



Student Transportation Approach to Back-to-School

Nbisiing Bus Lines has worked closely with our partner School Boards on the 2020-2021 school year student transportation needs since March. For the upcoming school year, we understand that you may choose to drive your child to school despite being eligible for transportation. Where possible, parents are asked to arrange their own transportation to and from school for their children.

Please contact our office if you wish to opt out of bus transportation in September.

Students will be transported 5 days a week. Nbisiing Bus Lines has implemented the recommended measures to help minimize the spread of COVID-19 to protect both students and school bus drivers. We recommend that you ready your child for these new protocols. Practice how to properly use face masks, physical distance, wash hands, and cough and sneeze.

Please check your child's School Board's website for updates on the learning environment in each school. Some secondary schools may adopt a *quadmester* model, which is four segments to the school year, to emphasize student cohorts. In this model students will attend school five days a week and take two credits at a time.

We will continue to share information with you on NFN.ca and the Nbisiing Bus Lines Facebook page about health and safety protocols and school re-opening information as it becomes available.

The recommendations and guidance in this plan below are subject to change, based on the evolution of transmission of COVID-19 and the discovery of new evidence.

Please be assured that we will do all that is possible within the constraints that we are up against to meet the needs of everyone we serve, having regard for the health and safety of all concerned. Miigwech/Thank you for your on-going patience and understanding as we update and finalize plans that will support student safety, achievement and well-being while meeting Ministry of Education and public health guidelines.

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Health and Safety protocols

The optimal way to prevent the transmission of COVID-19 is to apply a combination of controls, not only personal protective equipment (PPE), in order to mitigate and/or eliminate hazards that school bus drivers and students may be exposed to.

School bus drivers are encouraged to monitor and abide to public health authorities' recommendations including the [North Bay Parry Sound District Health Unit](#) and those published by the Government of Canada on the [Coronavirus disease \(COVID-19\)](#) and Transport Canada's [Federal Guidance for School Bus Operations during the COVID-19 Pandemic](#).

Controls implemented for Nbisiing Bus Lines

- 1. Parents have an option to transport child to school.** Parents may opt out of school transportation and arrange for their own transportation. Parents may also opt out of school attendance and pursue online learning.
- 2. Student and driver self-assessment:** Students and school bus drivers will use a screening tool to assess if they have any signs/symptoms of COVID-19. Those who do have signs/symptoms should contact the Lawrence Commanda Health Centre at (705) 753-3312, and not get on the bus.
- 3. Physical distancing, to the extent possible:**
 - Students will sit further apart when possible.
 - Assigned seating – 1 student per seat, family members will sit together, cohort of schools.
 - Load bus from back to front to reduce exposure with others.
- 4. Mandatory face covering:** The wearing of [face covering \(non-medical masks\)](#) is mandatory for students aged 5 and up, and can help prevent the transmission of infectious respiratory droplets. Face coverings play an important role when physical distancing is not possible or barriers are not available.

Exceptions should be made for students with medical conditions or special needs that prevent masking.

Please contact the NFN Education Department or the Lawrence Commanda Health Centre for reusable cloth masks for your child. We will provide instructions for cleaning and wearing masks. If your child does not have a mask, the school bus driver will provide them with a disposable mask.

- 5. Reduce Bus capacity.**
- 6. Students should maintain a distance of 2 meters while waiting at the school bus stop.**
- 7. Increased ventilation on bus:** If possible, and if weather permits, some windows will be open to increase ventilation.
- 8. Additional cleaning protocols.** See more details below.

9. PPE supplies on the bus:

- ✓ Masks, gloves, face shields, gowns and safety goggles for school bus drivers
- ✓ Hand sanitizer
- ✓ Tissues/Kleenex
- ✓ Disinfectant wipes
- ✓ Garbage bags with weighted garbage bins

10. Health and safety training for school bus drivers: All drivers have received PPE training and follow the [NFN Preventing COVID-19 in the Workplace Policy](#).

11. Health and safety training for students: Nbisiing Bus Lines recommends that parents reinforce hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette, physical distancing and environmental cleaning with their child before school starts.

12. Signage in bus: Posters on the bus will remind students and school bus drivers on respiratory etiquette, physical distancing, mandatory mask wearing and etiquette, handwashing and how to screen for COVID-19.

School bus drivers will also have a seating chart for students.

13. No eating or drinking on the bus.

School Bus Operations during the COVID-19 Pandemic

Before a Trip

Monitor for Symptoms

- Students and school bus drivers will self-assess for signs and symptoms of COVID-19.
- All children and school bus drivers who experience symptoms, including mild cough or low-grade fever (37.3 C or more), need to self-isolate and stay home. If a member of a child's or driver's household develops symptoms of COVID-19, it is recommended that the child or driver stay home and self-isolate.
- A child who develops symptoms while at school are not permitted to return home on a school bus and should be picked up by a parent or guardian.

Hand Hygiene

- Thorough hand washing with plain soap and water is still the single most effective way to reduce the spread of COVID-19.
- School bus drivers should wash their hands often, including before and after completing trips.
- Children should be reminded by parents or teacher to wash their hands with soap water for 20 seconds before they leave home to take the bus, when they arrive at school, when they are leaving school prior to taking the bus, and when they get home.

Cleaning High-Touch Surfaces in the School Bus

- School bus drivers will make sure school bus interiors are clean and hygienic by wiping surfaces with disinfectant during bus safety check.
- The following equipment will be available for cleaning:
 - PPE (as required by the operator's health and safety protocol)
 - Disposable cloths
 - Paper towels and absorbent materials
 - Waste disposal bags and tape
- Cleaning is a critical first step for disinfecting affected surfaces. In general, when cleaning school bus interiors:
 - Put on disposable, water-proof gloves. Avoid hand contact with the face, especially the nose and eyes. Direct contact with contaminated areas should be avoided.
 - For routine cleaning and disinfection, and for areas potentially contaminated with COVID-19, a hard-surface disinfectant authorized by Health Canada is recommended. For a list of hard-surface disinfectants for use against coronavirus (COVID-19), please see [Health Canada's website](#).
- High touch surfaces in school buses will be regularly cleaned include but are not limited to:
 - Seats;
 - Inside hand railing;
 - Floors;
 - Interior windows;
 - Inside and outside door handles; Inside door grab handles, pads and armrests;
 - Keys;
 - Steering wheel;
 - Shift lever and console;
 - Dashboard;
 - Turn signal and wiper stalks;
 - Seat and Seat adjuster; and
 - Any other parts that are commonly used and that may have been touched.
- Dispose of soiled cleaning clothes, disinfection cloths, disposable gloves and any other items in contact with contaminated surfaces in waste disposal bag. Seal the waste disposal bag and discard in lined trash bin.
- Wash hands when finished, using proper hand washing techniques.
- In addition to regular cleaning of school bus interiors, to the extent possible, it is recommended that operators reduce the number of drivers per vehicle. The same driver should use the same vehicle and keep the same work schedule in order to limit contact as much as possible.

During a Trip

- School bus drivers are encouraged to carry alcohol-based hand sanitizer (ABHS) with at least 60% alcohol and use it after assisting a child to their seat or having other direct contact with children, as needed throughout a trip. ABHS should be properly labeled and stored in accordance with its material safety data sheet. ABHS should be stored outside the reach of children.

Personal Protective Equipment/Masks

- School bus drivers will wear a non-medical mask or face covering and other personal protective equipment including gloves as recommended in Transport Canada's guidance Personal Protective Equipment and their uses by Commercial Vehicle Drivers available at this link:

<https://www.tc.gc.ca//eng/motorvehiclesafety/personal-protective-equipment-uses-commercial-vehicle-drivers.html>

Physical Distancing

- To the extent possible, social distancing measures are implemented in school buses. (1 per seat/mask, family cohort, school cohort).
- Where possible, to allow children required to ride school buses to sit further apart from other school cohorts on bus.
- Children from the same household can be permitted to sit together and are not required to social distance.

Shields

- It is important to remember that school bus passengers and driver are protected through compartmentalization, by using high back padded seats that are cleaned twice a day, face masks, physical distancing, hand washing, and assigned seating.
- Face shields/goggles for drivers can engage/disengage as needed throughout a trip.

Contact Tracing

- School bus drivers will log daily attendance of students on the bus for contact tracing purposes and if follow-up health measures are needed.

Rider who displays symptoms of illness

If a driver identifies a student who displays symptoms of illness, the student should be provided with a surgical grade mask and seated alone in the first vacant row, to the right of the driver. The driver may consider moving other students to ensure greater distancing between the student displaying symptoms and other students or themselves. In addition, the driver shall:

- Contact their dispatcher who will advise the school or parent, as the case may be, to request that the student be met at the bus by the principal or parent/guardian whether on the morning or afternoon run;
- Advise him/her of their concerns;

- Consider having the bus go directly to the school to reduce the possibility of spread to other students. In this case, Nbisiiing Bus Lines may post a route delay in the system. A second bus can be dispatched to complete the route.
- Document the incident and advise the operator who will report the incident to public health authorities unless previously reported by the principal.

At the End of the Trip

- School bus drivers will repeat a thorough cleaning of high-touch surfaces with appropriate disinfectants at the end of the run during bus safety check.
- School bus drivers who start to experience symptoms after completing a trip should stay home, self-isolate, and advise the Education Office and Health Unit so that additional steps can be taken to protect other drivers using the school bus.