**Passenger Transport Update – July 2020**

Shropshire Council’s Passenger Transport Team are working hard to ensure a smooth transition back to school in September 2020. To date, the current position on home to school transport has not changed with regards to 2 Metre distancing and hygiene/cleaning.

In this Covid-19 emergency, one of our key aims is to keep pupils as safe as we can whilst they are travelling on provided transport to and from school. Since 1st June 2020 we’ve maintained on-board Covid-19 social distancing by operating our transport network at only 25% maximum seating capacity (i.e. using only 1 in 4 seats, as per a designated seating plan). In this time we’ve only had to transport about 10% (650) of entitled pupils, which we’ve done successfully, in partnership with schools, parents and transport operators.

Current DfE guidance issued at 18th June 2020 is still suggesting that we maintain a 2 metre social distancing gap on contracted school transport. If this guidance doesn’t change by September 2020 we may only be able to transport 1/3 of all entitled pupils.

We await further guidance from the Department for Transport and the Department for Education as to what a return to school in September may look like and we look forward to working with parents, schools and operators.

Transport FAQs -

**What happens if someone is unwell?**

Drivers, passenger assistants and pupils should not travel on transport if they are feeling unwell, particularly if they have symptoms of coronavirus (Covid-19) which include a new, continuous cough, high temperature, or loss of taste or smell, or if they live in a household with someone showing any of these symptoms – they should self-isolate and stay at home.

**Will buses and taxis be cleaned?**

Operators will ensure that all touch points on school transport vehicles are cleaned to protect against coronavirus (Covid-19) prior to and after every new journey – this includes door handles, keys, handrails, armrests, seat backs, seatbelts, driver controls, etc.

**What about transport seating arrangements?**

Social distancing inside vehicles means that they will carry no more than 25% of their capacity, at least to start with. On buses, for the time being, only one (window) seat must be used per row, with alternate nearside/offside window seats occupied; bus operators will mark seats accordingly; on taxis only the rear seat diagonally opposite the driver should be used, unless two siblings from the same household are transported, when both rear seats can be occupied, subject to the taxi operator agreeing.

**Will there be cleaning equipment/PPE on-board?**

Operators will provide on-board cleaning fluids/cloths/disposable gloves and a suitable secure on-board bin for disposal of any cleaning items, tissues or PPE, for in-journey use.

**What about personal hygiene?**

All staff and pupils should maintain good hand hygiene (e.g. washing hands with soap and water or alcohol hand sanitiser, particularly straight before and straight after journeys), avoiding direct hand contact with eyes, nose and mouth, and using tissues to catch coughs and sneezes (or at least coughing/sneezing into the crook of their elbow), disposing of tissues in a bin as soon as possible.

**What about passenger assistants?**

Passenger assistants will still travel on buses, using a socially distanced seat. If there is a specific physical, behavioural or medical need the Passenger Assistant will sit close to, but not next to the relevant pupil and appropriate PPE will be worn. Where taxi transport is provided for one pupil with a Passenger Assistant, it will be difficult to maintain social distancing protocols, so unfortunately this transport may not operate; in these circumstances, alternative arrangements will be made where possible.

**What happens at pick up points?**

At pick up points, where staff receive passengers from their parents/carers, social distancing and hygiene guidance will be adhered to; persons involved should keep a maximum distance from and spend a minimum time with each other; staff shouldn’t make any physical contact with parents’/carers’ house doors, gates, property or belongings, etc, where possible.

**What happens if rescue medication is needed?**

For pupils who may require rescue medication, unfortunately it is unlikely that transport can be provided because of the potential infection risks that this may cause; this will be kept under review.

**How will wheelchairs be manoeuvred?**

If drivers or passenger assistants have to manoeuvre wheelchairs, they will clean the wheelchair handles and brake levers prior to pushing the wheelchair. Likewise, if installing car seats or booster seats, they will clean the hard surface areas (e.g. outer shell, buckles) before installing in the vehicle and clean them after use.