



Massachusetts Association of Pupil Transportation

Special Education Transportation Returning to School Resource Guide

MISSION

It is the mission of the Massachusetts Association of Pupil Transportation (MAPT) to promote the highest ethics and practices in pupil transport and to serve as a Statewide voice for school district personnel engaged in the management of pupil transportation.

PURPOSE

To ensure safe and healthy transportation conditions during the current public health crisis for all students with disabilities. The following recommendations are provided as a resource for districts to consider for reentry to school based on what is known now.

This resource has taken into consideration guidelines from the Mass Department of Public Health, the Mass Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, the Mass Department of Early Education and Care and the Centers for Disease Control.

In addition, this resource is supported by the Massachusetts Special Education Transportation Task Force. *

GENERAL

- All students, parents/guardians, program and transportation staff must wear face coverings or masks when loading and unloading the student on the vehicle, with the exception of those for whom it is not safe to do so due to age, medical condition, disability impact, or other health or safety considerations.
- Absent any definitive recommendations at both the Federal and State level relative to seating capacity on school transportation vehicles at this time, it is suggested that districts work with transportation providers to address this issue on a case by case basis.
- Consistency must be maintained as is critical when transporting children with special needs.
- Districts must advise transportation on individual students' needs.

- Only transportation staff or listed approved riders are permitted on vehicles designed to transport more than 10 passengers, to include Type A, B, C and D school buses.
- LEA's, Collaboratives and Approved Private Special Education 766 schools should emphasize to parents that the schools are working to minimize the number of person-to-person contacts their child will need for safe and healthy transportation conditions to and from school during COVID-19; and, as well, encourage parents to drive their child(ren) to school when possible. Districts should discuss reimbursement needs for parent transportation.
- Schools should maintain ongoing, consistent, and timely communication with parents/families regarding safe and healthy transportation needs and any changes where needed for student support.

PARENT/GUARDIAN RESPONSIBILITIES

- Parents or guardians must screen their children prior to boarding the vehicle, including checking symptoms and temperature.
- Parents or guardians should not send children to school if sick.
- If a child should become sick during the school day, the parent or guardian is responsible for transporting their child home.
- Parents or guardians will be responsible for buckling their child in the seat and must wear a face covering or mask upon entry on vehicles less than 10 passengers (7D). Transportation staff will assist students on vehicles greater than 10 passenger capacity.

STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES

- Children will be required to wear face coverings, unless medically unable. If this is the case the school district must provide written documentation to state the child is exempt from wearing a face covering.
- Students should maintain physical distance to the maximum extent feasible and refrain from touching one another's property and/or persons.
- Students must stay in assigned seats.
- No eating and No sharing on the vehicle.

PROGRAM STAFF RESPONSIBILITIES

- Program staff should assist children with washing or sanitizing hands prior to boarding the vehicle.

- Program staff must conduct health screenings according to their district guidelines of students prior to boarding the bus. If present with illness or temperature should not be transported.
- Program staff will be required to wear face coverings when interacting with students loading and unloading the vehicle.
- Program staff will be responsible for buckling the student in the seat and must wear a face covering or mask upon entry on vehicles less than 10 passengers (7D). Transportation staff will assist students on vehicles greater than 10 passenger capacity.
- Vehicle must be loaded back to front with assigned seating.

DRIVER/MONITOR RESPONSIBILITIES

- Drivers and monitors must be trained on the transportation plan prior to reopening.
- Drivers and monitors are responsible to self-identify and monitor symptoms or any close contact to a known or suspected COVID-19 case and report all incidents immediately to the employer.
- If a driver or monitor is sick they must stay home.
- Drivers and monitors must wear face coverings at all times while transporting students, with the exception of those for whom it is not safe to do so due to age, medical condition, disability impact, or other health or safety considerations.
- Ensure a mask or facial covering does not impact vision or ability to operate vehicle safety.
- Use gloves if required to touch surfaces contaminated by bodily fluids.
- Strongly recommend opening windows prior to students boarding. Keep windows open, if not possible, set the ventilation system to high.
- Staff should be trained to use disinfectants in a safe and effective manner and to clean up potentially infectious materials and body fluid spills.
- Clean and sanitize high surface contact areas between runs to include, but not limited to, seat belts, seats, door handles, walls and safety seats. Gloves are required when cleaning.
- All vehicles will undergo a deep clean and sanitization procedure at a minimum once per week.

- If soft or porous surfaces (e.g., fabric seats, upholstery, carpets) are visibly dirty, clean them using appropriate cleaners and then disinfect soft or porous surfaces using EPA Registered Antimicrobial Products for Use Against Novel Coronavirus SARS-CoV-2.
- Report to program staff or parents/guardians if a child presents with symptoms indicating an illness.
- Report to the program staff and/or parents/guardian if the student does not wear a mask unless exempt from doing so.
- Implement frequent hand-washing, proper hygiene, follow local and State guidelines, and when feasible, practice of physical distancing.
- Bring any and all concerns and problems to your Supervisor to help identify any high-risk issue to be addressed immediately.

DISTRICT RESPONSIBILITIES

- Districts must provide a list of students who are not required to wear a mask or face covering for whom it is not safe to do so due to age, medical conditions, or other health or safety considerations.
- Provide documentation to the transportation provider that the parent/guardian has been informed of and understands the transportation plan.
- District must advise transportation provider on individual students' needs.

***State Special Education Transportation Task Force Members**

Mass Administrators for Special Education (ASE)
 Mass Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE)
 Mass Association of 766 Approved Schools (maaps)
 Mass Association for Pupil Transportation (MAPT)
 Mass Association of School Business Officials (MASBO)
 Mass Association of School Committees (MASC)
 Mass Association of School Superintendents (MASS)
 Mass Organization of Educational Collaboratives (MOEC)

DISCLAIMER: This guideline is based on what we currently know and is subject to change based on new guidance from the local boards of health, CDC, and/or DESE.

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