

Needham Public Schools Safety Protocols for Transporting Students and Passengers on Pupil Transportation Vehicles

The health and safety of the students and passengers we transport, as well as that of our employees, is our primary concern. To this end, we have implemented safety measures to minimize the risk of exposure while students and passengers are being transported to and from their schools or programs following guidelines provided by Needham Public Schools (June 1, 2020), DESE (July 22, 2020), and local public health officials.

Needham Public School Responsibilities

1. The District will provide an emergency supply of personal protective equipment (PPE) for students and passengers being transported, in the event a parent, guardian or caregiver does not provide the student with a mask or face covering, or a passenger is in need of replacement PPE.
2. Needham Public School employees must follow the Needham Public Schools Standard Operating Procedures (June 1, 2020, and DESE guidelines related to the safe reopening of schools, including the transportation of students.
3. Contracted service providers are expected to following health and safety guidelines that conform to Occupational Health and Safety Administration (OSHA), the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), state and local regulations and guidelines, including those provided by the Department of Early Education and Care (EEC), the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) and local public health officials.
4. The Needham Public Schools will provide contracted service providers with a list of students who are not required to wear masks or face coverings for whom it is not safe to do so due to age, medical condition, or other health or safety considerations.

Responsibilities of Parents, Guardians or Caregivers

1. Parents, guardians, or caregivers must screen their children or youth prior to boarding a vehicle, including checking symptoms and temperature.
2. Students must stay home if they are feeling sick or have any symptoms associated with COVID-19. Symptoms include: fever over 100 degrees orally, cough/shortness of breath, new loss of taste/smell, sore throat, headache, muscle/body aches, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, fatigue and nasal congestion unrelated to other causes such as seasonal allergies. Parents should follow the protocol for ill students/staff at school. [Link](#)
3. All staff and students on the bus, regardless of age, are required to wear masks at all times. Exceptions may be made for students, due to medical and/or behavioral reasons. Face shields may be an option for students who are unable to wear masks.

4. Parents will be responsible for providing students with face coverings or masks, as well a personal bottle of hand sanitizer. See the protocols for face masks/cloth face coverings. [Link](#)
5. Parents should assist children with washing or sanitizing hands upon arrival after exiting the bus, van, or vehicle and prior to departure before boarding the bus, van, or vehicle.
6. When waiting for a school bus at a pick-up location, parents, guardians, or caregivers should wear protective masks and maintain at least 6 feet of distance between others waiting for the bus. When 6 feet is not possible, individuals must wear masks or cloth face coverings.
7. Parents, guardians and caregivers will reinforce the following safe transportation protocols with their children:
 - a. When boarding the bus, students should practice social distancing to the extent it is safe to do so.
 - b. When disembarking from the bus students should avoid touching any vehicle surface, other students, or the driver unnecessarily.
 - c. Students should sit in their assigned seat on the bus. Siblings will be assigned to sit together on the bus.
 - d. Students should face forward at all times and refrain from eating, shouting, singing, or sharing items while in transit.
 - e. Students should not touch other students.

Responsibilities of Vehicle Operators, Monitors and Transportation Nurses

Vehicle operators, monitors and nurses will:

1. Engage in frequent hand washing or hand sanitizing:
 - a. Wash hands regularly with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after going to the bathroom; before eating; after blowing their nose, coughing, or sneezing; and upon entering and exiting the vehicle.
 - b. If soap and water are not readily available, hand sanitizer with at least 60 percent alcohol content can be used.
2. Conduct personal pre-trip health screenings before every trip:
 - a. All staff must check their temperature at home before going to work.
 - b. Staff must stay home if they are feeling sick or have any symptoms associated with COVID-19. Symptoms include: fever greater than 100 degrees (orally) and /or chills, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, muscle/body aches, sore throat, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, cough, fatigue, headache, nasal congestion (unrelated to, or more than baseline of seasonal allergies symptoms).
 - c. Staff members who are ill and can not report to work should notify the Transportation Office immediately.

- d. Employees of the Needham Public Schools must additionally follow Human Resources protocols, including the submission of a daily attestation to Human Resources. [Link](#)
3. Wear masks covering the nose and mouth at all times.
4. Avoid touching surfaces often touched by students or other passengers.
5. Use gloves if required to touch surfaces contaminated by bodily fluids.
6. Practice routine cleaning and disinfection of frequently touched surfaces at the end of the morning and afternoon route:
 - a. Clean the area prior to disinfection to remove all surface matter and remove trash.
 - b. Use disinfecting products provided by the District or contracted service provider to clean high-touch surfaces, including the steering wheel, door handles, grab poles, top of seat backs in buses, handrails, or any other high contact area.
 - c. The vehicles will be thoroughly cleaned and disinfected weekly, and will be wiped down with disinfectant at midday and in the afternoon, after each run.
7. Observe students boarding the vehicle.
 - a. If students appear symptomatic, or report that they are not feeling well, the staff member will contact the Needham Public Schools Transportation Office immediately.
 - b. If a parent/caregiver is present, the student should not be permitted to board the vehicle.
 - c. If a parent/caregiver is not present to take them home, the staff member should refer students who may be symptomatic to the school nurse immediately upon arrival.
 - d. If a student who may be symptomatic must board the vehicle, they should be spaced at least six feet from other students, as feasible. The area used by the student should be closed off and not used again until after cleaning and disinfecting.
8. Keep windows open at least 3 inches while transporting students and passengers. The vehicle operator will set the ventilation system to high and not recirculate conditioned air.

Responsibilities of Needham Public Schools Transportation Office

The Needham Public Schools Transportation Office will:

1. In collaboration with contracted service providers minimize the time students and passengers are in group transportation.
2. Maximize social distancing to the greatest extent possible when routing students.
3. Assign students to a specific vehicle in the morning and afternoon.
4. Ensure that students maintain a distance of approximately three feet from one another, through assigned seating. The assigned seating will ensure the following:
 - a. Bus Seating:
 - i. Students are seated no more than one student per bench, alternating

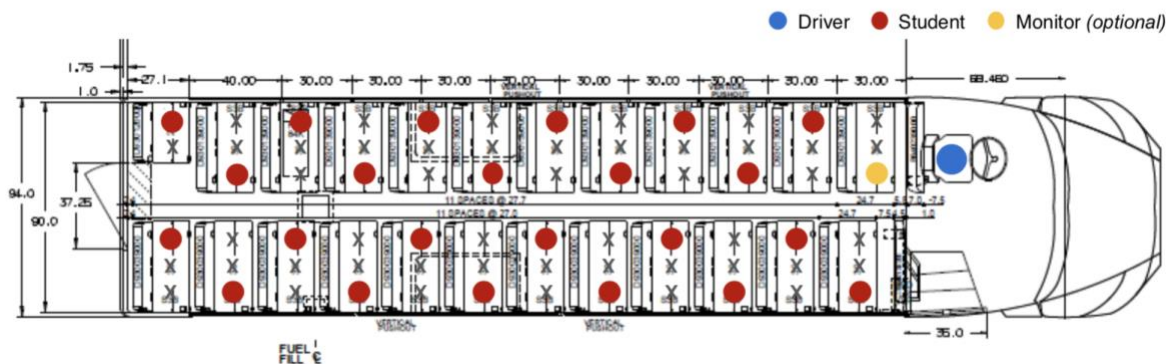
sides for each row, except when students from the same household are present. Students from the same household should sit together (up to 3 per seat).

- ii. The bench behind the driver's seat remains vacant, to maintain physical distance from the driver.
- iii. The diagram below represents a typical seating configuration for a 71-passenger bus. N

Bus Model: 71-passenger bus

Max. capacity with physical distancing requirements: 23 passengers (32% full capacity)

Seat map configuration:



b. Van Seating:

- i. Students are seated with three feet of social distancing between other students, the driver and monitor(s). The exact configuration will vary depending on the vehicle, and are presented in the attachment to this document. [Link](#)

5. Work collaboratively with families of students who are regularly unable to wear a mask regarding possible alternative transportation arrangements (such as walking to school or the family transporting the student.) In cases where school transportation is required, the District will create a plan to maintain 6 feet of space between the student and other students. If possible, the student should wear a face shield while on the bus.
6. Not require vehicle operators, monitors or transportation nurses to work if they are exhibiting symptoms: fever (100F or greater), cough, sore throat, difficulty breathing, diarrhea, nausea, vomiting, abdominal pain, unexplained rash, new loss of smell/taste/, new muscle aches, headache, or fatigue.
7. Ensure vehicle operators and monitors have adequate PPE and cleaning supplies, including soap, paper towels, tissues, hand sanitizer, and garbage bags. PPE shall include a supply of disposable face masks for students.
8. Confirm completion of personal pre-trip health inspection with vehicle operator or monitor when they sign on prior to starting their route.

9. Respond immediately and appropriately to any questions or concerns raised by the vehicle operators, monitors, parents or district staff members.
10. Ensure vehicles are cleaned and disinfected regularly, including:
 - a. High touch surfaces within the vehicle after each morning and afternoon route
 - b. Weekly vehicle cleaning to disinfect interior surfaces and floors, including soft or porous surfaces.
 - c. Provide staff with training on the appropriate use of disinfectants in a safe and effective manner.
11. Encourage alternative modes of transportation, where possible, including transportation by parent/caregiver, carpooling within fixed cohorts and the 'walking bus.'

Transportation for Children with Special Needs and Vulnerable Children:

To ensure that children with special needs and vulnerable children who rely on transportation will be able to access program services, the following additional transportation protocols will be followed:

1. Transportation practices will adhere to the aforementioned guidelines.
2. Vehicle windows should be open at least 3 inches. A/C and heating should only be used when necessary and should not be set in the recirculate mode.
3. The Needham Public Schools Special Education Department will work collaboratively with families to determine parents' ability to transport their child(ren) to and from school. Families who transport students are eligible to be reimbursed under 603 CMR 28.07(6).