

Keeping U Safe



2020-2021 Guidance for Instruction, Health and Safety Frequently Asked Questions



TRANSPORTATION

Q: How many students may ride my bus?

A: The [North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services \(DHHS\) guidance](#) suggests a maximum of 1 (one) student rider per seat; on a typical UCPS bus, the maximum number transported will not exceed 24 students. Siblings from the same family household may ride together in one seat on the bus without affecting the maximum number assigned to a bus. In other words, the true maximum may exceed 24 students when an allowance is made for siblings sharing a bus seat.

Q: What will be the cleaning protocol for the school buses?

A: School buses will be cleaned in the mornings after all students are transported to school and again in the afternoons after all students are delivered home with a focus on areas recommended by DHHS. Drivers will clean handrails after each school is served. Additional cleaning will take place on Fridays when schools are not in session. Cleaning will be performed when the bus is well ventilated and students are not present.

Q: What type of chemicals are used for cleaning the bus?

A: The cleaning supplies are state approved chemicals that are found to be safe when used on our school buses, yet effective against COVID-19. The chemicals are the same as used in our school buildings and will be stored in compartments on our buses that are not accessible to students.

Q: Will drivers wear face coverings?

A: UCPS will require face coverings and face shields for all drivers and safety assistants that are able to wear them on the bus. Face shields are being provided as an additional layer of protection, but are not mandatory.

Q: My bus stop has changed and now my student(s) must walk further to the bus stop. Why has this changed?

A: Bus stops have been consolidated into community stops where possible (resulting in more direct routes, less ride time and fewer cul de sacs/neighborhood streets travelled). This strategy has been put in place due to COVID-19 and a need to ensure routes are as short as possible so that buses may arrive on schedule at schools. Parents are encouraged to provide transportation to/from school when possible. Parents/guardians are strongly encouraged to escort their student(s) to and from the bus stop or have students walk together when possible while practicing social distancing on the way to and while at the bus stop location.

Q: My children would like to sit together. Is that a possibility?

A: Students will be required to sit one to a seat on the bus, unless they are siblings. Children that reside in the same household will be able to sit together.

Q: My children often have friends over after school and that spend the night. Will they be able to ride to and from school with my child?

A: Due to our strategic plans with bus ridership, we cannot allow other students to ride buses they are not assigned to at this time. UCPS will remain diligent in making sure that we stay within the guidelines for the maximum number of bus riders.

Q: What happens if my child forgets their face covering? Will they be allowed to ride the bus?

A: Bus drivers will have a supply of face coverings on the bus and will provide one for your child if they do not have one. What happens when another student gets on the bus and refuses to wear a face covering, then that student sits in the seat beside, in front of or to the rear of my child. What will be done to ensure my child's safety?

Inevitably, a student(s) will board the bus without a face covering and either refuse to wear one or be unable to do so based on a stated exception (see StrongSchools NC Public Health Toolkit). Bus drivers will request any student that boards the bus to wear a face covering and will request that student to sit away from other students on the bus when possible. For example, a student may be asked to sit in a seat by him/herself next to the window to minimize contact with other students. However, there is no practical way to ensure that students wear face coverings 100% of the time or keep a student without a face covering from being exposed to other students during transport. It should be noted that UCPS will NOT deny transportation for any student, whether or not they are wearing a face covering.

Q: Will my child's temperature be checked at the bus stop?

A: UCPS bus drivers will not check temperatures at the bus stop. Once students arrive at school, all screening protocols will be followed upon entry to the school. School bus drivers will focus on operating the school bus safely, including the loading and unloading of students at bus stops. UCPS supports the notion that safe loading practices are our focus while students are at bus stop locations; any process that increases load time for students is most often not in the best interest of our students and families.

Q: Will hand sanitizer be provided for students while on the bus?

A: Guidance from DHHS suggests that bus drivers will have access to hand sanitizer while on the bus and that "older" students may be provided hand sanitizer. Bus drivers have been instructed to use hand sanitizer for personal hygiene, but will not be distributing hand sanitizer to students on the bus unless an unusual situation warrants use of the product. Students will be allowed to possess/use small quantities of hand sanitizer so long as it is not used inappropriately on the bus (i.e. squirting on other students, etc.)

Q: My bus has air conditioning, so why are the windows down on the bus?

A: DHHS guidance encourages buses to operate with a continuous supply of fresh air in an effort to mitigate transmission of COVID-19. It is possible that buses will operate with 1 or more windows down to promote the circulation of fresh air. Bus drivers will use their discretion based on outdoor temperature and the ability to ensure operating the bus is done so with safety in mind for all passengers.

Q: My student attends a daycare in the afternoons; will s/he be allowed to ride the bus to the daycare?

A: Daycare transportation via school bus service will continue to approved day care facilities as scheduled in the past.

Q: Is social distancing required on the school bus or at the bus stop?

A: It is highly recommended that social distancing be practiced (minimum of 6 feet) while walking to/from the bus stop, waiting at the bus stop and while loading/unloading the bus. Students will be asked to sit 1 per seat except where siblings are assigned to the same seat by the Principal. These practices conform to DHHS recommendations.