

# COVID-19 Public Health Guidance: Student Group Transportation

Last updated September 14, 2021

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. It does not replace guidance from the Province. This document is for information purposes only, and shall not be construed as legal advice.

On July 16, the Province shifted into Step 3 of the [Roadmap to Reopen](#). Residents, organizations and businesses must abide by the public health measures outlined according to the provincial step Halton is in at the time (one, two or three). See [O. Reg. 364/20, Schedules 1, 2 and 3](#), for regulations for Step 3. The Chief Medical Officer of Health and other health experts will continue to monitor the data to determine when it is safe to exit the Roadmap.

For specific questions about COVID-19 provincial regulations, please contact the **Stop the Spread Business Information Line** at 1-888-444-3659.

## Instructions for workplaces from Halton Region's Medical Officer of Health

Halton Region's Medical Officer of Health (MOH) issued [amended Instructions to businesses and organizations](#) to help keep staff and customers/patrons safe. The instructions take effect at 12:01 a.m. on **Friday, September 10, 2021**. They combine key existing requirements from the Province and Halton Region Public Health, with some new requirements. **Compliance with these instructions is mandatory.**

## Workplace vaccination

### Workplace vaccination policy

To reduce COVID-19 transmission in the workplace, Halton Region's MOH recommends all local employers have a [workplace COVID-19 vaccination policy](#). For workplaces with more than 100 workers physically present, Halton Region Public Health requires mandatory [COVID-19 safety plans](#) and vaccination policies in place by September 22, 2021.

### Encourage everyone to get a COVID-19 vaccine

Getting vaccinated is one of the ways to stop the spread of COVID-19. Here are some ways you can support vaccination at your workplace:

- Develop a [workplace COVID-19 vaccination policy](#)
- Ensure employees are aware that everyone in Canada is eligible to receive a vaccine for free. Proof of identity is required but a health card is not required for vaccination.
- Share [COVID-19 vaccine resources](#), with staff, available in multiple languages

## Additional COVID-19 public health measures

The following COVID-19 Public Health Measures are recommended by Halton Region Public Health and should be considered in all steps of Ontario's [Roadmap to Reopen](#).

## 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 to where students can sit.
- Assign spaced seating to students and keep a record of the seating plan to assist with contact tracing.
  - Students of the same household are permitted to share seats.
  - Students of the same cohort sit in the same area
- Consider leaving a gap between each row.
- 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 a mask

For students:

- The Ministry of Education requires students in Grades 1 to 12 to wear a mask. Students in Kindergarten are encouraged but not required 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.

For bus drivers:

- [Consolidated By-law 47-20](#) requires individuals to wear a mask in indoor workplaces and public spaces, unless exempt.
- Workers are recommended to wear a mask when they cannot maintain physical distance of 2 metres (six feet) and cannot be separated by Plexiglass or a barrier.
- PPE (surgical/procedure mask and eye protection i.e. goggles or face shield) is required to be worn by workers when a distance of 2 metres (six feet) cannot be maintained from another person not wearing a mask indoors **and** cannot be separated by Plexiglass or a barrier.
- Masks can be removed when eating or drinking, but individuals must maintain physical distancing of two metres (six feet) between them.
- Masks do not replace other important public health measures, such as physical distancing, performing frequent hand hygiene, coughing and sneezing into a tissue or sleeve and staying home when ill.

## 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.

## 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

- Government of Ontario:
  - [COVID-19: Health, safety and operational guidance for schools \(2021-2022\)](#)
  - [Student Transportation](#)
- Government of Canada:
  - [Federal Guidance for School Bus Operations](#)
- Workplace Safety & Prevention Services:
  - [Psychological Safety Resources for Leaders During COVID-19](#)