

August 13, 2020

Guidelines for Transportation to Schools

Wherever possible, alternative transportation to school is encouraged. Parents/caregivers/ students may provide their own transportation, including carpooling, walking or cycling, to avoid possible virus exposure on the bus. Note that carpooling can also be a risk for transmission. For advice on how to minimize this risk, please visit www.gov.mb.ca/covid19/infomanitobans/transportation.html.

Where school bus transportation is necessary, the following guidelines should be followed by school bus drivers and students:

- Students with symptoms of COVID-19 should not attend school or be passengers on buses (see <https://sharedhealthmb.ca/covid19/screening-tool/>).
- Drivers with symptoms of COVID-19 should not drive the school bus (see <https://sharedhealthmb.ca/covid19/screening-tool/>).
- All school bus passengers in Grade 5 and over, as well as the driver, are required to wear a non-medical mask. These should be put on before getting on the bus and taken off after exiting the bus, if removal is appropriate for the setting. Students in lower grades may also wear non-medical masks. (Guidelines on how to wear a mask can be found at www.gov.mb.ca/covid19/prepareandprevent/index.html.)
- All passengers and drivers should perform hand hygiene before and after being on the bus.
- Where capacity allows, leave the seat immediately behind the driver unoccupied.
- When possible and as weather permits, open windows and/or roof vents to allow for increased ventilation.
- Assign seats so the same students are seated in the same seats every day for regular bus routes.
- Where possible, seat one student per seat on the school bus. Students from the same household can also sit together on one seat.
- Where one student/household per seat is not possible, seat students from the same in-school cohort on the same seat on the bus.
- Regardless of seating arrangement needs, ensure that up-to-date lists of bus riders and drivers are maintained to enable contact tracing if required.
- Students who require a companion to ride the bus may sit next to their companion (treated as if they were from the same household and/or in-school cohort).

- When unable to practice physical distancing while assisting students using mobility devices or child restraint systems, additional considerations may be necessary (see www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/covid/reopening/supports_non_distance.html).
- As per routine protocols, students should remain seated in their own seats and should not move around the bus.
- Students may transfer from one bus to another to get to and from school. These students will be considered members of two bus cohorts.
- Children should maintain physical distancing (two metres is recommended) when lining up to get on the bus, and when exiting the bus.
- Bus pick-up and drop-off of students at the school should be staggered where possible, to avoid crowding at the school entrance.
- Buses should be loaded from back to front and unloaded from front to back; one student or household should stand up and exit at a time to minimize close contact between students.
- Ensure there is enhanced cleaning of seats and other high-touch surfaces (e.g., windows, railings) before each new group of students attends the bus.
- Hard-surface disinfectants or cleaning agents may be transported on a bus providing the product is secured and not accessible to students (maximum of 1 litre).
- Subject to public health guidance and risk of COVID-19 transmission, additional measures for physical distancing may be required during the school year.