

Protocol for Primary and Secondary School home to school transport wef 1 September 2020, ambulant passengers i.e. no wheelchairs to secure.

Recently the Department for Education published an updated guidance document on Transport to School and other places for Education: Autumn Term 2020 and our guidance on the provision of school and college transport is based on the contents of this document.

The main points are covered below, but here is a link to the full document which provides further information and background on this subject.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/transport-to-school-and-other-places-of-education-autumn-term-2020/transport-to-school-and-other-places-of-education-autumn-term-2020>

From September there will be no requirement for social distancing on dedicated home to school transport (services which exclusively carry children and young people travelling to school or college), as:

- the overall risk to children and young people of serious illness as a result of Coronavirus (COVID-19) is very low
- they do not mix with the general public on those journeys
- home to school transport often carries the same group of children and young people on a regular basis, and they may also be together in school or college
- It will not be realistically possible to transport in year-group bubbles due to the geographic nature of the school routes. It is also difficult to enforce initially, but in practice this often occurs with younger age groups occupying the front seats through to older children to the rear. Where necessary due to the volume of children and young people using a public bus service to travel to and from school, temporary designated bus services will run as school or college only services. Although social distancing guidelines that apply on public transport will not apply on dedicated school transport, social distancing should still be maximised within vehicles wherever it is possible, between individuals or 'bubbles'.

- Bus/Coach operators are expected to carry out their own Risk Assessments. Guidance is available through the following webpage <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-safer-transport-guidance-for-operators>
- there is no requirement for drivers or passenger assistants to wear face coverings on dedicated school buses but Bakers coaches insist the driver/assistant **must** wear face covering.
- it is very important to maximise the ventilation of fresh air (from outside the vehicle) on dedicated school and college transport, particularly through opening windows and ceiling vents and operators must keep their vehicles well ventilated throughout the journey.

Guidance being given to parents with children and young people travelling on dedicated school transport

- Children and young people must not use school transport if they are displaying Coronavirus symptoms or if self-isolating
- Children and young people must only travel on the school bus route they have been allocated a seat on by Transporting Somerset
- Children and young people should ensure social distancing as much as is practically and safely as possible when waiting for the school bus
- Children and young people should wash their hands in line with the 20 second Government guidance prior to leaving home to catch the bus, and if possible, sanitise their hands before boarding the bus and again on disembarking
- Children and young people should board the bus in a calm and orderly manner
- Once seated, children and young people must stay in their seat with their seat belt on

- During the journey children and young people must adhere to Transporting Somerset's 'Behaviour Protocol' and must not eat or drink on the bus
- Once at school, children and young people should disembark from front to back in a calm and orderly manner.

Face Coverings

In line with Government advice **it is strongly recommended that secondary aged children and young people wear a face covering on dedicated school transport** unless they fall into one of the exemption categories. Disposable face coverings should be disposed of in a covered bin, re-useable face coverings should be placed in a plastic bag that they can take home with them. Children and young people should wash their hands prior to removing and after removing their face covering.

On Public Bus Services, including those closed to students only, serving either Schools or FE Colleges **the wearing of face coverings by all passengers is mandatory**, unless they fall into one of the exemption categories

Seating

There is no requirement for children and young people to sit in the same seat every day, however this is encouraged wherever possible to minimise the number of potential contacts. Some seats maybe marked as being 'out of use' particularly the front row. Children and young people should not sit in any seats marked as not for use. Where children and young people from different school's travel at the same time on the same school bus, the children and young people from each school should sit together as a group.

Seatbelts

To avoid close proximity between driver and children, parents have been asked to encourage their children to put on then on themselves, so far as possible. Where assistance is required (likely to be youngest children), the parent/ responsible adult should be encouraged to assist when boarding at home. When boarding at the school, the school staff in the "bubble" may be able to assist as required. However, where applicable the legal responsibility of drivers to ensure belts are worn properly is unchanged; but normally a visual check should be sufficient.

Where a Driver or Passenger Assistant is required to assist with seat belts, disposable gloves are recommended.

Driver to wash hands with soap and water or alcohol sanitiser (>70% alcohol) before and after each journey.

Behaviour protocol

We will be taking quick and necessary action with children and young people who do not adhere to the 'Behaviour Protocol' or are not following COVID-19 Government guidance and recommendations. If a child is removed from transport due to bad behaviour, it will then become the parent or carers responsibility to ensure their attendance at school at their own expense.

Children and young people displaying symptoms

Children and young people must not travel on school transport if displaying symptoms. If a child falls ill during the school day, it will be parental responsibility to ensure the child is picked up from school, and only returns to school and school transport when it is safe to do so, in line with Government guidance.

Cleaning of school transport vehicles

Operators will be expected to clean their vehicles in line with Government guidance. The cleaning regime to be carried out before and after each trip. (Note – where vehicles are employed on double runs, we accept that there will be no time to do all of this, but in this case can you ensure that drivers wipe down with disinfectant solution all touch points especially handrails).

- The vehicle **must** be cleaned between journeys ensuring thorough clean of all exposed surfaces, equipment and contact areas.
- Any exposed equipment (such as not within closed compartments) left on the vehicle will require cleaning with disinfectant wipes/spray.
- All contact surfaces will require cleaning with disinfectant wipes/spray, working from top to bottom in a systematic process
- Pay special attention to all touch points internally and externally.
- Appropriate PPE must be worn when cleaning, e.g. apron, gloves and mask
- Fogging machine to be used between am and pm school runs/ after use
- Alcohol sanitiser available on board for passengers / drivers/ assistants.

Consistent drivers and passenger assistants

Operators are encouraged, where practically possible, to ensure the same driver and, passenger assistant (where applicable) and vehicle is used daily on each route.

Driver or Passenger Assistant to wash hands with soap and water or alcohol sanitiser (>70% alcohol) before and after each journey.

Children and young people accessing public transport

Children and young people travelling on public bus services which have been temporarily designated as school and college only services, will not be required to socially distance, **but the wearing of face coverings on public transport services is mandatory**, unless the child or young person is exempt. Children and young people travelling on these services who are not entitled to free school transport will be charged the same as the equivalent fare on normal public transport. Where dedicated school, college and public services operate at the same time, drivers should advise children and young people if they are unsure of which bus to board.

Driver or passenger assistant suspected of having Coronavirus

In the event a driver or passenger assistant suspects that they have Coronavirus, they must isolate with members of their household and order a Coronavirus test in line with Government guidelines.

Driver or passenger assistant tests positive for Coronavirus

In the event a driver or passenger assistant tests positive for Coronavirus, they must immediately contact the NHS track and trace service and share information about their recent contacts to help alert other people who may need to self-isolate in line with Government guidelines. For this reason, it is vital that children and young people travel on their allocated service and not one which makes a similar journey.