Post-trip cleaning

- At the end of every route (including each leg of a round trip), clean all high-touch surfaces including the driver’s seat, hard seats, door handles, seat belt buckles, light and air controls, doors and windows, and grab handles.
- Be sure to keep doors and windows open while cleaning the bus to let it thoroughly air out and dissipate any toxic fumes.
- Check the sanitizer station to ensure enough remains to handle the next trip.

School bus pandemic safety protocols

As a K-12 bus driver, the health and safety of you and your students is of the utmost importance.

The Ohio Department of Health offers these guidelines so you can maintain a daily safety routine that becomes second nature to you and your students. They are based on the latest COVID-19 prevention recommendations from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the American Academy of Pediatrics, as well as guidance from our top medical professionals.
Prepping yourself

A daily self-check of your health is always an important first step.

- Take your temperature at the start of each day.
- Ensure you have a proper mask to wear. Neck gaiters are acceptable, according to the CDC, if they have two layers or can be folded to create a double-layer mask.
- Are you experiencing any COVID-19-related symptoms, or have you come into contact with anyone who has tested positive for COVID-19 or who has symptoms of COVID-19? If so, do not board your bus.
- If you become ill during the day, follow your district’s COVID-19 protocols and do not return to drive your bus.

Prepping your bus

There are numerous actions you can take before you turn the key in the ignition. Remember that cleanliness, air circulation, and social distancing are always critical measures against COVID-19 in enclosed spaces.

- Always have hand sanitizer available, preferably as a permanently installed hand station at the entryway.
- Have an extra supply of masks available for anyone who forgets to bring one.
- Use tape to designate acceptable seats for riders, maximizing distance between students.
- Circulation is important: Use natural ventilation to mix fresh outdoor air with indoor air. For example, natural ventilation can be accomplished by opening windows 1-2 inches on both sides of the vehicle to create cross ventilation. (During unfavorable weather or temperature conditions, open fewer windows while also operating the vehicle heating or cooling system at full power. This will provide some cross ventilation while maintaining a tolerable temperature.) Consider consultation with a specialist to inform specific strategies for maximizing cross ventilation under different conditions.
  - It is recommended that transportation operator-owners and managers work to adjust ventilation so the maximum amount of outdoor air is delivered to occupied spaces. For example, operate the vehicle heating or cooling system at full power with recirculation off and increase the efficiency of cabin air filters to MERV13, if possible.

Boarding your students

- Make sure students are wearing their masks properly – fully covering their nose and mouth – before they board the bus and remind them they are not allowed to remove their masks for the duration.
- Let students know hand sanitizer is available as they board.
- Seating should be assigned in a manner that maximizes distance between students from different households.
- Once students are seated, they should remain in those seats. If possible, assign seats and document where students are seated to assist with contract tracing should anyone be infectious while on the bus.
- One student per seat is ideal; household members may be seated together.
- Adults who do not need to be on the bus should not enter nor ride on the bus.

Disembarking your students

- Before arrival, tell students that the riders seated up front will exit first and go row by row. Students should remain seated until it’s their turn.
- Remind them to collect all their belongings so they aren’t forced to come back because they forgot something.
- As the rows empty, exiting students should always maintain distance from the person in front of them.
- Remind students to sanitize again, especially if they touched their masks during the trip.

Contact us

Ohio Department of Health

www.odh.ohio.gov