the bus for my child who is attending school for the first time? What about my child who is going to returning to the same school as last year?

A: You do not need to register or apply for your child to receive transportation by school bus. To find the school bus transportation information for your child, including whether they are eligible to ride the school bus, please visit the [Parent/Student Portal](#) to set up an account for your child. You will need your Ontario Education Number (OEN). You can also sign up to receive automatic notifications of delays or cancellations once your account has been created.

It is important to note that school bus eligibility changes according to grade of the child, and bus routes may change as well; so it is good to check before the start of each school year to ensure your child is still eligible.

Q: When will I know which bus to board and what time the bus will be arriving at my location?

A: Transportation information, including whether your child is eligible to travel by school bus, is available via the [Parent/Student Portal](#), including:

- Bus Stop Location and Time
- Route/Run numbers
- Bus Operator name and phone number
- Weather Zone

All users must create an account on the Parent/Student Portal in order to access Transportation information for the upcoming school year.

Q: Are face masks required on the bus?

A: Students and bus drivers are no longer required to wear Personal Protective Equipment (face mask, etc) while travelling on a school bus/vehicle. Students and bus drivers may continue to wear PPE on a voluntary basis.

School buses/vehicles will continue to be cleaned on a regular basis as they were prior to the pandemic and bus drivers will continue to perform a disinfecting wipe down of high touch areas (handrails) between runs. Physical distancing and assigned seating plans are no longer required onboard school buses.

Please continue to follow us on Twitter @STOPRinfo and monitor our website at www.stopr.ca for the latest information and updates on COVID-19 transportation requirements.

Q: Can you have an AM stop and PM stop at a different location? How do we request this?

A: Transportation may be provided to more than one location. Should an alternate address, within the attendance area, be downloaded for a student via the [Parent/Student Portal](#), transportation would be provided subject to the following criteria:

- Primary address must be within the same attendance area
- Alternate address meets the eligibility criteria for that grade level
- That the address is consistent 5 days a week

Therefore, transportation may be provided from one address in the morning and to an alternate address in the afternoon as long as the above criteria is met.

Q: Can an older child pick a younger one from the bus stop when dropped from the school bus?

A: Parents/guardians are ultimately responsible for the safety of their children to and from the bus stop location and while they are waiting at the bus stop. Parents/guardians may also designate a caregiver or older responsible sibling (babysitter age) to walk with their child.

Q: How far do you have to live to be eligible for the school bus? Is there an age cut-off for being able to take the school bus?

Students are eligible for school busing if their primary address is within their school's attendance boundary and is more than the following distance to school:

- JK-Grade 1: 1.0 km
- Grade 2 to 4: 1.6 km
- Grade 5 to 8: 2.0 km
- Grade 9 to 12: 3.8 km

See [Procedure STOPR002](#) for further details.

For all other questions related to school bussing, please contact STOPR directly Monday through Friday from 8:00am to 4:30pm at 905-890-6000 or 1-800-668-1140.