



Guidelines for school-bus operations

As schools reopen, many students will need to utilize school transportation services. From the moment students leave their home to boarding the school bus and after, new safety and sanitizing considerations will be required. This document provides guidance on how to help minimize the spread of COVID-19 in the context of school bus operations to ensure the safety of both students and drivers.

The recommendations in this document are subject to change based on the state of COVID-19 in the territory and emergence of new evidence.

General advice

Parents and caregivers are encouraged to transport their students to school if possible. This will allow more room on buses for students without other means of transport. Alternative means of transportation that will help decrease ridership on school buses include walking, biking and taking public transit if available and when appropriate.

The guidelines outlined below will help parents and families understand and communicate the role their students will play in reducing transmission risk.

Waiting for the bus

- Students and parents/caregivers should maintain 2-metre distancing from others at bus stops and while loading and unloading onto buses.
- Where possible, students should load back to front and unload front to back to encourage physical distancing and prevent students from walking past each other.

Monitoring for symptoms

Before a trip

- Parents and caregivers should assess their children for symptoms before sending them to school.
- All students should stay home if they:
 - have any symptoms of common cold, influenza, COVID-19 or other infectious respiratory disease, OR
 - travelled outside of British Columbia, Northwest Territories or Nunavut in the last 14 days, OR
 - had close contact with someone diagnosed with COVID-19 and have been directed to self-isolate by Yukon Communicable Disease Control.
- Parents and caregivers should keep their children at home if they are displaying symptoms.
- To help assess symptoms parents can use the [COVID-19 self-assessment tool](#) or contact a health care provider for additional guidance.

- Elementary school monitors may check-in with students and ask how they are feeling before returning to home.
 - A student who develops symptoms while at school should not be permitted to return home on a school bus and should be picked up by a parent or caregiver.
- Bus drivers must self-assess daily for symptoms.
 - Drivers who become symptomatic should advise their Operations Manager.
- Asymptomatic bus drivers can still work and asymptomatic students can still use school transportation services if someone else in their household is sick, unless someone from Yukon Communicable Disease Control (YCDC) has stated otherwise.

During a trip

- If a student displays symptoms while being transported to school, the driver should advise their Operations Manager, who will in turn inform the school.
- The driver should try to keep the sick student 2 metres from others, if possible.
 - Reserving a seat in the front of the bus for a sick student can help ensure spacing is always available.

Physical distancing

Consider the following methods to encourage a 2-metre distance between students:

- Where possible, limit the number of students to 2 student per bench, unless they are from the same household or combined household units.
- Consider using assigned seating to keep elementary students separate from high school students on bus routes with mixed elementary/high school ridership.
- Encourage students to avoid sitting within 6 feet of the bus driver.
- Consider adding additional bus stops and routes to accommodate fewer students on a bus at one time.
- Assign drivers to a single bus and/or specific routes and/or specific schools.

Hand hygiene

- Students should be reminded by parents and teachers to sanitize or wash their hands with soap and 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.
- Drivers must wash their hands immediately upon arrival at their designated start location, which may include a bus garage, home or other location.
 - Hand sanitizer will be provided for their own use when they are unable to hand wash with soap and water.

Cleaning and disinfection

- Buses should be cleaned and disinfected according to Yukon's [cleaning and disinfecting guidelines](#).

- This includes disinfecting high-touch areas (railing, seats and driver’s area) after the bus drops off students at home or school (every trip).
- Windows and doors should be open when cleaning the bus.
- Bus drivers must be provided with cleaning equipment such as gloves and disinfectant wipes or spray.
 - Ensure products are secure during transport.
- If a driver or rider tests positive for COVID-19 or exhibited symptoms of COVID-19, wait 24 hours before cleaning and disinfecting the bus. If 24 hours is not feasible, wait as long as possible.
 - Affected buses can be used immediately after cleaning and disinfection.

Ventilation

- Drivers should maximize natural ventilation on the bus by opening or partially opening selected windows, weather permitting.

Training staff

- Ensure bus drivers are trained to properly clean and disinfect buses. Additional training topics can include:
 - Understanding COVID-19 symptoms, risk of exposure and how it spreads.
 - The hygiene expectations of staff.
 - Avoiding touching surfaces often touched by students.
 - Knowing what to do if a student exhibits symptoms of COVID-19.

Personal protective equipment (PPE)

- Masks are not recommended for use by unsupervised students unless advised to do so by a health care provider.
 - In young students in particular, masks can be irritating and may lead to increased touching of the face and eyes.
- Alternative measures will help mitigate transmission risk among students when physical distancing cannot be maintained on school buses, including:
 - consistent ridership
 - assigned seating
 - keeping students home when they are sick
 - hand hygiene
 - enhanced cleaning and disinfection
- School bus drivers may consider wearing a non-medical mask or face covering.

Additional resources available on [Yukon.ca/covid-19](https://www.yukon.ca/covid-19) that may be of use:

- [the six steps to staying safe during COVID-19](#)
- [physical distancing guidelines for work and home](#)
- [hand-washing guidance](#)
- [cleaning and disinfecting guidelines](#)

For more information on COVID-19 and the most update information on the Yukon situation visit [Yukon.ca/COVID-19](https://www.yukon.ca/COVID-19) or call COVID-19 InfoLine at **877-374-0425** between 7:30 a.m. and 8 p.m. seven days a week.