On the Bus

Student Transportation Services of Thunder Bay

NEWSLETTER | WINTER 2026-2027 EDITION

KEEPING FAMILIES INFORMED. KEEPING STUDENTS SAFE.



Winter Weather and School Transportation

What Families Need to Know This Winter

Winter in Northwestern Ontario can bring rapidly changing weather conditions. Snow, ice, poor visibility, high winds, and extreme cold can all affect student transportation. At STSTB, every transportation decision is made with one priority in mind: student safety.

Student Safety Comes First!

WINTER WEATHER QUICK FACTS

REAL-TIME ALERTS

Follow your route on the Chipmunk app for instant updates.

EXTREME COLD POLICY

Transportation may be cancelled at -34°C or colder (as reported at the Thunder Bay Airport at 6:00 a.m.)

WEATHER CANCELLATIONS

Cancellations may affect rural routes only or all routes across the system

HAVE A BACKUP PLAN

Always have an alternate plan in place in case transportation or schools are cancelled.

ststb.ca

Weather Closures 807 625-1661

@ststhunderbay

chipmunk parent app

busplanner delays app

How Transportation Cancellations Are Decided

Careful Decisions for Safer Journeys

Deciding to cancel busing is one of STSTB's most difficult tasks. The process begins long before students leave for school.

5:00 a.m.

Weather and Road Reports Received

Reports are gathered from our contracted bus companies, experienced bus drivers positioned throughout our service area, Environment Canada and other meteorological websites, the Ministry of Transportation, and local roads departments.

Early Morning Review

STSTB Manager reviews all data and consults with bus companies and road maintenance supervisors to asses conditions throughout the region.

Recommendation and Decision

A recommendation is presented to school board Chief Executive Officers (or their designates) via conference call.

6:30 a.m.

Families Are Informed

Transportation cancellations and school closures are communicated through the Chipmunk app, BusPlanner Delays app, STSTB website, social media channels and Weather Closure Line, and local radio stations.

Important to Know:

- **Buses cancelled in the morning due to inclement weather are also cancelled in the afternoon.**
- **STSTB determines transportation service levels. Only school boards can decide to close schools.**

Understanding Cancellation Zones

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

Rural Routes Cancelled

- All rural routes and rural portions of urban routes are cancelled.
- Urban (city) routes may continue to operate.
- This is the most common weather action.

All Routes Cancelled

- Both rural and urban (city) routes are ccancelled.
- Implemented during severe weather conditions affecting the city of Thunder Bay.

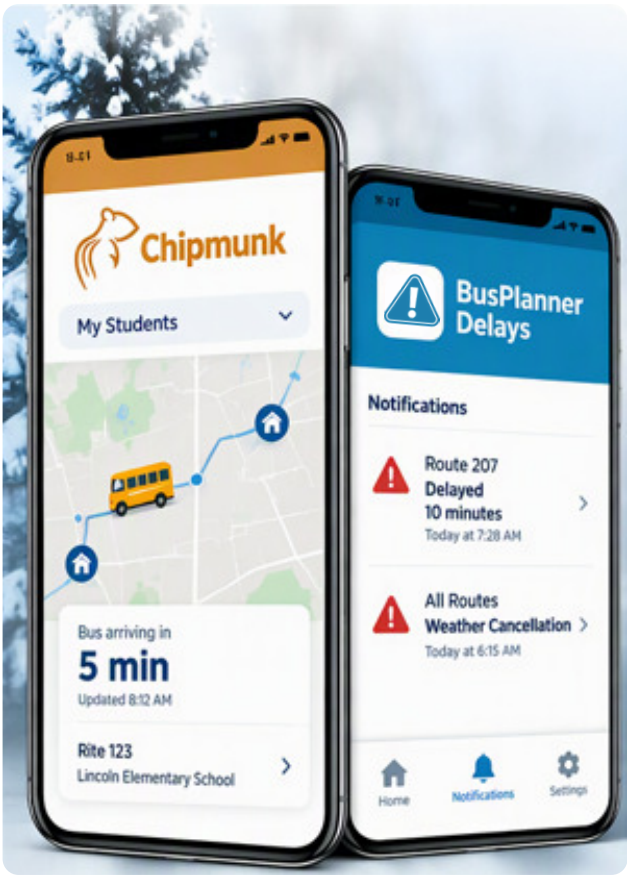
Why Not Cancel Only Part of the Rural System?

Many rural routes travel through multiple rural areas and rely on transfers at rural elementary schools. Because these routes are interconnected, partial rural cancellations are not operationally feasible.

Conditions may be safe in one area but unsafe elsewhere on the same route. Decisions are based on the safety of the entire transportation network, not individual neighbourhoods

Stay Connected with Our Apps

The Fastest Way to Receive Transportation Updates



Chipmunk

For Parents, Guardians & Students

Track your child's school bus in real time using GPS technology integrated with STSTB transportation information

Why Use Chipmunk?

- Real-time bus tracking
- Estimated arrival times
- Delay and cancellation alerts
- Student-specific information
- Multiple students on one account

Get Started in 4 Easy Steps

1. Download Chipmunk
2. Select Student Transportation Services of Thunder Bay
3. Sign in using your Parent Portal account credentials
4. Track your student's bus and receive notifications

Download on the App Store | GET IT ON Google Play

BusPlanner Delays

For Schools, Childcare & Community Partners

Receive instant notifications when delays and cancellations are posted for routes you select.

Why Use BusPlanner Delays?

- Route-specific notifications
- School-specific notifications
- Delay & Cancellation alerts
- Push notifications delivered instantly

Get Started in 4 Easy Steps

1. Download BusPlanner Delays
2. Select Student Transportation Services of Thunder Bay
3. Choose your school(s)
4. Choose your route(s)

Download on the App Store | GET IT ON Google Play

Which App Should I use?

If you want to...	Chipmunk	BusPlanner Delays
Track your child's bus in real time	✓	
View estimated arrival times	✓	
Receive student-specific notifications	✓	
Get delay and cancellation notifications	✓	✓
View detailed student busing information	✓	

Winter Safety for Bus Riders

Small Steps Make a Big Difference

Dress for the Weather

- Wear a warm coat, hat,mittens or gloves, snow pants, and winter boots.
- Buses may cool quickly in extreme temperatures.
- Proper clothing helps keep students safe and comfortable.

Plan for Delays

- Stormy weather can cause unavoidable delays.
- Ensure your child knows what to do if the bus doesn't arrive.
- Never leave children unattended without a backup plan.

Stay Informed

- Use the Chipmunk or BusPlanner Delays app for push notifications or check **Reported Delays and Cancellations** on our website.
- Know your bus route number and keep your bus company's contact information handy.

Bus Stop Safety

- Snow and ice buildup can be hazardous.
- Teach children to stand back from the curb as the bus approaches.
- Wait for the bus to stop completely and follow the driver's instructions.

Hands-Free Boarding

- Use a backpack to carry school items.
- Keeping hands free makes it easier to walk and allows children to safely use the handrail when boarding.

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.

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. During severe weather, buses may not be able to reach all areas. Always have a backup plan in place.

Student Transportation Services of Thunder Bay

Conseil scolaire du Grand Nord | Conseil scolaire de district catholique des Aurores boréales | Lakehead Public Schools | Thunder Bay Catholic District School Board

General Inquires 807 625-1660

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