

December 28, 2021

Mandatory Masks for LDSB & TBCDSB Kindergarten Students on School Buses

As per the **Lakehead District School Board** and the **Thunder Bay Catholic District School Board** and as a result of an increase in the recent number of positive COVID-19 cases impacting Kindergarten students in our service area, non-medical/cloth masks or face coverings will be mandatory for all students in kindergarten attending these board's schools while boarding, riding, and disembarking any school bus, effective **Monday, January 3, 2022**. While it remains non-mandatory for kindergarten students attending **Conseil Scolaire de District Catholique des Aurores Boréales** to wear non-medical/cloth masks or face coverings while boarding, riding, and disembarking any school bus, it is highly recommended.

Updated Mask / Face Covering Guidelines for Students on School Buses

The health, safety and well-being of students and drivers is a top priority of Student Transportation Services of Thunder Bay (STSTB), and the wearing of masks/face coverings is a key component to the layered approach to safety where multiple measures apply. When mask/face coverings are worn consistently and correctly, along with other protection measures, they comprise an important part of the safety procedures required on school buses. Face masks/coverings are recommended as a simple barrier to help prevent respiratory droplets from traveling into the air and onto other people when the person wearing the cloth face covering coughs, sneezes, talks, or raises their voice. Face masks/coverings are meant to protect other people in case the wearer is unknowingly infected. Students and families are asked to become familiar with and adhere to the guidelines below.

Non-Medical Masks/Face Coverings:

- The mask/face covering must always cover their nose and mouth.
- Face shields cannot be worn in the place of a mask/face covering. If a face shield is needed, a mask/face covering must be worn with a face shield.
- Students are not to share or swap their masks/face coverings.
- Students should refrain from touching their mask/face covering.
- Parents and students are responsible for the cleanliness of the cloth mask/face covering. Parents are strongly encouraged to teach their children how to properly care for and wear their mask/face covering and to reinforce these behaviours at home.

Mask/Face Coverings Accommodation/Exemption Request Process:

Where cloth masks/face coverings are required (LDSB & TBCDSB Kindergarten to 12; CSDCAB Gr 1-12) on our school buses to reduce the spread of COVID-19, STSTB recognizes there are specific instances when wearing a mask/cloth face covering may not be feasible. Students may be granted an accommodation/exemption from wearing a non-medical mask/face covering for reasons related to a medical condition, mental health, sensory, breathing difficulties or other reasons deemed reasonable by the principal. Parents are asked to contact the school principal if they are requesting a mask/face covering accommodation/exemption for their child while riding the school bus, based on these reasons.