

Personalized Transportation

RATIONALE:

Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board is committed to ensuring a safe, accepting, and inclusively designed learning environment which supports student participation. This learning environment extends to all forms of transportation and empowers all students to reach their full potential by acquiring the skills for life to independently travel to and from school safely. This commitment also recognizes that personalized transportation is an essential requirement for a small number of students to access specific or general learning opportunities. Personalized transportation is always based on the least restrictive method and will change as students learn and mature or as changes in placement or enrolment in a specific program or home location occur.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES:

Personalized Transportation Services for Eligible Students:

- are administered in a manner which respects the dignity of the student
- are provided in a safe, timely, effective and efficient manner.
- are based on the least restrictive method
- are reviewed throughout each school year to determine necessity
- are a shared responsibility between the Principal and the parent/guardian and the student. Traveling to and from school safely and independently is a 'skills for life' that requires programming by the school with support from the parent. The student is responsible to their school Principal for their conduct on the bus in accordance with all applicable Board policies and procedures, as school buses are an extension of the school

TERMINOLOGY:

Personalized Transportation: a method of transportation that is essential for a student to attend school because of one of the following:

1. As an *accommodation* because of an Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), a Physical or Neurodevelopmental Disability (ND) for students attending regular class at homeschool.
2. As a short-term *strategy* for students who have not yet acquired the skills to self-regulate behaviours.
3. Placement in a *system program* at an assigned location outside of the home school.

Personalized Transportation as an Accommodation: Transportation *may* be put in place for students who have an Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), a Physical or Neurodevelopmental Disability (ND), who have not yet acquired the skills to travel to and from school safely **within** the walking distances outlined in Policy No. 3.10. A decision on a request for personalized transportation as an accommodation will be based on an assessment of student independence by staff.

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Personalized Transportation to Access a System Program: A system program is one of the following:

- a Special Education Self-contained Class,
- an Alternative Education Program;
- a Care, Treatment, Custody and Corrections Class
- Safe and Accepting Schools Program

The location of the program is considered the home school for the student. Personalized transportation is necessary for a student to access a system program when the walking distance **exceeds** the ranges outlined in Policy No 3.10. In specific situations, Personalized Transportation *may* be necessary for a student to access a system program **within** the walking distance. In such a situation, it would be an accommodation request.

Personalized Transportation as a Strategy: Personalized transportation is a short-term strategy to ensure the student's safety on the way to and from school and/or to teach the student the 'skills for life' of accessing regular transportation.

'Skills for Life' Program Goal: 'Skills for life' are essential skills that allow students to lead independent lives. For students with an Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), a Physical or Neurodevelopmental Disability (ND), the Principal will ensure that student's Individual Education Plan includes a goal that supports the 'skills for life' of navigating the school and neighbourhood community or riding the bus with greater independence.

Lone Ridership: A form of travel where a student rides alone in a vehicle to and from school. Lone Ridership is a temporary measure. A plan to support the student to ride a school bus safely will be put in place.

Enhanced Safety Feature: Enhanced Safety Feature: There are three types of enhanced safety features used to secure students while traveling to or from school: 1. seatbelt, 2. buckle cover, 3. harness. Only certified harnesses are used by HWSTS. A request for a buckle cover or harness is approved following an assessment by school and system staff. A harness and a buckle cover are only available for use on a mini bus. If a harness or buckle cover is approved, then the Principal and school team will include a goal in the student's Individual Education Plan which supports the 'skills for life' of riding the bus without the need for this device.

PROCEDURES:

1.0 Personalized Transportation as an Accommodation

- 1.1 Prior to considering Personalized Transportation as an **Accommodation** for a student with an Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), a Physical or Neurodevelopmental Disability (ND), who attends the home school, the Principal will involve the Specialized Services Learning Consultant and when required, the Board Certified Behaviour Analyst to help determine the student's level of independence in navigating the home school building and/or travelling to and from home. If it is determined that the student is not yet able to independently travel safely to and from school, the Principal will:

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- 1.1.1 Complete the Personalized Transportation Request Form in PowerSchool Special Programs (SP) including a review date.
- 1.1.2 Upon completion of the form, the Principal will send notification in PowerSchool Special Programs (SP) to the appropriate Superintendent of Student Achievement (SOSA).
- 1.1.3 After reviewing the form in PowerSchool Special Programs (SP), the SOSA will notify the Associate Director.
- 1.1.4 Once reviewed, the Associate Director will determine the status of the Personalized Transportation Request. The SOSA, Principal and Hamilton Wentworth Student Transportation Services (HWSTS) Transportation Officer will be notified of the decision.
- 1.1.5 If approved, HWSTS will confirm the specific transportation details with the Principal.
- 1.1.6 The Principal will contact the parent/guardian to confirm personalized transportation details and place a copy of the Personalized Transportation Request Form in the OSR.
- 1.1.7 In advance of the review date identified in the original Personalized Transportation Request Form, an email notification will be sent to the Principal. When it arrives, the Principal will either let the request lapse or seek an extension by creating a new request in PowerSchool Special Programs (SP). The same process noted in 1.1.1 to 1.1.7 will be followed for each renewal request.

Note: Reviewed annually or until review date.

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2.0 Personalized Transportation as a Strategy

2.1 Prior to considering Personalized Transportation as a **Strategy** for a student with self-regulation concerns, the Principal will contact the Specialized Services Learning Consultant and the Board Certified Behaviour Analyst to review information as well as possible strategies which could mitigate self-regulation challenges prior to requesting personalized transportation. When it becomes evident that personalized transportation *may* be necessary for student with self-regulation concerns, the Principal will:

2.1.1 follow the process noted in 1.1.1 to 1.1.7 with the additional requirement of a short-term learning plan which is part of the Personalized Transportation Request Form: Section B to support the student to behave in a safe manner.

Note: Reviewed at 8 week intervals.

3.0 Personalized Transportation to Access a System Program

3.1 When a student is placed in a System Program (e.g. Special Education Self-contained Class (SCC), System Alternative Education, Care, Treatment, Custody and Corrections (CTCC), Safe and Accepting Schools Program) Personalized Transportation *will* be provided if the class is outside of the student's home school.

3.1.1 For students that will be attending a Special Education Self-contained Class (SCC), the Principal **will not** be required to fill out a Personalized Transportation Request Form. At the time of the initial placement, the Special Education Learning Consultant will prepare information for HWSTS.

Note: Reviewed annually or as required

3.1.2 For students that will be attending Care, Treatment, Custody and Corrections, (CTCC), the Principal **will** complete the initial Personalized Transportation Request Form. The process will follow 1.1.1 to 1.1.7. At each review date, the Principal, Systems Program, **will** complete the Personalized Transportation Request Form.

Note: Reviewed at 8-12 week intervals

3.1.3 For System Alternative Education Programs, the Principal, **will** complete the Personalized Transportation Request Form should it be deemed essential for a student to access public transportation through the Hamilton Street Railway. The process will follow 1.1.1 to 1.1.7. At each review date, the Principal, Systems Program, **will** complete the Personalized Transportation Request Form.

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- 3.1.4 For students that will be attending the Safe and Accepting Schools Program, the Principal, will complete **will** complete the Personalized Transportation Request Form. The process will follow 1.1.1 to 1.1.7.

Note: Reviewed as required

4.0 Requests for Lone Ridership or an Enhanced Safety Device

- 4.1** Prior to requesting lone ridership or an enhanced safety device, the Principal will contact the Specialized Services Learning Consultant and the Board Certified Behaviour Analyst to review information as well as discuss possible strategies that could mitigate the need for lone ridership or a restraint device. If it is determined that lone ridership or an enhanced safety device *may* be required, the Principal will follow the steps in 1.1.1 to 1.1.7.

Note: Reviewed at 8 week intervals for lone ridership; twice a year for Enhanced Safety Devices.

Reference

Policy No. 3.10. Transportation