

WESTPORT COMMUNITY SCHOOLS

UPDATED Transportation Guidelines released 2/11/2021

For the full updated release, please visit the link below:

<https://www.doe.mass.edu/covid19/on-desktop/2020-0722transport-guide.docx>

Masks

Everyone on the bus and waiting at bus stops must wear masks that cover the nose and mouth at all times.

- **Adults**, including drivers and other transportation staff (e.g., bus monitors), **are required to wear masks.**
- **Students are required to wear masks, regardless of age, when on the bus.**
- **Exceptions to masks for students:** Face shields may be an option for students with medical, behavioral, or other challenges who are unable to wear masks. Please see the “physical distancing” section below for protocols on how to work with families of students who cannot wear masks due to medical, behavioral, or other challenges.
- **Masks should be provided by the student/family**, but districts must ensure that sufficient extra disposable masks are made available on all buses for any student who needs them.

Physical distancing

As of February, 2021, physical distancing guidelines and resulting bus capacities have been updated per the below. **In all cases, maximum distance between students should be maintained during boarding and transportation, and all other safety protocols are still required, including wearing masks and opening windows a couple of inches.**

- **Elementary schools:**
 - Capacity limitations and physical distancing requirements for students on buses are lifted.
- **Middle and high schools:**
 - Capacity limitations and physical distancing requirements for students on buses are lifted, except for middle and high schools in districts with high community prevalence.
 - For middle and high schools in districts with high community prevalence, capacity limitations and physical distancing requirements on buses are amended to allow 2 students per bus bench.

Ventilation

Mitigate airborne transmission by increasing outdoor air ventilation. Doing so helps dilute the concentration or displace the presence of an airborne virus. Opening windows can greatly increase the level of ventilation within a school bus and therefore reduce COVID-19 transmission risk.ⁱ

- **Keep windows open at all times at least two inches during operation.** In adverse weather conditions, every other window can be opened (i.e. first row windows open two inches, second row windows closed, etc.). Districts should develop a rain plan to keep students dry when riding the bus in rainy conditions. Strategies could include:
 - Requesting that families send their students to the bus in full rain gear (and warmer attire, as needed) on rainy days, including hoods and leg protection.
 - Distributing disposable ponchos for any students who need them.
 - Leaving the seats closest to open windows (every other row) empty, if feasible.
- **Consider keeping roof hatches open** on buses during operation for further ventilation, if feasible.ⁱⁱ

ⁱ Harvard T. H. Chan School of Public Health, Schools for Health: Risk Reduction Strategies for Reopening Schools. (2020, June). Available at: <https://schools.forhealth.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/19/2020/06/Harvard-Healthy-Buildings-Program-Schools-For-Health-Reopening-Covid19-June2020.pdf>