

COVID-19 Public Health Guidelines: Student Group Transportation

Last updated December 3, 2020

This document provides local public health guidance to those who provide group transportation for students to or from school when walking or cycling are not feasible. This document does not replace guidance from the Province, including [Ontario's COVID-19 Response Framework: Keeping Ontario Safe and Open, O. Reg. 364/20](#) (regulations for the Prevent, Protect and Restrict levels), [O. Reg. 263/20](#) (regulations for the Control level) and [O. Reg. 82/20](#) (regulations for the Lockdown level). You may also want to refer to [Federal Guidance for School Bus Operations during the COVID-19 Pandemic](#). For specific questions about COVID-19 provincial regulations, please contact the **Stop the Spread Business Information Line** at 1-888-444-3659.

COVID-19 transmission

COVID-19 is spread mainly from person-to-person through the respiratory droplets of someone infected with COVID-19. The respiratory droplets can travel up to two metres (six feet) through coughing, sneezing or talking. COVID-19 can also be transmitted when a person touches a surface or object that has the virus on it and then touches their mouth, nose or eyes.

Students with COVID-19 Symptoms

- Students with COVID-19 symptoms should not attend school, child care or any other program and should not use student transportation services.
- Bus drivers should notify school staff upon arrival of any students who display symptoms or who have informed the bus driver that they feel unwell.
- Siblings (and other household contacts) of symptomatic children need to self-monitor while the symptomatic child is awaiting test results. This means that they can attend school as long as they do not have any symptoms.

Keep hands and surfaces clean

- Provide alcohol-based hand rub (60-90% alcohol) on all vehicles and prompt students to use it upon entry.
- Clean and disinfect commonly touched surfaces (e.g. door handles, handrails, seats, windows, seat belts, steering wheel, mirror) at least twice a day and when visibly soiled. See [cleaning practices to prevent the spread of COVID-19](#).
- Ask students to handle their own personal bags and belongings during pick-up and drop-off.

Maximize physical distancing and ensure appropriate ventilation

- Maintain as much distance between students as feasible.
- Use visual cues such as floor decals, coloured tape, or signage to indicate where students can sit.
- Assign spaced seating to students and keep a record of the seating plan to assist with contact tracing. Students who live in the same household or are in the same classroom cohort should be seated together, where possible.
- Consider boarding and exiting strategies such as filling seats back-to-front for boarding and front-to-back for exiting.
- Where possible, leave the seat directly behind the driver empty.
- Where possible, open windows to increase ventilation.

Wear non-medical masks

- The Ministry of Education requires students in Grades 4 to 12 to wear non-medical masks. Encourage students in Kindergarten to Grade 3 to wear masks.
- Allow exceptions for students with medical conditions or special needs that prevent masking.
- Some school boards have enhanced masking requirements. Check with your local school board for direction.

Follow recommendations for occupational health and safety

- Follow the recommendations in [Health and Safety Guidance During COVID-19 For Student Transportation Employers](#) for drivers and other staff on the vehicle.
- Use personal protective equipment (for example, masks and eye protection) as required by employer.

Additional resources

- Halton Region Public Health:
 - [Cleaning practices to prevent the spread of COVID-19](#)
 - [COVID-19 Public Health Guidelines: Taxi and Ride Share Vehicles](#)
 - [Recommendations for School Reopening 2020-2021](#)
- Government of Ontario:
 - [Guide to Reopening Ontario's Schools](#)
 - [Before and After School Programs Kindergarten – Grade 6](#)
- Government of Canada:
 - [Federal Guidance for School Bus Operations](#)

More information

For more information and updates, visit halton.ca/COVID19 or call 311.