

GUIDELINES FOR BUSSING DURING COVID-19 for Transportation Purposes

The health and safety of drivers, EA's, monitors and students is of utmost importance. This document is to outline procedures to ensure proper precautions are maintained during the transportation of students for the Renfrew County Joint Transportation Consortium in accordance with regulatory requirements and current public health directives. These precautions are a temporary measure that will last only as long as the COVID-19 pandemic. These precautions may vary as the situation unfolds over time and may be amended. They will end once the precautions become no longer necessary as directed by the Government of Ontario and the Renfrew County and District Health Unit. Public health prevention measures must be followed while using any school vehicle (e.g. self-assessment, hand washing, physical distancing, face covering).

BUSSING CONDITIONS PARENTS

Parents and students will be required to maintain 6 feet/ 2 meter apart while at the stop waiting for the school vehicle. Parents that are required to help their child load or unload from a vehicle must always wear a mask.

Active forms of travel (e.g., walking and cycling) and other private transportation by parents and care givers are encouraged, where possible, to ease the pressure and demand for transportation services.

The following health and safety measures should be clearly communicated and understood by parents and guardians of students that require transportation services. This will ensure their comfort with the adapted transportation system and receive their support in having their children understand and follow guidelines with seating.

Due to the number and frequency of passengers, families should note that school vehicles are not sterile environments and physical distancing will not be possible aboard the school vehicle.

BUSSING CONDITIONS STUDENTS

All students, prior to arriving or boarding the school vehicle stop, **must** first conduct a self-assessment provided by Ontario Ministry of Health <https://covid-19.ontario.ca/self-assessment/>

To support the return to school 5 days a week, consortia may be required to increase the utilization of school vehicles beyond one student per seat and operate closer to capacity. This means up to 3 students per seat from grades K-6 and 2 students per seat from grades 7-12, as normal.

Public health recommends the use of non-medical masks when physical distancing cannot be maintained. It will be mandatory for students in Grades 4 to 12 to wear a mask while riding on a school vehicle. Students in Kindergarten to Grade 3 will be encouraged to wear masks on school vehicles. Reasonable exceptions may be made for students with medical conditions or special needs that prevent masking, such as, students with sensory or breathing difficulties. These individuals may be exempted through consultation with the school principal and school board as necessary. Accommodations will be considered for students who are immunocompromised and/or medically vulnerable as well as those with special transportation needs, such as, assigning seating at front of school bus or arranging a separate vehicle.

Students are encouraged to practice wearing masks and learn what type of mask is most comfortable for them. Students may wear their own non-medical masks and non-medical masks made available for students through the school. Students are expected to thoroughly wash/ sanitize their hands (see appendix “C” and or “D”) prior to boarding the school vehicle and after they leave the school vehicle. Students are responsible for maintaining 2 meter distance while at the bus stop which includes lining up single-file when loading and unloading the school vehicle. Students will 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.

Due to contact tracing requirements, the use of emergency bus passes should only be utilized when deemed an emergency. Requests for temporary seating arrangements are discouraged. Due to space restrictions, all temporary seating arrangements will be made through consultation with the Renfrew County Joint Transportation Consortium, designated school principal as well as school board. Public health may be consulted when necessary.

Student Behaviour

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

- Boarded without a mask or took it off during the ride
- Board vehicle while exhibiting COVID-19 symptoms
- 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 that endangers others during the COVID-19 Pandemic may result in semi or permanent suspension from the vehicle.

BUSSING CONDITIONS CLEANING

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 school vehicles**. School vehicles will operate near capacity with additional health and safety precautions in place, such as cleaning regimes and the use of PPE. School vehicles will remain shared between schools and Boards.

Operators are obligated to ensure all vehicles are treated under the revised cleaning requirements. Public health recommends cleaning and disinfecting on the school vehicle will be completed **at least** twice daily and as time permits. Where possible the handrail should be wiped down between runs. After morning runs are complete high touch areas (see list below) will be cleaned and disinfected. After afternoon runs are complete there will be a deeper cleaning (including but not limited to high touch areas as well as tops/front/back/bottom of seats, side walls under window, window sills, safety latches etc.).

High Touch areas are listed in the [Federal Guidance for School Bus Operators during COVID-19 Pandemic](#) as follows;

- Seats;
- Inside hand railing;
- Floors;
- Interior windows and wall section below passenger windows;
- Inside and outside door handles (including manual control for service door);
- Inside door grab handles, pads and armrests;
- Keys;
- Steering wheel;

- Shift lever and console;
- Dashboard;
- Turn signal and wiper stalks;
- Seat and seat adjuster;
- Any other parts that are commonly used and that may have been touched.

NOTE: It is emphasised that school vehicles are not sterile environments due to the number and frequency of passengers.

For routine cleaning and disinfection, and for areas potentially contaminated with COVID-19, a hard-surface disinfectant authorized by [Health Canada](#) is recommended. Manufacturer’s instructions will be followed regarding the recommended dilution rates, contact times and conditions specific to the surface.

The following equipment should be available for cleaning:

- Personal protective equipment (as required by the operator’s health and safety protocol);
- Disposable cloths;
- Paper towels and/or absorbent materials;
- Waste disposal bags and tape; and
- Cleaning agents/disinfectants.

BUSSING CONDITIONS DRIVERS

All drivers prior to coming to work **must** first conduct a self-assessment provided by Ontario Ministry of Health <https://covid-19.ontario.ca/self-assessment/>

Medical masks and eye protection (i.e. face shields) will be provided for drivers, monitors and student aides. Eye protection for drivers should not interfere with the safe operation of vehicles. Masking and eye protection is intended to protect drivers during close contact with students, such as during boarding and exiting. Alcohol-based hand sanitizer will be available on vehicles to allow the driver to clean their hands when appropriate. Windows will be opened when feasible to increase ventilation, weather permitting.

Transportation operators should support accommodations for immunocompromised and otherwise medically vulnerable drivers. Training, where appropriate, to support drivers, monitors, and student aides should be provided to ensure that health and safety measures are understood, followed and enforced.

Transportation operators are always responsible to maintain records of their employees (see appendix A). This includes.

- Detailed tracking of worker’s status which school vehicle was used on which day to drive which route is to be kept at all times (e.g. regular scheduled vehicle or spare, route performed AM & PM, off-work for sick/family caring duties, etc.).
- Records of individuals who work together and when
- Records of student seating charts of who sits together.

SELF-ASSESSMENT

All persons prior to boarding the school vehicle or arriving at the school vehicle stop for school **must** first conduct a self-assessment provided by Ontario Ministry of Health <https://covid-19.ontario.ca/self-assessment/>

Access to any vehicle will only be granted to people who have passed the self-assessment with no COVID-19 symptoms.

Transportation personnel and students may not come into or remain at school or on the school vehicle if:

- They have COVID-19 or related symptoms (including cough, fever, sore throat, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing or sudden loss of smell);
- They have had close contact with a person(s) that has or is suspected of COVID-19; or
- They have traveled outside Canada within the past 14 days.

Transportation personnel and students **must** immediately self-isolate and notify the appropriate agency.

Transportation personnel and students who exhibit symptoms will be required to get contact RC VTAC (1-844-727-6404 / <https://rcvtac.ca/>) or their personal health care provider for assessment. They will determine whether swabbing for COVID-19 is necessary.

IF YOU ARE NOT FEELING WELL STAY AT HOME

REPORTING ILLNESS

- If a staff member is ill, they must not go to work and notify the appropriate personnel. They are encouraged to complete the self-assessment and follow the instructions given from the assessment result. If staff members develop symptoms while at work, they must isolate from others immediately, and notify RCJTC by alternate means (phone/ email etc.) in order to deal with any issues as they arise.

If a student is ill, they must not go to school, and notify the appropriate personnel. If a student develops symptoms while at school, they must isolate from others immediately, and notify the appropriate personnel. Students who are ill will be sent home immediately and NOT be transported by school vehicle.

**ALWAYS PRACTICE PHYSICAL DISTANCING BY MAINTAINING A PHYSICAL SEPARATION OF AT LEAST 6 FEET/2 METERS FROM ANOTHER PERSON
(APPENDIX B)**

GENERAL PRECAUTIONS

1. Refrain from shaking hands or any other forms of physical contact.
2. Cover your coughs and sneezes with a tissue. If you don't have a tissue, cough or sneeze into your upper sleeve or elbow, not your hands. If you use a tissue, discard immediately and wash your hands afterward. (*Appendix E- Coughing Etiquette*)
3. Avoid touching your eyes, mouth and nose as much as possible.
4. Stay within your designated seating assignment.
5. Avoid high-touch areas, where possible, or ensure you clean your hands after every ride on the school vehicle.
6. Do not share personal items or supplies such as phones, pens, notebooks, PPE, etc.

7. Wear gloves when you have a break in your skin, or you have a bandage that is covering a wound. Gloves are not a substitute for proper hand hygiene, as they do not guarantee that the item or surface is not contaminated. In the event that you use gloves, do so properly.

a. Tips for the Proper Use of Gloves (*Appendix F - Glove Removal*)

i. Gloves must be used in combination with handwashing.

ii. Hands should always be washed or sanitized prior to putting on gloves and after taking gloves off. See *Appendix C - Hand Washing and D - Hand Sanitizing* for information and instruction on proper steps.

iii. Change gloves whenever you change activity, touch your face, or come into contact with an item that may have germs.

iv. Gloves should be thrown out and not used again once they have been taken off.

8. Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.

9. Perform proper hand hygiene often (See *Appendix C - Hand Washing and D - Hand Sanitizing* for information and instruction on proper steps).

Paper work

10. Where possible, use technology to send and receive paperwork.

11. Do not share writing tools. Request that others use their own writing tools when signing. If required to share, clean and disinfectant writing tools.

12. Perform hand hygiene before and after transferring paperwork.

JOB TASKS WHERE PHYSICAL DISTANCING IS NOT POSSIBLE

There may be specific job tasks where physical distancing is not possible. When performing functions that require close contact, masks and face coverings will be utilized. Gloves are optional. These will be made available to you at your work location.

For drivers, this could include:

- Moving/lifting car/ booster seats.
- Securing/ releasing, loading/ unloading of wheelchair equipment with students.
- Having to communicate with students and or parents in a small tight area.

PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT

All drivers will be provided hand sanitizer, cleaning wipes, disposable medical face masks and disposable gloves at their location. It is the operators' responsibility to ensure they maintain their PPE for each of their drivers and train their staff on how to follow the proper protocol for putting on, taking off and disposing of PPE as required.

Contact RCJTC if re-stocking of PPE is required.

See *Appendix F - Glove Removal* and *G - Face Masks* for information and instruction on how to properly put on and take off gloves and face masks. PPE worn as part of safe work practices to prevent transmission of microorganisms from person-to-person should adhere to the following process. PPE should be put on just prior to the interaction with the person, removed immediately after the interaction has ended and disposed of in the appropriate

waste receptacle. Gloves are to be worn whenever required while on the worksite but are treated the same as bare hands in terms of minimizing unnecessary touching of anything on site and the user's face.

ALLOWING ACCESS (Third Party)

Before anyone is granted access onto vehicles, they must adhere to the following:

- All persons required to access vehicles **must** first conduct a self-assessment provided by Ontario Ministry of Health <https://covid-19.ontario.ca/self-assessment/>
- All persons **must** declare that they have taken the self assessment and confirmation of assessment is negative.
- Only enter and exit through the main door entrance.
- Wash and/or sanitize hands before they have entered the vehicle and again when they leave the vehicle.
- Remain 6 feet/2 meters apart where possible.
- If physical distancing cannot be maintained, they must wear a mask and face shield. Gloves are optional. Individuals entering are to supply their own PPE.

Appendix A: Daily Log/ Sign in Sheet

Date: _____

Name: _____

License #: _____

Unit #: _____

I verify that I have completed the COVID-19 Self Check and I am healthy to be on a vehicle: initial

Please list below your activities for your workday

Areas Accessed (Route # you drove)	If you have come into close contact with another, please note their name here

Before entry onto the vehicle:

Ensure to wash your hands

During your ride:

Ensure you wash or sanitize your hands frequently, there will be strict protocols for NO eating or drinking while on the school vehicle by anyone. Follow hygiene protocols of covering your cough/ sneeze in your elbow, maintain social distancing of 6 feet/2m from others in your area where possible. If during your shift you are required to be within 6 feet/2 meters of another person then you must wear a face mask and when loading/ unlading a face shield. Disposable gloves are optional but hand hygiene must be followed. When social distancing is not available you must wear mask and face shield PPE.

If during your ride you are required to share equipment, you must disinfect them before and after using them.

At the end of your route:

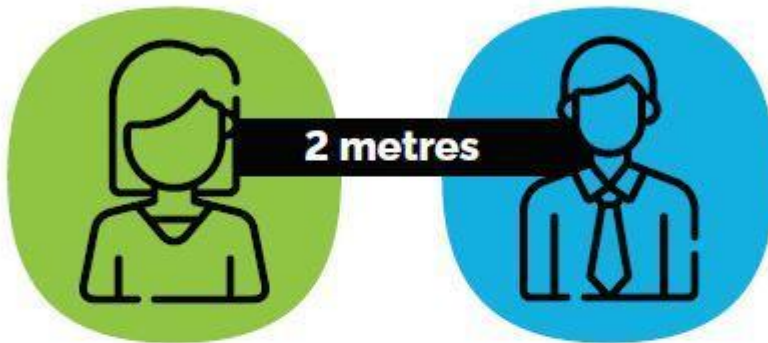
You MUST clean and disinfect all areas as identified.

I verify that I have cleaned my vehicle at the end of each of my shifts: initial

The log sheet is to be left in a binder in the vehicle at your work location.

2019 Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19)

Practice social distancing



Do your best to keep at least two metres away from others.

If you have symptoms,
take the self-assessment at [Ontario.ca/coronavirus](https://ontario.ca/coronavirus).
Or call your primary care provider
or Telehealth Ontario at
416-797-0000 (TTY: 416-797-0007)







For more information,
visit [Ontario.ca/coronavirus](https://ontario.ca/coronavirus)

Ontario 

Appendix C: Hand Washing Poster

Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)
How to wash your hands



<p>1</p>  <p>Wet hands with warm water.</p>	<p>2</p>  <p>Apply soap.</p>	<p>3</p>  <p>Lather soap and rub hands palm to palm.</p>	<p>4</p>  <p>Rub in between and around fingers.</p>
<p>5</p>  <p>Rub back of each hand with palm of other hand.</p>	<p>6</p>  <p>Rub fingertips of each hand in opposite palm.</p>	<p>7</p>  <p>Rub each thumb clasped in opposite hand.</p>	<p>8</p>  <p>Rinse thoroughly under running water.</p>
<p>9</p>  <p>Pat hands dry with paper towel.</p>	<p>10</p>  <p>Turn off water using paper towel.</p>	<p>11</p>  <p>Your hands are now clean.</p>	

Appendix D: Hand sanitizer poster

How to use hand sanitizer



<p>1</p>  <p>Apply 1 to 2 pumps of product to palms of dry hands.</p>	<p>2</p>  <p>Rub hands together, palm to palm.</p>	<p>3</p>  <p>Rub in between and around fingers.</p>	<p>4</p>  <p>Rub back of each hand with palm of other hand.</p>
<p>5</p>  <p>Rub fingertips of each hand in opposite palm.</p>	<p>6</p>  <p>Rub each thumb clasped in opposite hand.</p>	<p>7</p>  <p>Rub hands until product is dry. Do not use paper towels.</p>	<p>8</p>  <p>Once dry, your hands are clean.</p>

Sources:

Ontario Agency for Health Protection and Promotion (Public Health Ontario), Provincial Infectious Diseases Advisory Committee. Best practices for hand hygiene in all health care settings [Internet]. 4th ed. Toronto, ON: Queen's Printer for Ontario; 2014. Available from: <https://www.publichealthontario.ca/-/media/documents/Top-hand-hygiene.pdf?open>

The information in this document is current as of March 16, 2020.

©Queen's Printer for Ontario, 2020



Appendix E: Coughing Etiquette



This is an excerpt from
Infection Prevention and Control for Clinical Office Practice



COVER YOUR COUGH

Stop the spread of **germs** that can make you and others sick!

Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Put your used tissue in the waste basket.

If you don't have a tissue, cough or sneeze into your upper sleeve or elbow, not your hands.



You may be asked to put on a facemask to protect others.

Wash hands often with soap and warm water for 15 seconds. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand rub.

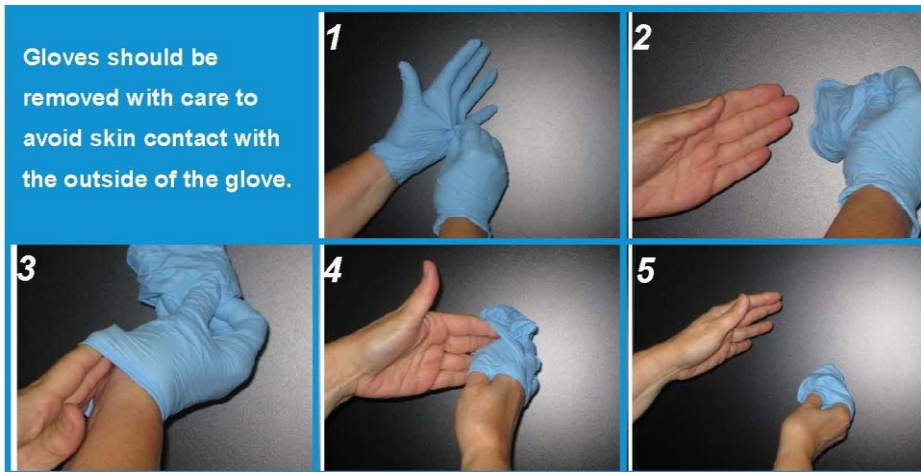


For more information please contact Public Health Ontario's Infection Prevention and Control Department at ipac@oahpp.ca or visit www.publichealthontario.ca



Appendix F: How to remove gloves

Steps to Take Off Gloves



©Ontario Agency for Health Protection and Promotion 2013

Disposable gloves should be removed as follows:

- 1** Remove gloves using a glove-to-glove/skin-to-skin technique. First, grasp the outside of one glove at the palm.
- 2** Peel glove away from the palm toward the fingers, rolling the glove inside-out. Be careful not to touch your skin with your gloved hand. The contamination is now on the inside. Ball the glove up and hold in your other gloved hand.
- 3** Carefully slide the un-gloved index finger inside the wrist band of the gloved hand. Try and avoid touching the outside of the glove because that is the contaminated region.
- 4** Gently pull outwards and down toward the fingers, removing the glove inside out.
- 5** Pull the glove down so that the first glove ends up inside the second glove and no part of the outside is exposed. Throw away both gloves in an appropriate container. Perform hand hygiene.



Steps to Put on and Remove a Face Mask



1
With clean hands, pull the mask to your face, grasping only the ear loops.



2
Place loops of mask over each ear.



3
Bend the nose bar over the bridge of the nose. Ensure a snug fit under the chin.



4
To remove your mask, carefully grasp the ear loops and remove from your ears.



5
Slowly pull mask from your face. Do not touch the front of the mask.



6
Store mask in a bag for storage or disposal. Clean hands.

Source: Public Health Ontario



Renfrew County and District Health Unit

"Optimal Health for All in Renfrew County and District"

Resources

Local Public Health Units

Renfrew County District Health Unit	https://www.rcdhu.com/
Renfrew County Virtual Triage and Assessment Center	https://revtac.ca/

Consortium & Boards Websites and Communications Channels

RCJTC

Renfrew County Joint Transportation Consortium	RCJTC/COVID-19
--	--------------------------------

Follow us on , , @RCJTC

SCHOOL BOARDS

Renfrew County Catholic District School Board	rccdsb.on.ca
Renfrew County District School Board	rcdsb.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

RCJTC Response to Provincial Reopening Recommendations

Ministry Recommendation	RCJTC 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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>Students in Kindergarten to Grade 3 will be strongly encouraged 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.</p> <p>Students who live in the same household or are in the same classroom cohort should be seated together.</p>	<p>Schools and RCJTC will develop assigned seating to group classmates and siblings as much as possible. <u>Emergency bus passes</u> should only be utilized when deemed an emergency. Requests for <u>temporary seating arrangements</u> will be made through consultation with the Renfrew County Joint Transportation Consortium, designated school principal as well as school board.</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>RCJTC 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>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>RCJTC will take direction from the boards on the development of the Individual Student Transportation Plan for such students. RCJTC 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>RCJTC 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>RCJTC will provide a COVID-19 page at onthebus.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>