

Parent Information on Return to School for September 2020

Student Transportation of Peel Region (STOPR) continues to work with our member school boards, Peel Public Health, bus operators and the Ministry of Education to mitigate health risks associated with COVID-19.

The health and safety of students, staff and bus drivers is our top priority and STOPR's goal is to create a transportation environment where all can feel safe and the transmission of the virus is limited to the best extent possible.

Preparing your Child for the Riding the School Bus

Each day, parents/guardians must assess their child(ren)'s health before sending them on the bus/van or dropping them off at school.

Parents/Guardians should visit the Public Health Ontario website and click on the COVID self-assessment tool. <https://covid-19.ontario.ca/self-assessment/>

Good hand hygiene is critical in mitigating the transmission of viruses. Students are encouraged to wash their hands thoroughly and/or use hand sanitizer prior to going to the bus stop.

Students in Grades 4 to 12 must wear a face mask while waiting at the bus stop and while riding the bus unless they are unable to due to medical reasons or special needs.

Students in Kindergarten to Grade 3 are not required to wear a face mask. However, it is strongly recommended that they do wear a face mask while waiting at the bus stop and while riding on the school bus, unless they are unable due to medical reasons or special needs.

Please keep in mind that reducing COVID-19 risk of transmission is everyone's responsibility.



**SICK STUDENTS
SHOULD NOT BOARD THE BUS**



WASH YOUR HANDS BEFORE GETTING ON THE
BUS OR USE HAND SANITIZER



WEAR YOUR FACE MASK



COUGH AND SNEEZE IN YOUR ELBOW

Waiting at the stop

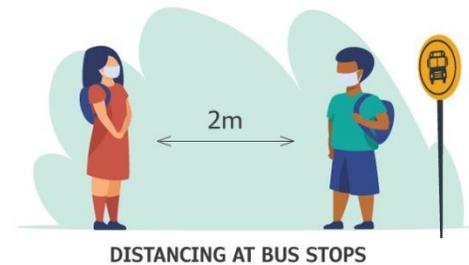
While waiting at bus stops, students and parents/guardians should wear their face masks and maintain physical distancing between family groupings. A distance of two-metres between families is suggested.

Additional bus stops may be added, where required, to minimize the number of students and parents/guardians waiting at the stop.

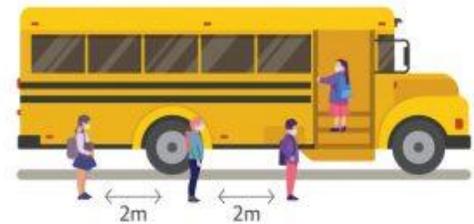
It is important that students arrive at their designated stop at least five minutes before the posted stop time.

Once the bus arrives, students should not crowd the front door. Rather, students should line up while maintaining a two-metre physical distance between them, where possible.

No more than one student should be on the stairs of the bus at a time. Students should get to their assigned seat and sit down as quickly as possible and place their backpack/bag on their lap.



DISTANCING AT BUS STOPS



KEEP YOUR DISTANCE WHILE
GETTING ON THE BUS

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.

Vehicle Seating

All school buses, including special needs vans and wheelchair accessible vehicles, will be loaded closer to capacity with students from the same household and/or class cohort seated together.

STOPR has temporarily suspended “courtesy seating” on our regular bus network due to the uncertainty of COVID-19 restrictions. This may be reassessed at some point during the school year.

The seat located directly behind the driver will be cordoned off and left vacant unless it is needed for the driver's child.

Assigned Seating Plans

Seating plans will be developed for all school buses/vans by School Administration during the last week of August and the first week of school. All seats will be clearly numbered, and all students will be assigned to a specific seat on their bus/van. Every student must sit in their assigned seat during their ride to and from school in order to maintain the household and classroom cohort "bubbles" to the extent possible. Assigned seating will reduce the possibility of virus transmission, and if necessary, the seating plan will facilitate contact tracing for Peel Public Health.

These seating plans will be kept on file at the school and a copy provided to the bus driver.

Meeting the Driver



Medical masks and eye protection (i.e., face shields) have been provided for all school bus drivers and bus monitors. This includes van drivers and taxi drivers who are transporting students.

Additional personal protective equipment (PPE), such as gowns and gloves, will be available for special needs drivers and bus monitors.

Eye protection for drivers should not interfere with the safe operation of the school vehicle and is intended to protect drivers as students are boarding or exiting the vehicle.

Parents/guardians are encouraged to talk to their children prior to their first trip on the bus to remind them that their bus driver may be wearing a mask, face shield or goggles or other type of PPE, such as gloves and a gown.

Travel Assistants, Bus Monitors and Parents

Travel Assistants and Bus Monitors will also be wearing personal protective equipment (PPE) depending on their role within the bus or van. This may include face masks, face shields, goggles, gloves and/or gowns.

Any individuals that come into close proximity with a student (e.g. to load and secure the student) will likely wear a gown, face shield or goggles, a mask and gloves. An alternative to using gloves is to use hand sanitizer before and after handling each student.

Individuals who are only monitoring students and who are not required to enter into the two-metre physical space around students for any reason, will only be required to wear masks, unless they are unable to maintain physical distance. In that case, they may choose to wear face shields or goggles.

Parents/guardians must wear a mask when securing their child within a special needs van or when assisting them off of the van at the end of the day.

All Drivers, Travel Assistants, Bus Monitors will also perform a self-screening procedure before operating their route or performing their duties each day.

Loading and Unloading at the School



DON'T CROWD THE AISLE WHEN EXITING - EXIT ONE AT A TIME ONLY

Upon arriving at the school, students will unload from the front to the back, one seat at a time, while maintaining physical distance between them. Students should use their personal hand sanitizer as soon as they get off the bus or the school provided hand sanitizer before entering the school. Schools will direct students to make their way to the appropriate location for their class cohorts.

At dismissal time, Schools will do their best to maintain class cohorts until it is time to load buses/vans. Class cohorts may be separated into family cohorts upon loading, based on seat assignments.

Cleaning of School Vehicles



In consultation with Peel Public Health, a “deep clean” of all vehicles will be performed on each vehicle twice a day—once after the morning route and again after the afternoon route.

In addition, all high-touch areas of school vehicles will be cleaned by the driver after each run where possible.

Contact Tracing

In the event there is an individual, whether Travel Assistant, Bus Monitor, Driver or Student, identified as potentially having COVID-19, and who may have come in contact with students on a particular bus, the School will contact Peel Public Health. Peel Public Health will conduct contact tracing based on predetermined criteria and advise the school and affected individuals regarding next steps to take. This may or may not include self-isolation, or other measures.



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 an impact on route delays.

Parents/guardians are encouraged to subscribe to STOPR's notification system to receive late bus alerts. They can subscribe by visiting www.stopr.ca

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

Opt-Out/Opt-In

If you haven't already, please complete the Opt-Out form if your child is eligible and will not require transportation. Our opt-out form is available by visiting www.stopr.ca. Please note that you can opt back in at any time for transportation by completing the form and selecting opt-in.