



COVID-19 PANDEMIC

BACK TO SCHOOL TRANSPORTATION GUIDELINES FOR PARENTS

Please refer to the following document for information, procedures and processes regarding the transportation of students effective September 2020.

Student Health and Well-Being

Students who have symptoms associated with COVID-19 or think they have been exposed to COVID-19 are recommended to stay home and self-isolate.

Parents must screen their child for any symptoms prior to sending them to board the bus. They should visit [Ontario's COVID-19 website](#) to determine if they need a test and where to find an assessment centre. If a child is displaying symptoms such as coughing, fever or other obvious signs of an illness, they are recommended to stay home and self-isolate.

If a child gets sick or exhibits symptoms at school, they will not be transported on the bus after school. Parents/guardians will be contacted to pick the student up at school.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

Proper hand washing is the best practice for stopping the spread of the virus. Hand washing prior to and after each trip on the bus is recommended for everyone.

Parents must supply their child with a face covering. If a parent is required to board the bus to help with a safety restraint the parent must also wear a face covering.

A small supply of masks will be available on each bus if for any reason a student may not have one.

Vehicle Cleaning

All school vehicles (i.e. frequently touched surfaces such as seat cushions, top of seats, handrail(s), seatbelts, and driver controls) will be cleaned with disinfectant prior to the start of each bus route and additionally handrail(s), and tops of seats will be cleaned with disinfectant prior to each bus run.

All waste container liners are to be removed from the vehicle after each school route. The type of disinfectant used will be in accordance with recommendations from Public Health.



Waiting at bus stops

While waiting at bus stops, students and parents/guardians should wear their face coverings.

Two metres between families is suggested. It is important that students arrive at their designated stop 10 minutes before their scheduled stop time.

Students should be reminded to wash their hands thoroughly with soap and water for 20 seconds before they leave for the bus stop or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer just before boarding the bus. Students must follow the direction of the driver when boarding the bus.

Once the bus arrives, students should line up while maintaining a two-metre physical distance between them, where possible.

Loading of Students

To address physical contact between students, the number of students to be transported on a bus will be limited to one family per bench seat to a maximum of three to a seat. Single child families will be grouped together with classmates where possible.

No more than one student should be on the stairs of the bus at a time.

Students cannot bring large items on the bus that would not ordinarily fit in a knapsack.

Students should get to their assigned seat and sit down as quickly as possible and place their backpack/bag on their lap.

All students will unload from front to back when being dropped off. This will limit close contact between students on the bus.

Students are encouraged to walk to their seat without touching seats as they pass as much as possible. Students must follow the instructions given to them from the bus driver and sit in their assigned seat. Students may not change seats at any time during the bus trip.

Remember there is no food or drink permitted on a school bus.



Seating Plans

Seat assignments for students will be mandatory and must be followed by the driver and enforced by the School Administration.

Seat movement of students will not be permitted.

Students are to sit 1 family per bench seat unless there are non-family from the same household or single students in the same class. The front two seats behind the driver will remain empty and be used for the driver's preschool children and to maintain physical distancing for the driver.

Drivers will ensure that students sit in their assigned seats. This is required for contact tracing any if a student riding the bus is exposed to COVID-19.

Route Operation

Where possible, and depending on weather conditions, school buses/vans will operate with their windows down to increase air ventilation.

Primary protocol procedures will be maintained for all Kindergarten and Grade 1 students. All Kindergarten and Grade 1 students must be met at the bus stop location at the end of the school day by their parent/guardian or caregiver.

Route Delays

A shortage of drivers is not anticipated for the school year, however due to various challenges as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, there could be route delays.

Parents/guardians are encouraged to subscribe to the STWDSTS notification system to receive late bus alerts. Parents can subscribe by visiting www.stwdsts.ca.

Parents/guardians are also encouraged to follow STWDSTS on Twitter at [@STWDSTS](https://twitter.com/STWDSTS) for the most up-to-date transportation information, alerts, and updates.



STWDSTS Transportation Opt-Out form

If you have not already, please complete the Opt-Out form if your child is eligible for transportation but will not require transportation services this year. The STWDSTS opt-out form is available by visiting www.STWDSTS.ca.

Please note that you can opt back in for transportation by contacting us at support@stwdsts or by calling 519-824-4119.

The opt-in student re-assignment process and timelines may be delayed due to higher call volume anticipated during the school start-up process

The courtesy seat program is on hold until further notice due to COVID-19 requirements.

Emergency Situations

Should the need arise that a driver is required to respond to a first aid situation, the driver should radio dispatch for clear direction and if required to attend to a student(s), the driver will park the vehicle in a safe location, turn the vehicle off, be certain to keep PPE on, and attend to the student(s). Dispatch will call 911 if necessary.

Standard Emergency procedures will apply as required.

Special Needs Transportation

Parents and school staff may need to board the vehicle to assist with the student's safety restraint/harness or car seat. They should always wear a face covering when boarding the vehicle.

Parents should be reminded to wash their hands thoroughly with soap and water for 20 seconds before they leave for the bus stop or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer just before boarding the bus.

Parents/Guardians are reminded that when boarding and debarking to not touch anything except the safety restraint/harness (i.e. do not touch seats when going down the aisle of a bus).
