

Boards will hold orientation day for new school bus riders

The two local school boards will be combining in August to host a free Young Rider Orientation Day.

It will be Aug. 26 at various locations, including St. Michael Catholic Secondary School in Bolton, and will be aimed at helping new students feel more comfortable taking the school bus. This year, approximately 65,000 Peel District School Board and Dufferin-Peel Catholic District School Board students will ride the school bus each day. Both boards have provided joint busing service since 1994.

Now in its 25th year, this orientation will give children confidence when riding the bus to and from school and will reinforce the importance of bus safety, Tom Howe, manager of Student Transportation of Peel Region (STOPR), said. Parents and children will watch a bus safety video, discuss their bus safety concerns and ride on a school bus.

The program, designed for kindergarten children and their elementary-aged siblings, as well as eligible French Immersion students, will run every hour between 9 a.m. and noon.

To help children feel more at ease with their first school bus experience, parents can talk about bus rides as fun adventures. Parents should try not to be anxious in front of their children. Parents can also establish a routine by taking a few walks to the bus stop before the first day of school.

They should also keep children organized. A backpack is easier for students to carry than many small items.

Make sure children recognize their bus stop location and carry identification in case they get lost.

Teach them bus safety rules, such as listening to the bus driver's instructions, staying seated on the bus and respecting other students.

Parents should also teach traffic safety. If children must cross the street to get to the bus stop, remind them to wait until the bus stops, activates its flashing lights and the stop arm before they look in both directions and cross.

There will also be an orientation session that day at are available at St. Marguerite d'Youville Secondary School at 10815 Dixie Rd. in Brampton.

To confirm attendance and preferred time slot, parents are asked to call Parkview Transit at 905-857-9894, or 905-584-0400.