

Return to Transportation Plan

Updated August 18th, 2020

Tri-Board Student Transportation Services Inc provides school bus services to the Algonquin & Lakeshore Catholic District School Board, the Hastings and Prince Edward District School Board, and the Limestone District School Board. On average, Tri-Board transports 30,000 students to and from school daily on over 600 shared bus routes. In order to help prevent the spread of COVID-19 through our communities, Tri-Board has consulted with the school boards, Public Health, The Ministry of Education, and local school bus companies and revised our services to meet the current standards dictated by Health and Education experts. Any changes to transportation guidelines based on expert recommendation will be communicated online at triboard.ca/COVID19 and via social media.

In accordance with Ontario's School Reopening Plan and local Public Health guidelines, buses will operate near capacity and remain shared between schools, with enhanced health and safety protocols in place for September 2020. Families may opt for other forms of school travel or Remote Learning through their school board if they are not comfortable with the school bus environment. Families who decide to use school transportation services will be responsible for assessing their children for COVID-19 symptoms. Anyone showing signs of COVID-19 will not be permitted on the bus or at the school.

Safety Provisions for Transportation

Physical Distancing

Public Health recommends individuals stand two (2) metres apart to prevent the spread of COVID-19. Families are responsible for maintaining this distance at the bus stop. Students will be required to enter and exit the bus maintaining this distance. Buses may be delayed getting to the school or stop due to this revised un/loading procedure.

In order to support the Ministry of Education's goal of all students attending school five days a week, and without provisions for additional vehicles or drivers, **Physical Distance cannot be maintained on the bus**. School buses will operate near capacity with additional health and safety precautions in place, such as disinfecting regimens and the use of PPE. Buses will remain shared between schools.

Cleaning Requirements & Ventilation

The Ministry of Education has provided additional funding for anti-viral cleaning supplies as well as driver/monitor Personal Protective Equipment. Bus Operators are obligated to ensure proper protocols are maintained on all vehicles servicing Tri-Board routes.

Where weather permits, according to Public Health direction, windows should be left open to increase ventilation. Only drivers/monitors should touch the windows.

YELLOW SCHOOL BUSES

At the end of morning runs, all seat tops, walls under windows, and the handrail will be treated with anti-viral spray.

At the end of afternoon runs, all seats (top, back, front), walls under windows, window and latches, metal partition next to the stairs, doors and handrail will be treated with anti-viral spray. Garbage will be collected from the floor.

WHEELCHAIR BUSES

In addition to the protocol above, all hard surface equipment will be treated with anti-viral spray.

MINI-VANS

At the end of runs, all door panels (inside) and handles (inside and outside), seat belt latches and tongues, buckle buddies, hard surfaces of car seats and boosters, side windows will be treated with anti-viral spray.

Parents must wear masks and may use a non-scented wipe to clean any equipment their child will be using in the van before loading their child. This practice will not be completed at the school.

Seating Assignments and Contact-Tracing

To assist in contact-tracing, students will be assigned and required to use their assigned bus seat every day. Students in the same household will sit together. Schools and Tri-Board will work together to create these assignments and they will need to be modified every time there is a new application. The application process will therefore take longer to complete. Families who submit their application at the beginning of the school year may need to make alternate arrangements for the first few weeks of school.

If a Driver or Monitor believes a student is ill, they will contact the school immediately through their dispatcher, which will in turn initiate a Public Health process if required.

Everyone on the Bus Should Wear a Mask

Where a distance of two metres between individuals cannot be maintained, Public Health recommends wearing face masks. The Ministry of Education has made masks mandatory for all bus riders in Grades 4-12. Tri-Board strongly recommends anyone on the school bus wear a mask including those in JK-Grade 3, unless exempt for health reasons.

- All drivers and monitors must wear masks
- Any parent/guardian or school staff required to board the bus to load or unload a student must be masked
- All students in Grade 4-12 must wear masks to board and ride the bus.
- All students in JK-Grade 3 should be encouraged to wear masks similarly.

Families are responsible for equipping their children with masks before sending them to school.

Bus Operator Responsibilities

Bus Company

Bus Operators are obligated to ensure all vehicles are treated under the revised cleaning requirements.

Driver/Monitor

Bus drivers/monitors must self-assess for illness and not board the bus if they show symptoms of COVID-19. This may result in the start of the run being delayed.

PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT

All drivers and monitors will be provided with masks, gloves (for cleaning), and optional face shields. Masks are mandatory unless exempt for health reasons.

Student & Family Responsibilities

Obligations from Public Health

PHYSICAL DISTANCE

Individuals must stay 2 metres apart whenever possible.

HAND HYGIENE

Students are expected to thoroughly wash/sanitize their hands before and after riding the bus in the morning and afternoon. There will not be hand sanitizer on the bus for students to use while boarding/deboarding.

Screening for Signs of Illness

Students in households where contamination is suspected must not ride the bus. Students must be kept home if they are sick and/or showing signs of COVID-19.

Students will not be permitted on the bus if they develop symptoms at school and will need alternative transportation home.

While only students in Grades 4-12 and adults are mandated to wear masks, families should encourage younger-aged students to wear them as well.

Student Behaviour

Drivers/Monitors will use the Bus Communication Form to inform schools of any student who:

- Boarded without a mask or took it off during the ride
- Did not sit/stay in their assigned seat
- Put others at risk by touching, or spreading bodily fluids to other people in the vehicle

Severe misconduct with respect to COVID-19 safety may result in semi or permanent suspension from the bus.

Additional Service Modifications

In addition to changes on the school bus and at the stop, Tri-Board has had to amend our complimentary services:

Safety Programs

In order to limit visitors at the school and movement on the bus, The Bus Patroller and First Rider Programs have been suspended for the 2020-2021 school year.

We strongly recommend families visit the safety section of triboard.ca for information normally provided by these programs. For various bus safety videos, visit triboard.ca/safety/videos/

On Time Service

Due to the pre-existing driver shortage and the responsibility of all individuals to isolate for fourteen (14) days if transmission is suspected, there may be times when a driver is unable to

operate their route. The bus company is responsible for finding a replacement driver for the day. Runs may be delayed getting to the school or stop. Late buses will be posted in the usual channels. Families should subscribe to bus delay notifications if they have not already done so.

Application Process

Processing of transportation applications by Tri-Board will take longer than usual due to the importance of seat assignments. Families may need to make interim travel arrangements if they apply for busing in September.

Resources

Local Public Health Units

Kingston, Frontenac, and Lennox & Addington Public Health Unit

kflaph.ca

Hastings and Prince Edward Public Health Unit

hpepublichealth.ca

Board Websites and Communications Channels

TRI-BOARD

Tri-Board Student Transportation Services

triboard.ca/covid19

Follow us on [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#), and [Instagram](#)

[@triboardbus](#)

SCHOOL BOARDS

Algonquin & Lakeshore Catholic District School Board

alcdsb.on.ca

Hastings and Prince Edward District School Board

hpedsb.on.ca

Limestone District School Board

limestone.on.ca

Province of Ontario

[Guide to Reopening Ontario's Schools](#) report

[COVID-19 Reference Document for Symptoms](#) –Version 6.0

SickKids

[Covid-19 Guidance for School Reopening](#) report

Transport Canada


[Federal Guidance for School Bus Operations during the COVID-19 Pandemic](#) report

Appendix A –Tri-Board’s Response to Provincial Reopening Recommendations

Ministry Recommendation	Tri-Board Response
<p>Active forms of travel (for example, walking and cycling) and private transportation by parents and caregivers, are encouraged where possible, to ease pressure on transportation demand.</p>	<p>School Boards will encourage Active Transportation</p>
<p>To support return to school 5 days a week, school boards may be required to increase the utilization of buses beyond one student per seat and operate closer to capacity. To the extent that physical distancing may not be possible, the use of non-medical masks for students in Grades 4 to 12 will be required on school vehicles. Students in Kindergarten to Grade 3 will be encouraged but not required to wear masks on student transportation. Exceptions should be made for students with medical conditions or special needs that prevent masking.</p>	<p>To the extent that physical distancing may not be possible, the use of non-medical masks for students in Grades 4 to 12 will be required on school vehicles. Students in Kindergarten to Grade 3 will be strongly encouraged but not required to wear masks on student transportation. Exceptions should be made for students with medical conditions or special needs that prevent masking.</p>
<p>Students should be assigned seats and a record of the seating plan should be kept to assist with contact tracing in the case of a student or driver contracting COVID-19. Students who live in the same household or are in the same classroom cohort should be seated together.</p>	<p>Schools and Tri-Board will develop assigned seating to group classmates and siblings as much as possible. Bus passes will not be accepted.</p>
<p>Medical masks and eye protection (i.e. face shields) will be provided for school bus drivers, school bus monitors and student aides. Eye protection for drivers should not interfere with the safe operation of vehicles and is intended to protect drivers during close contact with students, such as during boarding and exiting</p>	<p>Face coverings will be required, and face shields will be made available to drivers and monitors.</p>
<p>The province has enhanced funding to support increased disinfecting protocols for frequently touched surfaces (for example, handrails and seatbacks) to at least twice daily. Alcohol-based hand sanitizer should be available on vehicles.</p>	<p>Tri-Board will provide anti-viral spray for cleaning and gloves/ hand sanitizer for driver/monitor use. High touch surfaces shall be treated twice daily.</p>
<p>Where possible, the seat directly behind the school bus driver should remain empty to maintain physical distancing. Windows should be opened when feasible to increase ventilation.</p>	<p>Where possible, the seat directly behind the driver will be kept empty or used by the drivers own child.</p>

<p>School boards should support accommodations for immunocompromised and otherwise medically vulnerable students, and students with special transportation needs (e.g., arrange separate vehicle, assign seating at front of school bus).</p>	<p>Tri-Board will take direction from the boards on the development of the Individual Student Transportation Plan for such students. Tri-Board will provide recommendations and support to the boards in the development of such plans.</p>
<p>Training, where appropriate, to support school bus drivers, school bus monitors, and student aides should be provided to ensure that health and safety measures are understood, followed and enforced.</p>	<p>Tri-Board will provide COVID related materials for instruction for school bus operators to use in their staff training sessions.</p>
<p>Health and safety measures should be clearly communicated to parents and guardians of students to ensure their comfort with the adapted transportation system and receive their support in having students understand and follow guidelines.</p>	<p>Tri-Board will provide a COVID-19 page at Triboard.ca and use regular social media channels to communicate with parents. Member Boards will augment this communication.</p>
<p>Student transportation service providers should also consider the Health and Safety Guidance During COVID-19 for Student Transportation Employers released by the Public Services Health and Safety Association</p>	<p>This link will be provided to School Bus Operators for their instruction and use.</p>


Appendix B – Infographic of Key Messages



COVID-19 School Bus Safety


High-touch areas of the school bus will be treated 2x daily with anti-viral spray. Handrails will be sprayed after every bus run. When weather permits, windows will be left open






Wash your hands **BEFORE** and **AFTER** riding the bus or use hand sanitizer.


Wear your mask, sit in your assigned seat, and keep your backpack on your lap for the entire bus ride






Do not ride the bus if you feel sick

Practice Physical Distance at the bus stop, while boarding, and when exiting the bus





[Triboard.ca/covid19](https://triboard.ca/covid19)