

# Coronavirus update for parents / carers of travellers on dedicated school buses. 20th August 2020.



Your child will soon be resuming home to school transport on a dedicated school bus. A dedicated bus is used solely by children travelling to and from school and is not open to the general public. You may have questions/concerns regarding safety on the school bus in relation to coronavirus. I write to communicate the most recent Government guidelines issued on 11<sup>th</sup> August 2020 and the procedures put in place to minimise the risk of coronavirus. We have consulted with schools and transport suppliers. It is important that students understand they have an important infection control role to play by following national coronavirus guidance.

<https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus>

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-safer-travel-guidance-for-passengers>

## **Health check**

If your child or any member of the household is showing any symptoms of coronavirus such as a new and persistent cough, high temperature or loss of taste/smell, the child must not board home to school transport. Anyone with symptoms must stay at home and follow the Government's guidance for households with possible or confirmed symptoms. This reminder has also been communicated to transport staff.

If a 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 place of education will contact parent or carer who should make arrangements for the young person's journey home.

## **Social Distancing**

Government advice is that from the autumn term local authorities will not be required to uniformly apply the social distancing guidelines for public transport on dedicated school or college transport. This is because the same students travel daily, the students will not mix with the general public and the risks of spreading C-19 is considered to be much lower.

- Students are expected to social distance as far as possible and try to minimise the number of people they interact with so that they are not exposed to an unlimited number of people daily.
- Where possible sit with children from your own school.
- Follow any instructions / signed directives from the bus company.
- Attempt to maintain as much distance as possible from others whilst waiting at bus stops and on board.
- Board and disembark in an orderly fashion, be patient and try to leave space between yourself and other passengers.
- Avoid using direct face to face seating.

## **Clean hands**

Students should present for travel with clean hands. Regular handwashing remains key to infection control. Passengers will be encouraged to sanitise their hands before boarding and again on disembarking. It would be good practice for students to carry a personal supply of hand sanitiser.

### **Contactless payment**

Passengers are encouraged to use contactless payment wherever possible or to have the correct cash fare. Passengers are asked to maintain a social distance and stand behind the screen when talking to the driver.

### **Good respiratory hygiene**

Transport operators are required to ensure that vehicles are well ventilated, travellers can expect windows to be open during the journey.

'Catch it, bin it, kill it', passengers should travel with tissues and use them to catch and control coughs and sneezes. Tissues then must be disposed of hygienically.

### **Face coverings for passengers**

The Government has not gone so far as to make face coverings compulsory on dedicated home to school transport. However, they are now strongly recommended for travellers over the age of 11 without a specific medical exemption. The council would respectfully ask travellers bus dedicated home to school bus users to wear one.

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

If your child is over 11 and you think they should be exempt from using a face covering, please contact the relevant operator. Yellow Buses offer an exemption card and More Buses digital exemption passes.

### **Enhanced vehicle cleaning**

Home to school transport suppliers are committed to implementing an enhanced cleaning regime with appropriate disinfectants; frequently touched surfaces will be cleaned after every journey and a thorough clean carried out at the end of each working day.

### **Active Travel**

The Government has asked that all travellers consider active travel. This means walking, cycling or scooting to / from school wherever possible. This form of self-help will reduce passenger numbers and will improve social distancing for those who are unable to actively travel. It is also seen as beneficial for physical and mental health, the environment.

Finally, I would like to thank you in advance for your co-operation in ensuring the safest possible outcome for your child and other travellers these challenging times.



David Harrop. Passenger Transport Manager.

# Coronavirus update for parents / carers of travellers who use public buses to travel to and from school. 20<sup>th</sup> August 2020.



Your child will soon be resuming school and you may have questions/concerns in relation to coronavirus-safety of public bus travel (network buses where members of the public travel alongside school children). Travel on public buses remains safe and I write to communicate the most recent Government guidelines issued on 11<sup>th</sup> August 2020 and the procedures put in place to minimise the risk of coronavirus. We have consulted with schools and transport suppliers. It is important that students understand they have an important infection control role to play by following national coronavirus guidance.

<https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus>

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-safer-travel-guidance-for-passengers>

## Health check

If your child or any member of the household is showing any symptoms of coronavirus such as a new and persistent cough, high temperature or loss of taste/smell, he / she must not travel to school. Anyone with symptoms must stay at home and follow the Government's guidance for households with possible or confirmed symptoms. This reminder has also been communicated to transport staff.

If a young person develops symptoms whilst at school or their place of education, they will be sent home. They must not travel on public transport. The school or place of education will contact parent or carer who should make arrangements for the young person's journey home.

## Social Distancing

Government advice is that social distancing of 1 Metre Plus is required on public transport. Travellers will observe that the bus operators have remove seats from service and reduced capacity on each bus accordingly. Standing passengers are not permitted.

- Students are expected to social distance as far as possible and try to minimise the number of people they interact with so that they are not exposed to an unlimited number of people daily.
- Attempt to maintain as much distance as possible from others whilst waiting at bus stops and on board.
- Board and disembark in an orderly fashion, be patient and try to leave space between yourself and other passengers.

## Network Capacity

During the pandemic public transport usage has been greatly reduced. However, in September, as school children return to school and commuters to work this is expected to change. The Council is actively working with bus companies to ensure sufficient capacity at peak times across the network. Individual travellers can help by changing their travel habits and embracing **active travel** see below.

## Clean hands

Students should present for travel with clean hands, regular handwashing remains key to infection control.

Passengers will be encouraged to sanitise their hands before boarding and again on disembarking. It would be good practice for students to carry a personal supply of hand sanitiser.

### **Contactless payment**

Passengers are encouraged to use contactless payment wherever possible or to have the correct cash fare. Passengers are asked to maintain a social distance and stand behind the screen when talking to the driver.

### **Good respiratory hygiene**

Transport operators are required to ensure that vehicles are well ventilated, travellers can expect windows to be open during the journey.

'Catch it, bin it, kill it', passengers should travel with tissues and use them to catch and control coughs and sneezes. Tissues then must be disposed of hygienically.

### **Face coverings for passengers**

The Government has made face coverings compulsory on public transport for travellers over the age of 11 without a specific medical exemption. Please do not attempt to travel without one. If your child is over 11 and you think they should be exempt from using a face covering, please contact the relevant operator, Yellow Buses offer an exemption card and More Buses digital exemption passes.

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

Bus drivers are not obliged to wear a face covering whilst driving but should do so when out of the cab area.

### **Enhanced vehicle cleaning**

Public transport operators are committed to implementing an enhanced cleaning regime with appropriate disinfectants. Buses will be sanitised before use; frequently touched surfaces will be cleaned throughout the working day and a thorough clean carried out at the end of each working day.

### **Active Travel**

The Government has asked that all travellers consider active travel. This means walking, cycling or scooting to / from school wherever possible. This form of self-help will reduce passenger numbers and will improve social distancing for those who are unable to actively travel. It is also seen as beneficial for physical and mental health, the environment.

Finally, I would like to thank you in advance for your co-operation in ensuring the safest possible outcome for your child and other travellers these challenging times.



David Harrop. Passenger Transport Manager.