



Section Accessibility Transportation Standards	Page 1 of 4
	Date : April 4, 2024

<p>Statement</p>	<p>WESTS is committed to providing services in a way that is accessible to students in compliance with the <i>Integrated Accessibility Standards, Ontario Regulation 191/22</i>, under the <i>Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005</i>, S.O. 2005 c.11 (the "AODA").</p> <p>WESTS believes that excellence in service is founded on mutual respect for the dignity and humanity of all individuals and enabling individuals and groups to participate and contribute fully within a diverse society.</p> <p>Equity, diversity and inclusion are related yet distinct concepts which form the foundations of social justice and reflect values such as fairness, empathy and respect for the dignity of all humans, and practicing equity involves proactively eradicating attitudes, actions, structures and systems that result in discrimination and exclusion. To this end, WESTS is committed to the continual improvement of accessibility and the on-going removal of barriers in order to provide greater equity for all our students.</p> <p>WESTS will ensure that accessible school transportation services are provided for students with disabilities or identified health conditions in a manner that meets their unique needs and ensures their safety. Where appropriate and practicable, integrated accessible school transportation will be provided. Where in WESTS' opinion integrated accessible school transportation services are not possible or not the best option for a student with a disability because of the nature of the disability or safety concerns, appropriate alternative accessible transportation services will be provided for students with disabilities.</p> <p>The provision of accessible student transportation services will include the development of an individual Student Transportation/Health Plan for each student that has been identified, by their respective boards, as</p>
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Section Accessibility Transportation Standards	Page 2 of 4
	Date : April 4, 2024

	having a disability or health condition that affects their transportation to and from school. The plan will be developed by the respective Board’s Special Education Services in collaboration with the consortium and in consultation with the student’s parents/guardians and home school staff.
Requirements	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. This policy and the Student Transportation/Health Plan (Appendix A) and Driver Accessibility Guidelines (Appendix B) will be included as an addendum to the WESTS Consortium Operator contracts and training on the policy will be included as a driver/monitor requirement. 2. The Superintendent of Special Education for the respective boards and, where appropriate, the General Manager of WESTS, will identify and communicate roles and responsibilities with regard to the implementation of the individual Student Transportation/Health Plans to the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Bus Operator • The parents/guardians of the student • The driver of any vehicle that is transporting a student with a Student Transportation Plan • The appropriate members of the school administration; and • The student for whom the Student Transportation/Health Plan has been developed.
Responsibilities: Boards	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Superintendent responsible for Special Education, or their designate, will, in consultation with parents/guardians and home school staff, annually identify students with disabilities and/or health conditions who require special transportation services. Such identification will, whenever possible, be made prior to the commencement of the student’s attendance at school.



Section Accessibility Transportation Standards	Page 3 of 4
	Date : April 4, 2024

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. The Superintendent responsible for Special Education, or their designate will work with the General Manager of Student Transportation, or their designate, to develop an individual Student Transportation/Health Plan (Appendix A) for each student identified as requiring special transportation services. 3. The Student Transportation/Health Plan will include details of the student's assistance needs with respect to transportation to and from school and provisions for boarding, securement and deboarding of students, as applicable, following the Driver Accessibility Guidelines (Appendix B).
Responsibilities of Bus Operators	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Bus Operator will ensure that all of their Bus Drivers are made aware of individual student's needs with regard to boarding, securement and deboarding and/or any other needs identified in the Student Transportation/Health Plan. 2. Access to Student Transportation/Health Plans will be provided to the Bus Driver and any appropriate training will be completed, including on the safe use of accessibility equipment and features, acceptable modifications to procedures in situations where temporary barriers exist or accessibility equipment on a vehicle fails, and emergency preparedness and response procedures that provide for the safety of persons with disabilities. 3. The Bus Operator will keep a record of the training provided, including the dates on which the training was provided and the number of individuals to whom it is provided.
Responsibilities of Bus Drivers	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Bus Driver will ensure that the student is transported safely according to their needs as per the Student Transportation/Health Plan. 2. The Bus Driver will follow all consortium procedures for the transportation of students with disabilities



Section Accessibility Transportation Standards	Page 4 of 4
	Date : April 4, 2024

	and/or health needs.
Responsibilities of Parent/Guardian	<p>The Parent/guardian will:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Advise the school, Student Transportation and/or the Bus Operator of any disability, medical or other condition affecting the safe transportation of the student and communicate any changes to such. 2. Help identify tools or strategies that may help the driver and/or monitor while transporting the student. 3. Work collaboratively with the School Board, WESTS, and the Bus Operator in the accommodation of the student. 4. Consent to sharing the student's personal information as required by this Policy.
Responsibilities of School Administration	<p>School Administration will:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Advise Student Transportation and parents of any relevant issues while at school during the day. 2. Advise the Bus Driver if there are any relevant issues that may affect the safe transportation of the student at the end of the day.
Responsibilities of Students	<p>Students will:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Follow the bus rules. 2. Advise the driver and/or monitor of any emergency health issues or concerns, if possible.