

Transportation

Considerations

Transportation routines need to be modified to meet guidelines associated with minimizing the transmission of COVID-19. Many transportation providers will rely on students to adhere to social distancing and infection control policies and procedures established by school districts in accordance with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. When determining how to help children and adolescents safely use transportation, consider the various persons involved (e.g., student, bus driver, paraprofessional), the multiple environments encountered (e.g., bus, pick up and drop off locations), and the array of tasks and occupations performed (e.g., waiting in line, boarding and disembarking the bus). Below are some tips that teachers and other school staff may consider when addressing transportation routines.

Modify or Change the Bus Environment

- Install Plexiglas shield around the bus driver seat.
- Reduce the number of students on the bus by staggering schedules or making multiple trips.
- Assign bus seats.
- Mark seats with tape or visual markers so students know where to sit and where not to sit to maintain social distance.
- Seat students wearing masks or other facial coverings. Seat one student in each seat.
- Seat students who are unable to wear masks or other facial coverings one per seat.
- Alternate students in every other row, and by window and aisle seats.
- Seat siblings or students who reside in the same home together.
- Between trips, use [effective procedures and supplies](#) to clean and disinfect high-touch point areas, such as handrails and seats.
- Drive with bus windows open (as weather permits) and use fans to circulate air.
- Maintain bus attendance logs to assist with possible contact tracing.

Prepare Students for Transportation to and From School

- Encourage students to [wash and sanitize hands](#) before they enter transportation, and after they get to school or back home.
- Provide students with spare masks or other facial coverings in case they get lost or wet from rain or snow.
- Provide parents and guardians with detailed information regarding [infection control policies and procedures during bus transportation](#).
- Provide parents and guardians with detailed information regarding drop-off and pick-up procedures, including traffic flow and whether they may bring their child into the school building.

Prepare Students for Waiting

- Rehearse strategies for waiting for the bus or at car pool lines, while maintaining a [safe social distance](#).
- Use visual markers (e.g., chalk, tape, cones) to help students maintain appropriate spacing.
- Use snapshots, written checklists, and verbal reminders to help students manage backpacks and supplies independently (reminding them why it's important to not ask friends to hold items or offer to carry things for others).

Students With Special Needs

- For each student with special needs, review the individualized education plan (IEP) to determine if transportation services are listed as related services.
- Provide [travel training](#) to students with developmental and cognitive disabilities so they can learn how to safely follow transportation routines.
- Use assigned seats on buses and vans to help students maintain social distancing.
- For those who rely on touch for balance or bus entry/exit, develop routines to wash hands before and after, and pack gloves that can be kept in a bag and used specifically during transportation.
- Alert bus drivers and bus assistants to special accommodations related to students' ability to follow social distancing and infection control procedures.
- To mitigate the isolation of sitting alone, consider packing an easy-to-wash stuffed animal as a "travel buddy" to sit in the adjacent seat, or provide the student with an electronic device in a cleanable case.

Resources

- [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention—What Transit Operators Need to Know about COVID-19](#)
- [Easter Seals—Tips for Preparing Your Child to Ride the School Bus](#)
- [Education Week—Guidance for Social Distancing on School Buses](#)
- [National Association for Pupil Transportation—COVID-19 Guidance](#)
- [National Association for Pupil Transportation—Transportation for Students With Disabilities](#)
- [Safe Routes to School: Recommendations for Safe Routes School Programming](#)