

Home to School Transport for Pupils

Updated guidance for taxi, bus and
coach operators

March 2021

The on-going COVID-19 situation means that home to school transport must continue to operate in a Covid safe way to minimise and prevent the risk of transmission.

- ▶ Follow the Government guidance which is designed to keep children and young people safe, as well as drivers and passenger assistants – see [here](#) for the latest advice. Specifically for educational transport, the relevant guidance is detailed [here](#)
- ▶ Share this guidance with your staff and ensure they are fully aware.

General advice

- Drivers and passenger assistants must not report for work, or drive/be a passenger in a vehicle, if they, or a member of their household, has symptoms of COVID-19 or they are currently self-isolating due to a positive test in the last 10 days
- Drivers and passenger assistants must not work if they are self-isolating as a result of COVID-19 symptoms or sharing a household or support bubble with someone who has COVID-19 symptoms
- Drivers and passenger assistants must not travel if they have been advised by the NHS Test and Trace Service to self-isolate
- Drivers and passenger assistants must book a test if they display COVID-19 symptoms
- Drivers and passenger assistants must be willing to provide details of anyone they have been in close contact with if they test positive for COVID-19 or if asked by NHS Test and Track

Transport company expectations

- All routes will operate in the Spring term 2021 as per the timetables prior to the third national lockdown –there will be no staggered arrival or departure arrangements unless directed by Council officers
- In order to reduce the need for handling money, pupils who do not have a free bus pass and pay a fare on dedicated school bus services, will continue to pay a £1.00 standard charge. The correct fare should be given and placed into a container. No change will be given.
- The Council has worked with operators to ensure that on public services where pupils travel, to enable social distancing, operators have minimised the number of passengers from the general public by:
 - Closing the service to the general public
 - Or reserving seats and not allowing members of the public to use them
- Bus, coach and taxi operators must continue to have enhanced vehicle cleaning in place. It is vitally important that frequently touched surfaces should continue to be cleaned after each journey and deep cleaning should take place at the end of each day. Normal cleaning products will kill the COVID-19 virus on surfaces - specialist products are not needed. For the full guidance refer to:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-safer-transport-guidance-for-operators>

- Windows/skylights must continue to be open to allow maximum ventilation, where possible. Even during colder weather, the Council strongly advise this to still happen
- If capacity allows, bus and coach operators should leave a row of seats between each year group and keep the front seats empty
- No face to face seating will be allowed (only side by side)
- Bus and coach operators should display the poster produced by the Council showing the responsibilities of all travelling children and young people
- Bus and coach operators should provide hand sanitiser at the entrance of the bus if safe to do so. Taxis are required to carry small containers of hand sanitiser
- Drivers and passenger assistants are not required to wear a face covering but the Council encourages them to do so, dependent upon company risk assessments and the requirements of some children and drivers
- Drivers must not refuse entry to any pupil who is not wearing a face covering as they may be exempt. They should not ask for medical evidence, instead they should raise any concerns with their manager or the school staff
- Drivers will be required to do what they reasonably can in terms of promoting COVID-19 safety measures on their vehicles, however they will not be expected to enforce seating plans, alighting or disembarking procedures, or the wearing of face coverings as they have to concentrate on driving safely and should not be distracted
- Drivers should report any behaviour concerns to the school or to their manager so that appropriate action can be taken.

Pupil expectations

- Children and young people must not board home to school transport if they, or a member of their household, has symptoms of COVID-19
- On mainstream bus services, pupils over the age of 11 must wear a face covering when boarding, during the journey and when they get off the vehicle. However, some may have legitimate reasons not to wear a face covering. Pupils with a physical or mental condition or impairment, or a disability are exempt from wearing of face coverings – for full guidance refer to:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/face-coverings-when-to-wear-one-and-how-to-make-your-own/face-coverings-when-to-wear-one-and-how-to-make-your-own>

- Pupils are being encouraged to wash their hands before the journey and as soon as possible afterwards, when they get into school or home
- Pupils are being encouraged to have their own sanitiser as well as some tissues in case they need to cough or sneeze
- Pupils are being encouraged to travel in year group “bubbles”, so to keep different year groups from mixing, pupils should:
 - Board the vehicle in ascending year groups. The eldest should board first and sit towards the rear of the vehicle and the youngest should board last and sit towards the front
 - As pupils load at each stop, they should sit with those from their year group “bubble” in repeating patterns throughout the vehicle
- Where possible, pupils should sit in the same seat each day
- Pupils should sit facing forwards and not turn around to talk to their friends
- Where possible, pupils should not shout, talk loudly or sing, as this may help spread the virus
- Where possible, pupils should avoid touching anything other than their own possessions.

Children developing symptoms at school

- If a child or young person develops symptoms whilst at school or their place of education, they will be sent home
- They must not travel on home to school transport – the school or setting should contact the parent or carer who should make arrangements for the journey home and no other children should travel on the transport at the same time as the child with symptoms
- For Special Needs children and young people, and in exceptional circumstances, where it is not possible for the parent or carer to make arrangements for the child or young person's journey home, transport may be considered following a risk based assessment between the Council, school and operator
- If a SEND child or young person tests positive whilst at school or their place of education after being transported via transport earlier in the day, the situation will be assessed on a case by case basis in consultation with the school/setting and NHS Test & Trace, with regard to who is required to self-isolate and who is determined to be a close contact, as this is dependent on many variables.

This is the latest information at the time of going to print and is based on Government advice. We regularly update our website at derbyshire.gov.uk/septschooltransport with the latest information for parents.

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