

On the Bus

Student Transportation

Services of Thunder Bay

NEWSLETTER

WINTER
EDITION



WINTER WEATHER AND SCHOOL TRANSPORTATION: WHAT FAMILIES NEED TO KNOW

As winter approaches, Student Transportation Services of Thunder Bay (STSTB) reminds families to be prepared for possible school bus delays or cancellations due to poor weather or road conditions. Students should dress warmly while waiting for the bus, and families should have a backup plan in case the bus doesn't arrive or transportation is cancelled.

Understanding Cancellation Zones

Due to the size of our service area, weather conditions can vary widely. To reduce confusion, cancellations fall into two categories:

- Rural-Only: All rural routes are cancelled.
- System-Wide: Both rural and city routes are cancelled.

How Cancellation Decisions Are Made

Deciding to cancel busing is one of STSTB's most difficult tasks. The process begins at 5:00 a.m. when the Consortium Manager receives weather and road condition reports from contracted bus companies. These reports are based on input from experienced local drivers, Environment Canada, the Ministry of Transportation, and municipal road crews.

Because rural high school routes often cross multiple zones and involve transfers at elementary schools, partial rural cancellations are not feasible. We understand this may be frustrating if roads near your home seem safe, but conditions elsewhere on the route may not be.

Safety First

We recognize that transportation cancellations can disrupt family routines. However, student safety is our top priority. We encourage all families to have an alternate plan in place should transportation or schools be cancelled.

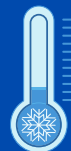
After reviewing all data and consulting with bus operators and road maintenance supervisors, the Consortium Manager makes a recommendation. By 6:25 a.m., the decision is confirmed with school board Directors of Education (or their designates) via conference call. Please note: only school boards can decide to close schools.

Thank you for your understanding and cooperation.

How You'll Be Informed

Transportation cancellations and school closures are communicated through:

- Bus Status mobile app
- STSTB and school board websites
- STSTB and board social media channels
- Local radio stations
- STSTB Weather Closure Line



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.

(807) 625-1661



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Bus Status app



ststb.ca



SCHOOL BUS

Stay Informed with the Bus Status 4 App

The **Bus Status 4** app provides real-time updates from our contracted school bus operators for routes managed by Student Transportation Services of Thunder Bay (STSTB). Parents, guardians, students, and staff can receive instant notifications about delays and cancellations, including those due to inclement weather.

How to Set Up the App

Step 1: Download the App

Get Bus Status 4 from the Google Play Store or Apple App Store



Step 2: Select Your District

When you first open the app, choose **Student Transportation Services of Thunder Bay** from the district list. The app will then default to STSTB routes.



Step 3: Subscribe to Weather Alerts

To receive notifications for weather-related zone cancellations:



- Tap the star next to **RURAL ROUTES WEATHER CANCELLATIONS** and/or **ALL ROUTES WEATHER CANCELLATIONS**.

Step 4: Subscribe to Your Bus Route(s)



- Tap **All Buses** at the bottom of the screen to view all AM and PM routes.
- Use **Filter by School** to narrow the list to your school's routes.
- Tap the star next to your child's morning and afternoon bus routes to receive alerts for delays or cancellations.

Your Choice, Your Plan.

While school bus service may be running, the final decision to send your child(ren) on the bus rests with you, the parent or guardian. Please keep in mind that during severe weather, buses may not be able to reach all areas. Always have a backup plan in place in case the bus cannot make it to your stop.

BE PREPARED: Winter Safety for Bus Riders

As winter sets in, students and their parents/guardians are reminded to take extra precautions. Please review the following tips with your children:

- **Dress for the Weather:** Cold temperatures and increased risk of mechanical issues mean buses may cool quickly. Children should wear warm clothing in case of delays.
- **Plan for Delays:** Stormy weather can cause unavoidable delays. Children should be accompanied to the bus stop or have clear instructions if the bus doesn't arrive. Never leave children unattended without a backup plan.
- **Stay Informed:** Use the **Bus Status 4** app for push notifications or check **Reported Delays** on our website. Know your bus route number and the contact information for your bus company.
- **Bus Stop Safety:** Snow and ice buildup can be hazardous. Teach children to stand back from the curb as the bus approaches.
- **Hands-Free Boarding:** Carrying school items in a backpack makes walking easier and allows children to safely use the handrail when boarding.

