



2021-22 Student Transportation Guidelines & FAQ's For Transportation on School Buses and Specialized Transportation

The Simcoe County Student Transportation Consortium (SCSTC) will be following all Government of Ontario, Ministry of Education (MOE), and local public health unit guidelines related to student transportation which includes:

Self-Screening	All transported students must self-screen every day before going to the bus stop in the morning.
Physical Distancing	Students and parents are encouraged to respect physical distancing of at least 2 metres between students at assigned bus stop locations.
Masking	The use of non-medical masks for all students (from Kindergarten through Grade 12) is required on school vehicles.
Driver PPE	Drivers will be wearing medical masks. Eye protection will be worn as students board and exit the school vehicle.
Assigned Seating	Students will be assigned seats and are required to sit only in their assigned seating.
Hand Hygiene	Students are encouraged to follow proper hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette.
Enhanced Cleaning	School vehicles will follow an enhanced cleaning protocol of disinfecting high-touch surfaces (for example handrails, seatbacks) twice daily.

Some Frequently Asked Questions Related to Student Transportation for Fall 2021:

1. Seating Plans on School Buses, Busettes, Wheelchair Accessible Vehicles and Vans

a. Why are there seating plans on the school buses and vans this year?

Ontario's guidance for schools, school boards and school authorities to operate during the 2021-2022 school year identifies: *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.*

b. How will the seating assignments be chosen?

Ontario's guidance for schools, school boards and school authorities to operate during the 2021-2022 school year identifies: *Students who live in the same household or are in the same classroom cohort should be seated together where possible.*

c. How will my child find out what their seat assignment is?

School vehicle drivers will have copies of seating plans for their vehicles and will communicate seat assignments as students board the vehicle on their first day.

d. Will my child's transportation arrangements or seating assignment change? How will I be notified of these changes?

Student transportation arrangements are subject to change throughout the school year and occur due to several factors. Any changes to transportation arrangements or seating assignments will be communicated prior to the change effective date by the school, school board and/or the SCSTC.

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e. Can I request a change to my child's assigned seat?

Unfortunately, we cannot accommodate special requests. If you have any concerns with the seating plan, please contact your child's school.

2. Face Covering Requirements on School Buses, Busettes, Wheelchair Accessible Vehicles and Vans

a. Will school bus and van drivers be wearing masks?

Yes. As outlined in Ontario's guidance for schools, school boards and school authorities to operate during the 2021-2022 school year, school bus drivers will be provided with the required Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) including medical masks, and eye protection as students board and exit the school vehicle.

b. Is my child required to wear a face covering on the school vehicle?

Yes. As outlined in Ontario's guidance for schools, school boards and school authorities to operate during the 2021-2022 school year, the use of non-medical masks for all students (from Kindergarten through Grade 12) is required on school vehicles. Exceptions should be made for students with medical conditions or special needs that prevent masking.

c. Am I required to wear a face covering if I need to access the school van to help my child buckle their seat belt?

Yes. For students approved for specialized transportation, parents/guardians of students riding on school purpose minivans will be required to wear a face covering if their student requires assistance boarding or exiting the vehicle or buckling their seat belt.

3. School Bus Stops

a. What should I do prior to sending my child to the bus stop in the morning?

All transported students must self-screen every day before going to the bus stop in the morning. Ontario's guidance for schools, school boards and school authorities to operate during the 2021-2022 school year identifies: *All students who are experiencing symptoms consistent with COVID-19 as identified in the screening tool, must not attend school and should follow the guidance provided in the screening tool, which may include seeking appropriate medical attention as required, and/or getting tested for COVID-19.*

b. What should I do while waiting at the bus stop?

Students and parents/guardians are encouraged to respect physical distancing of at least 2 metres between students at assigned bus stop locations. Maintaining physical distancing at the bus stop is the responsibility of the student and their parent/guardian. Parents/guardians are responsible for student safety to, from and at the school bus stops.

4. Enhanced Cleaning on School Buses, Busettes, Wheelchair Accessible Vehicles and Vans

a. Will all school vehicles receive enhanced cleaning?

Yes. Ontario's guidance for schools, school boards and school authorities to operate during the 2021-2022 school year identifies: *School vehicles should follow an enhanced cleaning protocol of disinfecting high-touch surfaces (for example handrails, seatbacks) at least twice daily.*

SCSTC contracted school vehicle operators will follow the enhanced cleaning protocols for frequently touched surfaces provided in Ontario's guidance for schools, school boards and school authorities to operate during the 2021-2022 school year. The frequently touched surfaces that will receive increased

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disinfecting twice daily include: handrails, seat tops and backs, windowsills, inside and outside door handles, and driver console area.

This enhanced cleaning will occur once in the morning and once in the afternoon. Particular attention will be paid to the handrail of the bus which will receive additional disinfection between bus runs.

b. Will hand sanitizer be available on the school vehicle?

Yes. As outlined in Ontario's guidance for schools, school boards and school authorities to operate during the 2021-2022 school year, hand sanitizer will be available.

5. Capacity of School Buses, Busettes, Wheelchair Accessible Vehicles and Vans

a. Will there be reduced capacity on school buses and vans?

No. Ontario's guidance for schools, school boards and school authorities to operate during the 2021-2022 school year identifies: *School vehicles can operate at full capacity.* The number of students transported on any school bus or van varies by geographic location and is subject to several different factors.

b. Will physical distancing be maintained on all school buses and vans?

No. Ontario's guidance for schools, school boards and school authorities to operate during the 2021-2022 school year identifies: *School vehicles can operate at full capacity.*

Efforts will be made to assign seats to students who live in the same household or are in the same classroom cohort together. Where school vehicles are able to operate at less than full capacity, efforts will be made to seat students in a manner that maximizes physical distancing. Where possible, the seat directly behind the school bus driver will remain empty to maintain physical distancing. Windows will be opened when feasible to increase ventilation.

c. Will bus routes continue to service more than one school?

Yes. Bus routes will still service multiple schools. We're continuing to monitor all of our bus routes as we do every year, so there may be changes to bus routes throughout the year based on timing and the needs of students.

6. Who is responsible for student behavior issues on the school bus?

On the bus, students should remain seated, facing forward, and in their seats for the entire ride. Additionally, those students required to wear face coverings should keep them on for the entire ride. Student transportation is a privilege not a right, that can be suspended or revoked if expectations are not met. For the safety of all, students must respect that the school vehicle driver is in charge of the vehicle and the passengers. As the school vehicle is an extension of the classroom, student discipline falls under the responsibility of the school Principal.

7. What is the Government of Ontario's operational guidance for COVID-19 management in schools?

On August 13, 2021 the Government of Ontario released its guidance on management of COVID-19 in schools. The information is available by [clicking here](#).

Reference: Government of Ontario (2021). *COVID-19: Health, safety and operation guidance for schools (2021-2022), Version 2 (Released August 13, 2021)*. Ontario, Queen's Printer.