

School transport from September 2020

The council may change the information set out below, particularly if there are changes to guidance. We recommend you continue to check the web page for the most up to date information.

How do children (including those 16 years and older) travel to school/college?

- Most walk, cycle or are driven/drive
- Some pay to use public transport, e.g. bus, taxi or train
- Some pay to use commercial vehicles that only transport school children and not the general public
- Some are entitled to free transport, arranged by the council, on either:
 - dedicated school transport, which only carries school children
 - public transport (where the council funds the ticket cost)
- Some pay for a ticket on dedicated school transport where there is a spare seat
- Some schools/colleges fund or provide transport for their pupils

Is my child entitled to free transport?

You can check if your child is entitled to free school transport [here](#) and make an application.

What should I do if my child won't be using their free transport from the autumn term?

If your child is entitled to free transport, but won't be using it, please complete the form [here](#). Those without access to the internet should call 01522 782020.

You can change your mind at any point, but if you want your child to start using their transport again, you must inform the council using the same form [here](#).

It is very important to tell the council so there is a record of which children are travelling on a vehicle. This will also help the NHS test and trace process, if needed.

The council will make transport arrangements as soon as possible. We apologise that very short notice may mean a delay to transport being in place.

If you decide to arrange your own transport, the council will not reimburse your costs.

If for any reason transport becomes unavailable, we will contact you to discuss your options.

Should I pay the post-16 contribution towards transport?

If your child will be using their transport, then you must pay the contribution, even if their timetable means they will be travelling to school or college less often.

The council heavily subsidises this transport, and it will still be paying for the transport even if reduced numbers of pupils use it.

If a school or college is formally closed due to a local lockdown, the council will refund the proportionate amount. Please note the processing of refunds may take a few weeks.

Should I apply and pay for concessionary transport?

You should only apply and pay for concessionary transport, if your child will be using the seat. If the seat is not used, the council reserves the right to offer the seat to other children in line with its policy.

The council reserves the right to withdraw any concessionary ticket if a child entitled to free transport requires the seat.

Enquiries about the availability of any concessionary transport can be made as set out [here](#).

How will school transport work from autumn term 2020?

Where possible, all children should walk or cycle to school or college. Where this is not possible, driving a child to school or college or using public transport will be an option.

Even if children are entitled to free or subsidised education transport, they should only use this transport if absolutely necessary. This will help to reduce the number of interactions between children as far as possible.

Parents and carers are responsible for supporting their child to maintain social distancing whilst queuing at bus stops.

Schools and colleges are asked to put in place appropriate queuing or other arrangements needed for picking up and dropping off children at school or college.

If your child needs your help getting into a vehicle, we recommend you limit the time you spend in the vehicle, wear a face covering and also wash your hands thoroughly before and after.

Allowing space between pupils is helpful on transport, but because of limited transport capacity this may not always be possible, and so other infection prevention control measures are more important.

Unless it is possible on the transport used, social distancing will **not** apply on dedicated school transport from the autumn term, in line with Government guidance. This is because:

- the overall risk to children and young people from coronavirus (COVID-19) is very low
- they do not mix with the general public on those journeys
- dedicated school transport often carries the same group on a regular basis, and those children may also be together in school
- the predictability, which public transport does not afford, will allow for planning so that appropriate protective measures can be put in place.

The Government guidance says that having school bubbles will still bring benefits even if implemented partially, and that schools may need to allow mixing into wider groups in certain circumstances, including on transport.

There is no requirement for children to sit in their school bubble on dedicated school transport. Some children will travel with pupils from different school bubbles and also from other schools. There are not enough vehicles available to transport pupils only within their school bubbles. However, where possible, children should try to sit within their school bubbles on vehicles.

Transport will be provided as close to the normal start and end of the school day as possible, because children in different bubbles will need to travel together. It will not be possible for them to arrive at different times from one another. Schools and colleges have been made aware of this and been advised that they may need to provide a safe place for children to wait for their transport. Parents are advised to contact their child's school or college if they have any questions about this.

How will the risk of infection on dedicated school transport be reduced?

Children should not travel to school if they:

- are experiencing any [coronavirus symptoms](#)
- are [self-isolating as a result of coronavirus symptoms or sharing a household or support bubble with somebody with symptoms](#)
- have been advised by the [NHS test and trace service](#) to self-isolate.

Drivers or passenger assistants should not work if they meet any of the criteria above. They must go home if they begin displaying symptoms whilst at work and get a test.

If a child becomes unwell during a school day, parents/carers will be expected to arrange their collection from school or college. Dedicated school transport or public transport should not be used.

Will my child have to wear a face covering?

The council expects that all children wear a face covering on dedicated school transport if they are able to do so.

By law, people aged 11 and over must wear a face covering on public transport. Although, this law does not apply to dedicated school transport, Public Health England recommends that children aged 11 and over wear a face covering when travelling on dedicated school transport from the start of the autumn term. This does not apply to those who are exempt from wearing a face covering on public transport. Government guidance also supports younger children wearing a face covering if they are able to handle them as directed.

Face coverings should not be worn by those who may not be able to handle them as directed (for example, young children or those with special educational needs or disabilities) as it may increase the risk of transmission).

Parents and carers are advised to check transport providers' websites for any specific rules on face coverings. Transport providers will raise any concerns they have with the council, who will contact schools to discuss specific issues.

Schools and colleges should have a process for pupils to remove face coverings. This should enable them to wash their hands immediately on arrival, dispose of temporary face coverings in a covered bin, place reusable face coverings in a plastic bag, and then wash their hands again.

Will the bus driver/passenger assistant wear Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)?

Transport providers are expected to follow Government guidance on the use of PPE.

Drivers and passenger assistants will not normally require PPE on dedicated school transport, even if they are not able to maintain distance from the children. This is because children with symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19) must not board dedicated school transport. They should stay at home and get a test.

Where the care of a child on dedicated school transport ordinarily requires the use of PPE, this should continue as usual.

What measures will be in place for hand hygiene and cleaning?

Coronavirus (COVID-19) is easy to kill when it is on skin. Children should continue to wash their hands thoroughly before and after using transport. This can be done with soap and running water or hand sanitiser. Children, drivers and passenger assistants should clean their hands, before boarding home-to-school transport and when arriving at school or home.

Drivers and passenger assistants may wish to use alcohol hand rub or sanitiser at intervals throughout the journey, and should always do so after performing tasks such as helping a

child into the vehicle or handling a child's belongings. It should not normally be necessary for children to clean their hands during the journey.

The 'catch it, bin it, kill it' approach is very important. Children should carry tissues on transport and use them to catch any coughs or sneezes. Tissues should then be disposed of safely in a covered bin after leaving the vehicle and hands should be cleaned as soon as possible.

Children must not consume food or drink on dedicated school transport vehicles.

Coronavirus (COVID-19) is easy to kill on surfaces. Transport providers should clean frequently touched surfaces quickly after each journey wherever possible and undertake enhanced cleaning at the end of each day.

Transport providers should follow the [cleaning of non-healthcare settings guidance](#) and refer to the 'Keeping public and private areas and modes of transport clean' section of the [transport operator guidance](#) for information on carrying out cleaning procedures and adjusting ventilation on vehicles.

Transport providers should keep windows on dedicated school transport open, where possible, to increase ventilation, or use air conditioning.

What will happen if someone on dedicated school transport displays symptoms or tests positive for coronavirus (COVID-19)?

If a child, driver or passenger assistant has been in contact with someone that has developed symptoms and travelled on dedicated school transport, they do not need to go home to self-isolate unless they develop symptoms themselves (in which case, they should arrange a test) or have been requested to do so by NHS test and trace.

If the symptomatic person tests positive, the local health protection team will work quickly with the family, school, council and transport provider to identify people who have been in close contact with that person and ask them to go home and self-isolate for the advised time period. Other members in the household will not need to self-isolate, unless the person who is self-isolating subsequently develops symptoms.

Close contact means:

- Direct close contacts: Face-to-face contact with an infected individual for any length of time, within 1m, including being coughed on, a face-to-face conversation, unprotected physical contact (skin-to-skin)
- Proximity contacts: extended close contact (within 1-2m for more than 15 minutes) with an infected individual
- Travelled in a small vehicle, like a car, with an infected individual

Anyone coming into contact with someone who has symptoms must wash their hands thoroughly for 20 seconds with soap and running water or use hand sanitiser. If a person with symptoms has been on dedicated school transport, the vehicle must be cleaned with normal household disinfectant to reduce the risk of passing the infection on to other people. Transport providers should follow the: [cleaning of non-healthcare settings guidance](#).

The council expects drivers and passenger assistants to book a test if they display coronavirus (COVID-19) symptoms. The council also expects staff to self-isolate as advised. If this means that transport cannot be provided to any pupils, then the council will try to find alternative vehicles. However, in the worst case scenario, parents and carers may need to transport their children to school until normal arrangements can resume.

Who will make sure children follow the advice and guidance?

Transport drivers must focus on driving vehicles safely, and so are not responsible for overseeing whether children are following advice and guidance.

Parents and carers are responsible for ensuring children understand how to use transport safely, and children themselves are responsible for acting upon this, where they are able to.

Dedicated school transport providers are being asked to put signs in all vehicles with key messages for pupils to follow.

The council's transport inspection team will continue to spot-check transport providers compliance with guidance.

My child attends a special school – will their transport be different?

The information above applies to dedicated special school transport. The council will work directly with schools and transport providers to understand if there are any children that are very medically vulnerable that may need different transport arrangements, and these may be supported for an agreed time period, where possible.

My child uses transport provided by their school – what should they do?

You should contact your school to understand their arrangements, if you have any questions. Arrangements should be in line with Government guidance. If the school will not be operating their own transport, then the council will only be able to provide transport for those children that are entitled under the council's education transport policy.

Where can I find further information and guidance?

Government guidance for the full opening of schools for autumn term 2020 can be found [here](#).

Government guidance for dedicated home to school and post-16 transport for autumn term 2020 is due to be published in the very near future. The guidance above may therefore be subject to change when the government guidance is issued.

Government guidance for pupils using public transport can be found [here](#).