

# On the Bus

## Student Transportation

### Services of Thunder Bay

#### NEWSLETTER

WINTER EDITION



### INCLEMENT WEATHER CANCELLATIONS

As winter weather approaches, we remind all students and parents to be prepared to adjust to school bus delays and cancellations due to poor weather and/or road conditions. Not only is it important to dress warmly while waiting for the bus, parents and their children must have a plan in place for what to do if the bus doesn't arrive or what will happen if busing is cancelled.

One of the most challenging decisions for Student Transportation Services of Thunder Bay (STSTB) is whether to cancel busing during inclement weather. The process starts at 5:00 a.m. with the STSTB Consortium Manager receiving reports on weather and road conditions from our contracted bus companies who compile information from experienced, professional school bus drivers residing throughout the district. Additional information is obtained from Environment Canada, the Ministry of Transportation and municipal road crews. After reviewing all the data and further consulting our school bus operators and area roads maintenance supervisors, the Consortium Manager then decides whether to recommend cancelling student transportation for the day. The decision to cancel is then confirmed with the Directors of Education, or their designates, of each school board via conference call by 6:25 a.m. Any decision to close schools remains solely with each school board's Director or designate.

School transportation cancellations and school closures due to inclement weather will be communicated in multiple formats:

- Bus Status mobile device app
- STSTB and Board websites
- STSTB and Board social media
- Local broadcast radio
- STSTB Weather Closure Line

With such a large geographic area, it is not unusual for weather to be worse in some parts of our service area than in others. However, to limit confusion, bus cancellations will only fall under one of two scenarios, either Rural-Only or System-Wide (rural and city).

As many rural high school routes cross multiple elementary school catchment zones and transfers occur at rural elementary schools it would be confusing to narrow Rural-Only cancellations down to only specific areas. Therefore, a rural closure affects all rural areas. STSTB understands that parents may get frustrated if roads in their immediate area look fine, however, travel elsewhere in the district that the bus their child rides on may be unsafe.

Student Transportation Services of Thunder Bay appreciates that cancelling buses in inclement weather can have a significant effect on family routines; however, student safety is our number one priority, so there are times we simply must cancel busing in the interest of keeping everyone safe. Once again, we remind all families to have an alternate plan in place should school transportation and/or schools be cancelled.

(807) 625-1661



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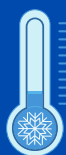


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Bus Status app



stst.tb.ca



### EXTREME COLD TEMPERATURES

Transportation may be cancelled if the ambient temperature reaches -34°C or colder as reported at 6:00 a.m. at the Thunder Bay Airport on the Environment Canada website.

# SCHOOL BUS

## Bus Delay & Cancellation info sent directly to your mobile device!

The Bus Status app displays bus service information from our contracted school bus operators for school routes administered by Student Transportation Services of Thunder Bay. The app uses real-time push notification alerts to keep parents/guardians, students, and other stakeholders in the Thunder Bay area updated. Users can subscribe to receive alerts for inclement weather cancellations and school bus delays/cancellations.




**Step 1: Download the Bus Status 4 App**  
The Bus Status 4 app is available for download from the Google Play store and the Apple App Store



**Step 2: Select District**  
Select 'Student Transportation Services of Thunder Bay' from the district list the first time they open the new app. From that moment on the app will default to routes administered by STSTB.

**Step 3: Subscribe to Weather Cancellations**  
To receive general alerts in the event of either Rural Only or All bus cancellations due to inclement weather, tap and highlight the star to the right of either or both

\*RURAL ROUTES WEATHER CANCELLATIONS\*  
and \*ALL ROUTES WEATHER CANCELLATIONS\*.

**Step 4: Subscribe to your bus route(s)**   
Tap "All Buses" at the bottom of the app screen to display the list of all bus routes, both AM and PM, servicing multiple schools.

Tap "Filter by School" above the start of the list of bus routes to narrow the list to only bus routes servicing your school.

Subscribe to bus delay and cancellation notifications by tapping and highlighting the star to the right of your morning and afternoon bus route(s). This will allow you to receive alerts on your mobile device in the event of a delay or cancellation.

### BE PREPARED

Bus students and their parents/guardians are reminded that extra caution should be taken during the winter months. Please take a moment and review this important information with your children:

- Children should be dressed appropriately for the colder weather. Unexpected mechanical problems with the bus may occur more frequently at this time of year. Children must be prepared for this as buses cool off very quickly.
- Cold or stormy days can result in buses being unavoidably delayed. We encourage parents to use extra caution with children on those days. Children should be accompanied to the bus stop or have very clear instructions on what to do if the bus does not arrive. Never leave children at the stop with no backup arrangements for an emergency.
- Use the Bus Status 4 app to receive push notifications or monitor Reported Delays on our website. Know your bus route number, name, and telephone number of the school bus company to call for updates should the bus be significantly delayed
- A build-up of ice and snow can create a safety hazard for children waiting at the bus stop. Ensure that your child understands the importance of standing back from the curb as the bus approaches the bus stop.
- Children will find it easier to walk through the ice and snow when their schoolbooks and lunches are carried in a backpack. It is also much safer for them to board the bus with their hands free to use the bus handrail.

Ultimately, it is a parent/guardian decision to have their child(ren) ride the bus if transportation is running.

Also, keep in mind that buses may not be able to service all areas during adverse conditions and to always have a backup plan should the bus not arrive at your stop.