

| | |
|-----------------------------|--|
| CLASS Business Unit: | Student Transportation |
| Operating Practice: | Boarding/Deboarding-Special Needs Students |
| Reference: | STS-PRA-025-08 |
| Adopted: | June 17, 2008 |
| Revised: | January 08, 2020 |

1.0 Scope

CLASS is committed to ensuring safe transportation of all eligible students planned to be riding school buses. For students a consortium Board has identifies as having special needs, CLASS is committed to working with the Board stakeholders to implement alternate safety equipment including restraint harnesses, car/booster seat, wheelchair/strollers and seat belts on mini-buses, accessible buses and School Purpose Vehicles to support these students.

2.0 Alternate Safety Equipment Requirements

2.1 Restraint Harness:

- Must be prescribed by an Occupational/Physical Therapist
- Must be ordered by CLASS through an approved vendor
- Must be used ONLY in a School Purpose Vehicle

2.2 Car/Booster Seat:

- Must be purchased through CLASS according to the sizing requirements set out by the Ontario Highway Traffic Act
- Must be used ONLY in a School Purpose Vehicle

2.3 Seatbelt:

- Must be used by students in any vehicle that is factory equipped
- Aftermarket or retrofit Seat Belts must not be installed in any vehicle

2.4 Wheelchair/Stroller:

- Must board/deboard the bus via the wheelchair lift
- Student must be properly strapped in their seat prior to boarding/deboarding the bus at home and at the school.
- Must be used ONLY on a Mini-accessible bus

3.0 Responsibility

3.1. CLASS:

- Transportation planning including vehicle selection for all eligible consortium Board students;
- Reviewing the individual student needs as presented by the special Needs Department and working collaboratively to develop individual student transportation plans as required;
- Implementing approved transportation plans with school bus operator;
- Coordinate order of specialized equipment such as restraint harness or car/booster seat;
- Communicating transportation plan arrangements with schools / parents / guardians / special needs department staff;
- Maintaining inventory log and annual review of all equipment within the fleet network, including age, student and ownership; and
- Annual review of a student's needs and devices required for the following school year.

3.2 School Bus Operator:

- Work with Board staff, CLASS staff and all other support staff to ensure that equipment is installed to meet the needs of the student;
- Provide their School Bus Driver with all required training on the proper installation and usage of equipment; and
- Notifying CLASS staff immediately of any issues pertaining to the use and/or condition of the equipment.

3.3 School Board Administration:

- Notifying CLASS staff of any students requiring alternate equipment;
- Working with CLASS staff in determining the most appropriate transportation plan for students and providing CLASS with the pertinent information such as height, weight and prescription, etc.;
- Liaising with parents/guardians to ensure they support planned solution; and
- Ensuring the school support staff is aware of the transportation arrangements and their role with respect to buckling/unbuckling of the student

3.4 School Board Support Staff:

- Collaborating with the school bus driver to ensure a safe transition of students with special needs during boarding/deboarding; and
- Providing feedback regarding any issues with the individual student transportation plan or boarding/deboarding process.

3.5 Parent / Guardian:

- Collaborating with the school bus driver to ensure a safe transition of students with special needs during boarding/deboarding at the residence; and
- Providing feedback regarding any issues with the individual student transportation plan or boarding/deboarding process.
- Ensuring all student safety equipment is properly used and in proper working condition (no damage, excessive wear, proper size etc.).

4.0 Responsibilities for Student Securement:

4.1 Restraint Harness:

- Parent/guardian must ensure that the harness is properly fitted onto their student prior to boarding the bus from the residence stop;
- Parent/guardian must secure/detach the harness to the fastening points on the vehicle seat at the residence stop;
- School Board Support Staff must ensure that the harness is properly fitted onto the student prior to boarding the bus at the school;
- School Board Support Staff must secure/detach the harness to the fastening points on the vehicle seat at the school; and
- School Bus Driver will be present for both boarding/deboarding of the student to support the School Board Support Staff in the Two Deep Method.

4.2 Car/Booster Seat:

- Parent/guardian must secure/detach the student into/from the device at the residence stop;
- School Board Support Staff must secure/detach the student into/from the device at the school; and
- School Bus Driver must be present for both boarding/deboarding of the student to support the School Board Support Staff in the Two Deep Method.

4.3 Seatbelt:

- Parent/guardian must be present for both boarding/deboarding of the student at the residence stop to support the Two Deep Method and must secure/detach the device at the residence stop if the student is not able to safely do so on their own;
- School Board Support Staff must be present for both boarding/deboarding of the student at the school to support the School Bus Driver in the Two Deep Method; and
- School Bus Driver must secure/detach the device at the school if the student is not able to safely do so on their own.

4.4 Wheelchair/Stroller:

- Parent/guardian must ensure that their student has all required safety equipment, that the equipment is in good working order, and that it is safely secured to their student;
- Parent/guardian must be present for both boarding/deboarding of the student at the residence to support the School Bus Driver in the Two Deep Method;
- School Bus Driver must safely load/unload the equipment and student onto/off of the accessible mini-bus at the residence/school stop, including locking wheels / powering off the device while it is on the lift and unlocking wheels / activating device once at vehicle height or returned to ground level;
- School Bus Driver must notify their supervisor of any deficiencies or issues with the condition of the wheelchair/stroller/equipment identified;
- School Bus Driver must secure/detach the device to the attachment points within the mini-bus and the additional student securement belts at the residence/school stop;
- School Board Support Staff must be present for both boarding/deboarding and securement of the student at the school to support the School Bus Driver in the Two Deep Method; and
- School Board Support Staff must assist the School Bus Driver in safely loading/unloading the student and device, including while the student is on the lift as an added measure of supporting student safety.

5.0 Definitions

| Term | Definition |
|---|--|
| Consortium Board / Member Board / Board | Reference to one of the School Boards that CLASS services (Lambton Kent & St. Clair Catholic District School Boards) |
| Restraint Harness | A multi-point harness system that affixes to a student like a parachute and is then connected to a School Purpose Vehicle seat. |
| Special Needs Department | Reference to the staff working in this role for either of the Consortium Boards. |
| School Board Support Staff | Reference to Educational Assistants in place at school site. |
| School Board Administration | Reference to school Principal, Vice Principal, Special Needs Department Staff in place at school site. |
| School Bus Operator | Reference to a 3 rd party independent service provider contracted by CLASS to perform assigned school bus service. |
| School Bus Driver | Reference to Class B licensed employee of independently contracted School Bus operator who is qualified to be operating the school bus / school purpose vehicle. |
| Alternate Safety Equipment | Includes Restraint Harness, Factory Installed Seat Belts, Car/Booster Seat, Wheelchair/Stroller |
| Two Deep Method | Two adults present at all times while students are secured in all alternate safety equipment on a school bus / school purpose vehicle. |
| School Purpose Vehicle | Reference to a mini-van type passenger vehicle configuration that is dedicated to transporting students to / from school. |