



**MARCH 2022  
REVISED 2022-04-05  
Transportation Plan  
Next Phase**

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## TRANSPORTATION PLAN

### March 2022

### REV. 1.1 – 2022-04-05

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The Nipissing-Parry Sound Student Transportation Services continues to be committed to supporting the transition to a more normal learning experience for students. As the Government of Ontario adapts the COVID-19 pandemic response to the evolving health environment, we are providing an update on the key health and safety measures as they apply to student transportation. We remind everyone that the school bus is its own environment with unique challenges. We remain cognizant of the needs of students and drivers who start and finish their day on the bus.

## 2. SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS

The decision to wear or not wear a mask should take into account the following considerations:

- a. Uninterrupted student transportation service is contingent on having sufficient drivers available on a daily basis;
- b. The driver pool is often drawn from the older cohort of our population. These workers sometimes have or care for persons who have sensitive health issues;
- c. For the first time in recent history, driver shortages due to COVID-19 protocols have resulted in the cancellation of routes, resulting in students not having access to transportation;
- d. At this time of year, northern Ontario temperatures may not allow for the opening of windows on busses to allow for increased ventilation;
- e. As this is a personal choice, we will respect others and their personal choices.

## 3. CHANGES TO THE PRESCRIBED MEASURES

Effective March 21, 2022:

- Masks are now optional for students, monitors and drivers on student transportation. As some students may choose to continue to wear masks, the



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schools will continue to provide masks as needed. Transportation staff will continue to be supplied with the necessary PPE.

- Enhanced cleaning measures will continue on all vehicles.
- Seating plans and cohorting are no longer mandatory, however the driver may choose to continue with the seating plan to encourage safe riding behaviour.
- Consideration should be given to keeping the seat directly behind driver empty.
- Weather and temperature permitting, the opening of windows on the bus should be considered, at the discretion of the driver.
- Rapid antigen testing of unvaccinated individuals is no longer required on a regular basis. Rapid antigen tests will still be made available to symptomatic individuals until the end of this school year.

#### 4. VACCINATION DISCLOSURE POLICY

Effective March 14, 2022, the instructions issued by the Ontario Chief Medical Officer of Health (OCMOH) related to vaccination disclosure policies will be revoked across all sectors.

School boards will no longer be required to have a COVID-19 vaccine disclosure policy in place. Provincial requirements listed below will be lifted:

- Collecting proof of COVID-19 vaccinations, medical exemptions, or completion of an education program.
- Asymptomatic screening requirements for individuals who do not provide proof of full vaccination.
- Reporting vaccination coverage to the Ministry of Education.
- Reporting test usage as part of the Provincial Antigen Screening Program to the Ministry of Health, (this change is reflected in recent direction from the Ministry of Health and noted below).

Therefore, effective March 14, unvaccinated individuals covered under school board vaccination policies will no longer be required to undertake rapid antigen screening three times per week.

#### 5. CLEANING OF SCHOOL BUSES

The Ministry of Education will continue to provide disinfectant supplies to bus operators for this purpose. Frequently touched surfaces will continue to be disinfected at a minimum of twice daily (e.g., after each run). MSDS and instructions on use should be included with the products received. The NPSSTS Safety Officer will coordinate the procurement of these and other PPE products. Regular hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette are of paramount importance to reduce the risk of infection.

## 6. SELF-SCREENING

The Ministry of Health has revised the [COVID-19 Integrated Testing & Case, Contact and Outbreak Management Interim Guidance: Omicron Surge](#), with updated guidance for close contacts in the community and in households:

- Asymptomatic individuals who are close contacts of a case or a symptomatic individual in the community are no longer required to isolate but must self-monitor for 10 days following last exposure. During the self-monitoring period, close contacts must wear a well-fitted mask in all public settings and avoid activities where they need to remove their mask.
- Asymptomatic household contacts of a case or a symptomatic individual are also not required to isolate if they are 17 or younger and [fully vaccinated](#); 18 and older and have already received their COVID-19 booster; or tested positive for COVID-19 in the last 90 days and have completed their isolation period. Asymptomatic household contacts who are not required to isolate are also required to self-monitor for 10 days following last exposure, as outlined above. Children under the age of five who are asymptomatic household contacts are required to isolate for five days.

The [COVID-19 school and child care screening tool](#) has been updated to align with the recent changes made to federal travel requirements.

Note that the Ministry of Health has also consolidated guidance documents into the updated [COVID-19 Integrated Testing & Case, Contact and Outbreak Management Interim Guidance: Omicron Surge](#) which includes information that is applicable to schools and child care. As a result, the Ministry of Health's school and child care-specific guidance documents, [COVID-19: Interim Guidance for Schools and Child Care:](#)



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[Omicron Surge](#) and [COVID-19 Guidance: School Case, Contact, and Outbreak Management](#), have been discontinued.

Students **should** continue to self-screen every day before attending school, using the COVID-19 school and child care screening tool: <https://covid-19.ontario.ca/school-screening>.

All monitors and drivers **should** self-screen each day prior to attending work, using the self-assessment tool: <https://covid-19.ontario.ca/self-assessment>.

## 7. RIDER WHO DISPLAYS SYMPTOMS OF ILLNESS

Should a driver identify a student who is displaying symptoms of illness, the student should be provided with a surgical grade mask and seated alone in the first vacant row, to the right of the driver. The driver may consider moving other students to ensure greater distancing between the student displaying symptoms and other students or themselves. In addition, the driver shall:

- a. Contact their dispatcher who will advise the school or parent/guardian to request that the student be met at the bus by the principal or parent/guardian whether on the morning or afternoon run;
- b. Advise him/her of their concerns;
- c. To reduce the possibility of spread to other students, consideration will be given to have the bus go directly to the school. In this case, the bus company will post a route delay in the system. A second bus can be dispatched to complete the route as would be done in the case of a motor vehicle collision; and
- d. Document the incident.



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## 8. NON-COMPLIANT BEHAVIOURS

Any conduct on the part of a student that does not comply with these directives will be dealt with by school administrators. The goal is to have students succeed and comply with these necessary measures.

## 9. AMENDMENTS TO THE PLAN

We continue to deal with an ever changing landscape and our ability to adapt at any moment is critical. These measures are subject to change as new information becomes available.

## 10. COMMUNICATION

The Transportation Plan shall be posted on the NPSSTS website in order to ensure community access to information.

## 11. CONCLUSION

The NPSSTS encourages drivers, monitors and students to continue using strategies to protect themselves from COVID such as masking and hand and respiratory hygiene. Consideration must be given to all the factors listed herein, and maintaining the utmost respect for others and their personal autonomy at all times..

## 12. DISTRIBUTION

Parents/Guardians via [www.npssts.ca](http://www.npssts.ca)  
Member Boards  
School Bus Operators  
North Bay Parry Sound District Health Unit  
NPSSTS Staff  
Moose Deer Point First Nation



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## 13. RESOURCES

1. **Ministry of Education Update: Lifting of Health and Safety Measures in Schools dated March 9<sup>th</sup> 2022.**

