

FAQS - FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

about the
School Bus Driver Retention Program (DRP)

NEW and ORIGINAL FAQS

NEW QUESTIONS – as of May 10, 2018

22. **Are there any exceptions to the 95% attendance requirement under criteria #6 (a)?**

Answer: Yes. The DRP is a pilot program which presents many learning opportunities. School bus operator and driver feedback is highly valued. The DRP has the authority to make exceptions to certain aspects of the eligibility criteria and will do so in Payment Period #1.

Exceptions will be granted to applicants who have taken time off of work for various absences as noted in the **Exception Application Form** available for download here:

<http://www.osba.on.ca/files/drp-exceptions2.pdf> during Payment Period #1, and who qualify under the remaining eligibility criteria #1 to #5. Exceptions include approved vacation, WSIB claims, short or long term disability, absences permitted by law (e.g. personal emergency days, bereavement for immediate family members, parental leave, pregnancy leave), jury duty and other approved leave (medical or otherwise). Exceptions may also be considered in other circumstances. If you were absent for a listed reason, or for a reason that you believe requires further consideration, you should complete and submit the Exception Application Form to your employer.

23. **Do I have to apply for an exception under criteria #6 (a) for Payment Period #1?**

Answer: Yes. If you meet criteria #1 to #5 but require an exception because you do not meet the 95% attendance requirement under criteria #6 (a), you must complete an **Exception Application Form** available for download here: <http://www.osba.on.ca/files/drp-exceptions2.pdf> and submit it to your employer. Every application form must be received by your school bus operator employer as soon as possible and no later than Friday, July 6, 2018. **Exceptions are not required for absences prior to May 1, 2018 for Payment Period #1.**

24. **What if I fill in an Exception Application Form this week and then I have to take another day off next month?**

Answer: You should complete and submit another Exception Application Form for such absence (and each additional absence that is not reflected in your previous Exception Application Forms that were submitted).

25. **Who approves my request for an exception?**

Answer: Your employer will review for accuracy and completeness and then submit your Exception Application Form to the DRP for processing.

26. **Will the same exception process be available in Payment Period #2 or Payment Period #3?**

Answer: The exception process is currently only applicable for Payment Period #1. Final decisions have not yet been made about Payment Periods #2 and #3.

27. **Why do I need to complete a Consent Form?**

Answer: A Consent Form is required in order to share your personal information with someone other than your employer. Information such as your name, address and SIN number are required in order to pay a bonus to you directly and to issue you a T4 directly. Your personal information will not be accessed or used for any purpose other than to administer and evaluate the DRP. Any reports published on the DRP to develop future strategies to assist drivers and the student transportation industry will not include your personal information.

28. **Can my school bus operator employer collect my Consent Form using an electronic signature process or other electronic process?**

Answer: Yes. Your employer is responsible for the collection and safekeeping of all Consent Forms and may set up an electronic process to do so. Consent Forms will be retained by your employer and not submitted to any other party or agency.

29. **Will the first bonus payment affect my ability to collect Employment Insurance in July and August, 2018?**

Answer: The bonus should not affect your ability to obtain Employment Insurance in the months of July and August 2018 because the bonus payment will relate to services you provided prior to July 1, 2018. It is expected that the bonus will be mailed to eligible school bus drivers in September 2018. *[Note: This is an updated version of FAQ #19 previously posted and will replace that response]*

30. **Will the bonus payment affect the amount I may receive in the future for Employment Insurance?**

Answer: Maybe. It is likely that the bonus will be counted as employment income once it is received. If this is something you are concerned about, you should seek advice from a professional advisor or the applicable government agency before completing either a Consent Form or an Exception Application Form agreeing to participate in the DRP.

31. **I am currently on leave. Will the bonus payment affect my ability to claim disability, maternity or other benefits?**

Answer: Maybe. It is likely that the bonus will be counted as employment income once it is received, which could affect your ability to claim or obtain certain benefits or the amount of those benefits. If this is something you are concerned about, you should seek advice from a professional advisor or the applicable government agency before completing either a Consent Form or an Exception Application Form agreeing to participate in the DRP. By completing the Exception Application Form, you agree to be considered for a bonus payment and to receive the bonus payment if you qualify.

32. **If I am eligible to receive a bonus, how much will the bonus be?**

Answer: The amount of the bonus will be up to \$1000 less deductions for Canada Pension Plan, Employment Insurance (both employee and employer portions) and income tax. Options are being considered at this time to maximize the amount of the bonus.

33. **I drive students during am and pm shifts/runs to schools under one or more Eligible Education Organizations listed on the OSBA website, but I am not employed by a school bus operator that has a contract with any of the Eligible Education Organizations. Am I still eligible to receive a bonus?**

Answer: Yes. You will be deemed to meet criteria #1 if you drive a school bus covered by an Ontario Ministry of Transportation Commercial Vehicle Operator's Registration (CVOR) that transports students to schools under one or more of the prescribed list of Eligible Education Organization including transportation consortia, school boards, school authorities and provincial or demonstration schools. The list is available: <http://www.osba.on.ca/files/DRP-list-of-educational-organizations-2018.pdf>

If you meet this requirement, please have your school bus operator employer email OSBA at info@osba.on.ca in order to receive a participation agreement.

34. **If I miss my morning or afternoon shift, does it count as a half or full day off?**

Answer: If you regularly drive an am **and** pm shift (e.g. 5 days per week) for a school bus operator employer, but have to take off an am or pm shift one day, it will count as half a day off. However, if your employment agreement with your employer or regular work week schedule is to ONLY drive the am shifts, for example, and you miss one am shift, then it will count as a full day off since that am shift is your full day of work.

35. **If I am a standby or spare driver and do not drive the same am and/or pm routes every school day, will I be eligible to receive the bonus?**

Answer: Yes. As long as you meet all other eligibility criteria. If the majority of your working time for the school bus operator employer is driving students to and from schools under one or more of the Eligible Education Organizations listed [here: http://www.osba.on.ca/files/DRP-list-of-educational-organizations-2018.pdf](http://www.osba.on.ca/files/DRP-list-of-educational-organizations-2018.pdf), then you will qualify to receive the bonus. *[Note: This is an updated version of FAQ #12 previously posted and will replace that response]*

36. **I am an on-call school bus driver who is called upon by my employer to cover am and/or pm shifts that are missed/cancelled by other drivers, and sometimes I also do school field trip charters, but I do not have a regular am and/or pm shift assigned to me. Do I qualify to receive the bonus?**

Answer: Yes. As long as you meet all other eligibility criteria. If the majority of your working time for the school bus operator employer is driving students to and from schools under one or more of the Eligible Education Organizations listed [here: http://www.osba.on.ca/files/DRP-list-of-educational-organizations-2018.pdf](http://www.osba.on.ca/files/DRP-list-of-educational-organizations-2018.pdf), then you would qualify to receive the bonus.

37. **I am a charter school bus driver only who periodically transports students on various school trips and outings. I do not drive a regular home-to-school am or pm shift/run. Do I qualify to receive the bonus?**

Answer: No. As noted in eligibility criteria # 1, only those school bus drivers who spend the majority of their working time for the school bus operator employer driving students to and from schools under one or more of the Eligible Education Organizations listed [here: http://www.osba.on.ca/files/DRP-list-of-educational-organizations-2018.pdf](http://www.osba.on.ca/files/DRP-list-of-educational-organizations-2018.pdf) qualify to receive a bonus.

38. **If my company removes me from my ‘home to school’ run to do a charter, does it affect my eligibility for a bonus payment?**

Answer: No. You can still fulfil the eligibility requirement of continuous employment if you are employed by the same school bus operator throughout the Payment Period. In order to be eligible, your primary employment responsibility must be driving students to and from schools under one or more of the Eligible Education Organizations listed [here: http://www.osba.on.ca/files/DRP-list-of-educational-organizations-2018.pdf](http://www.osba.on.ca/files/DRP-list-of-educational-organizations-2018.pdf). See criteria #2 for further details regarding “primary employment responsibility”.

39. **If I fill in for other drivers who are absent/missing for the day by doing double/triple runs (e.g. on top of my regular single am and pm routes), can I build up credit for my days off towards the 95%?**

Answer: No. Eligibility for the bonus is based on the percentage of your scheduled days that you work; increased work on a single day will not affect the calculation of “minimum percentage of days” under criteria #6.

40. **Why are monitors excluded from the DRP?**

Answer: The DRP is subject to conditions established by the Province of Ontario, through the Ministry of Education in order to achieve the goal of improved school bus driver recruitment and retention. Monitors are not within the scope of this pilot program.

41. **If I change employers during a Payment Period, will I be eligible to receive the bonus?**

Answer: Maybe. Provided that your employer remains a school bus operator, you may still be eligible to qualify as long as you continue driving substantially the same route(s) throughout the Payment Period. See criteria #5 (b). If you transfer from one school bus operator employer to another due to the first employer losing routes in an RFP process or the employer returning routes to a consortia or education organization, but you remain driving substantially the same route(s), you will be eligible to receive a bonus payment.

However, if you change employers (due to personal choice or circumstances or otherwise) you will not be eligible to receive the bonus. You may be eligible during the subsequent Payment Periods as long as you meet the eligibility criteria at that time. *[Note: This is an updated version of FAQ #9 previously posted and will replace that response]*

42. **If I drive a van or mini bus for a school bus operator, am I eligible to receive a bonus?**

Answer: Yes. If you hold a valid Class G licence and meet all other eligibility criteria, you will be eligible to receive a bonus. See criteria #4.

43. **If I miss a month of work for any reason, but otherwise had a perfect attendance record, will I be eligible to receive the bonus?**

Answer: The eligibility criteria requires that you must work 95% of the school calendar days within the specified time period. For the first Payment Period, the attendance requirement applies from the date that the eligibility criteria were first announced (May 1, 2018) to the last day of the school calendar year. If you miss a month of work prior to May 1, 2018 in the first Payment Period, but otherwise meet the other eligibility criteria, you will be eligible for a bonus. If you miss more than the permitted absences after May 1, 2018, you will not meet the 95% threshold. *[Note: This is an updated version of FAQ #10 previously posted and will replace that response]*

44. **Will information about the DRP be available in French?**

Answer: Yes. Some documents related to the DRP will be available in French in the near future, including the consent form, the exception form and the DRP Guide for use by school bus operator employers. Please check the [OSBA website](#) for updated information.

45. **Who do I contact if I have more questions about the DRP?**

If you are a school bus driver:

Email Address – schoolbusdriver@deloitte.ca; Toll-free Number – 1-833-346-6177

If you are a school bus operator:

Email Address – schoolbusoperator@deloitte.ca; Toll-free Number - 1-833-715-7360

This FAQ list will be updated periodically. *[Note: This is an updated version of FAQ #21 previously posted and will replace that response]*

ORIGINAL FAQs – as of April 30, 2018

1. **What is the DRP?**

Answer: The DRP is the School Bus Driver Retention Program. It is a pilot project initiated by the Ontario Ministry of Education which is comprised of a series of three separate bonus payments made directly to eligible Ontario school bus drivers. The purpose of the DRP is to enhance school bus driver recruitment and retention rates by providing a financial incentive for school bus drivers to stay on the job throughout the school year.

2. **What are the periods of the bonus payments?**

Answer: Bonuses will be paid based on eligibility in three separate Payment Periods (see below). You must meet the eligibility criteria in each period to receive the bonus for that period. If you are not eligible in one period, you may become eligible in the next period.

- (a) Payment Period #1 - The first school calendar day in January 2018 to the last school calendar day in June 2018. The 95% attendance requirement (see below) in this period begins on May 1, 2018.
- (b) Payment Period #2 - The first school calendar day in September 2018 to the last school calendar day in December 2018. In this period, the 95% attendance requirement will apply from the day that you begin work, which must be before the last school calendar day of September.
- (c) Payment Period #3 - The first school calendar day in January 2019 to the last school calendar day in June 2019. In this period, the 95% attendance requirement will apply from the day that you begin work, which must be before the last school calendar day of January.

3. What are the bonus payments based on?

Answer: Please see the specific criteria details listed on the separate web page called “Eligibility Criteria” posted on the OSBA website the following link: <http://www.osba.on.ca/school-bus-driver-eligibility-criteria>

You must meet all of the eligibility criteria in order to receive a bonus. As a summary only, DRP eligibility involves 4 major requirements:

- (a) “Continuous Employment” – this is the minimum period of time during a Payment Period that a school bus driver must be continuously working for a school bus operator or driving substantially the same route. The eligibility criteria require “continuous employment” from the last school calendar day of the first month of the Payment Period through to and including the last school calendar day of the final month of the Payment Period.
- (b) “Attendance” – this is the minimum number of days that a school bus driver must work during an employment period (e.g. 95%). See criteria #6 (a) For the first Payment Period, the attendance requirement applies from the date that the eligibility criteria are published (May 1, 2018). You must still meet all the other eligibility requirements to receive a bonus, including continuous employment from the last school calendar day of January.
- (c) “Employment Period” – this is the time that a school bus driver is employed and paid by a school bus operator. To be eligible, your “employment period” must begin during the first month of a Payment Period and continue to the last day of the Payment Period.
- (d) “Primary Employment Responsibility” – individuals receiving a bonus must either have an agreement with a school bus operator that states that they are employed as a school bus driver, or work in the capacity of a school bus driver for the majority of their working time for the school bus operator each week.

4. How do I know if I am eligible to receive a bonus payment?

Answer: Your employer will determine your eligibility for each Payment Period based on the eligibility criteria posted on the OSBA website at the following link: <http://www.osba.on.ca/school-bus-driver-eligibility-criteria>

5. As a School Bus Driver, what do I need to do to receive my bonus?

Answer: All you will be required to do is sign a consent form and provide it to your employer. Your signed consent will allow your personal information to be shared with OSBA, the Service Provider (Deloitte) and the Ontario Ministry of Education. Personal information will be used to administer the bonus payments, complete required tax forms and conduct research and analysis on the DRP and School Bus Driver workforce.

6. Where do I obtain a consent form?

Answer: Your employer will have the consent form for you to complete and return to them (either manually or electronically). The form is also available on the OSBA website which can be downloaded and returned to your employer from the following link: <http://www.osba.on.ca/files/Consent-Form-DRP-School-Bus-Drivers-Final.pdf>

7. **For the first Payment Period, if I became a school bus driver in February 2018 or later and did not miss a single day of work through to the end of June 2018, will I meet the eligibility criteria?**

Answer: No. In order to qualify you must be employed as a school bus driver on or before the last school calendar day of the first month of the Payment Period. For the Payment Period ending in June 2018, this means you will need to have been an employee with a school bus operator employer on or before January 31, 2018. However, you may be eligible during the subsequent Payment Periods as long as you meet the eligibility criteria at that time.

8. **For the first Payment Period, if I was in unpaid training to be a school bus driver on February 1, 2018 or later, will I be eligible to receive the bonus?**

Answer: No. In order to be eligible you need to have been a paid employee of a school bus operator employer (not an unpaid trainee) on or before January 31, 2018. However, you may be eligible during the subsequent Payment Periods as long as you meet the eligibility criteria at that time.

9. **If I change employers during a Payment Period, will I be eligible to receive the bonus?**

Answer: See FAQ #41 with updated information.

10. **If I miss a month of work for any reason, but otherwise had a perfect attendance record, will I be eligible to receive the bonus?**

Answer: See FAQ #43 with updated information.

11. **If I drive students to a private school, will I be eligible to receive the bonus?**

Answer: No. In order to qualify for the bonus you must drive students for a school bus operator that provides services to an eligible education organization. Private schools are not eligible. Please go to the OSBA website for a full list of eligible education organizations at the following link: <http://www.osba.on.ca/files/DRP-list-of-educational-organizations-2018.pdf>

12. **If I am a standby driver and do not drive the same routes every day, will I be eligible to receive the bonus?**

Answer: See FAQ #35 with updated information.

13. **If I work every day as a school bus driver but also work in my employer's office or maintenance area doing other jobs, will I be eligible to receive the bonus?**

Answer: Yes. If: (a) you have an employment agreement that explicitly states that you are employed as a school bus driver; or (b) if the time you spend driving each week constitutes the majority of the time you work for the school bus operator, then you would receive the bonus.

14. **I work part-time at another job in addition to driving a school bus, will I receive the bonus?**

Answer: Yes. The eligibility criteria is concerned with the period of time you work for the school bus operator, not the time you work for others.

- 15. I have worked every day as a school bus driver. I have never missed a day but in April I chose to move to a new community and I applied to work with a new school bus company. Will I still receive the bonus?**

Answer: No. In order to meet the eligibility criteria, you must work for the same school bus operator or drive substantially the same route(s) throughout the Payment Period. If you meet the eligibility criteria in subsequent Payment Periods, you may qualify for the bonus at that time.

- 16. When will I receive my bonus payments?**

Answer: Significant paperwork must be completed before your bonus can be processed and mailed. All bonuses in respect of the same Payment Period need to be processed at the same time. It is anticipated that you will receive your bonus approximately 3 months after the end of the Payment Period. The specific payment dates will be communicated by OSBA as they are confirmed.

- 17. How will I receive my bonus payment?**

Answer: If you are eligible, you will receive a cheque directly mailed to your home address issued by the Service Provider (Deloitte).

- 18. How do I know if my employer is participating in the program?**

Answer: You need to speak with your employer directly and enquire with them.

- 19. Will the bonus payment affect my ability to collect employment insurance in July and August?**

Answer: [See FAQs #29 and #30 with updated information.](#)

- 20. If I receive a bonus payment, do I need to report it as income for income tax purposes?**

Answer: Yes. A T4 slip will be issued to each school bus driver from OSBA (not your employer) by the end of February in the year following the payment of the bonus.

- 21. Who do I contact if I have any questions about the DRP?**

Answer: [See FAQ #44 with updated information](#)