

GETTING TO SCHOOL SAFELY

(A Guide for
Parents/Carers)



August 2020

SHROPSHIRE
MAINSTREAM SCHOOL
TRANSPORT
SEPTEMBER 2020 ONWARD
CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19)



RETURNING TO SCHOOL— SEPTEMBER 2020

Our objective is to return the mainstream school transport network back to 'normal' from September 2020.

We will aim to ensure that we can provide transport for every entitled pupil in a Covid-19 safe way, which also allows for a pleasant and comfortable journey.

This information and instructions have been produced using guidance from the Department for Transport (DfT) and Department for Education (DfE).



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Our priority is to support children and young people to access their entitlement to a school placement by taking measures to ensure that school transport is as Covid-19 safe as possible. We will do this by:



Support parents/carers



Working closely and collaboratively with schools to achieve the best transport outcomes for pupils



Providing home to school transport for all entitled pupils

PLEASE NOTE

You may be aware that social distancing on public transport had reduced seating capacities to 50%; however, the Government has recently relaxed these rules for dedicated (contracted) school transport, with additional safety advice. Information will be outlined within this document.

PUPILS WHO SHOULD NOT TRAVEL:

The Government and Council advises that people (pupils) should not travel at all if they:



are experiencing any Covid-19 symptoms

Are self-isolating as a result of Covid-19 symptoms or sharing a household or support bubble with someone with symptoms



Have been advised by the NHS test and trace service that they should self-isolate

If pupils have any symptoms of Covid-19 they should self-isolate at home and arrange to have a test to see if they have Covid-19.

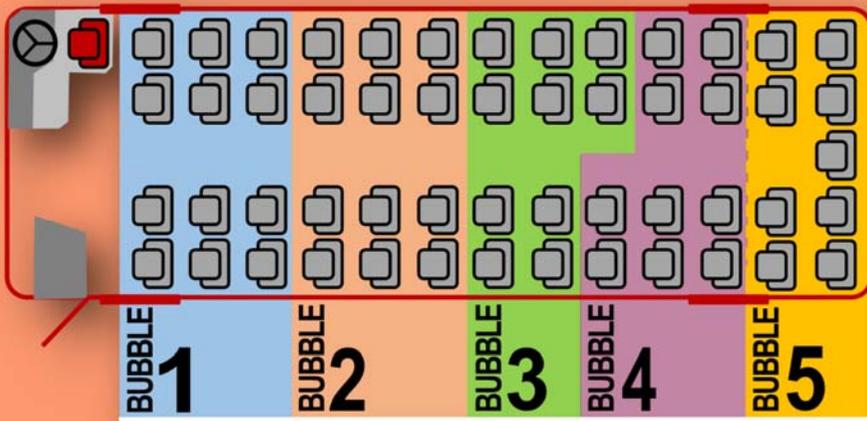
If anyone in the pupil's household or support bubble has symptoms of Covid-19 every member of the household/bubble should self-isolate.

ON BOARD SOCIAL DISTANCING

From September 2020 there will be no social distancing on dedicated contract (closed) school buses and taxis, which means that vehicles will operate at 100% capacity. It's important to note that no members of the public travel on these buses/taxis whilst on Council contracts and they are restricted to the same group of pupils each day

The default seating arrangement on school buses will mean that each pupil uses the same seat each day and that they are grouped in their Year Groups ('bubbles'), with the eldest pupils seated at the rear of the bus and progressively younger Year Groups sitting towards the front of the bus, as described in the 'bubble' seating examples below. Where it is possible, individual pupils and 'bubbles' should be as distanced as possible from each other, preferably by an empty row of seats or more. Once the seating arrangements are established, where possible they should be replicated daily.

Siblings from the same household can sit next to each other, even if they are in different 'bubbles'



BOARDING

Boarding buses should be done one at a time - disembarking buses should also be undertaken one at a time, from the most forward seats first, with pupils staying apart

SEATING



Pupils should go straight to their usual seat, and sit down. Where primary school pupils have difficulty fitting seat belts themselves, the driver should offer verbal guidance and support from a safe distance - seat belts should be pre-adjusted for pupil use

Pupils travelling on coaches should stay seated for the whole journey, face forwards, not touch other pupils, not shout or sing and use a tissue to catch any coughs or sneezes

SOCIALLY DISTANCED EMBARKATION

We expect pupils, parents and staff to be socially distanced whilst boarding buses/taxis where possible - parents and school staff will be expected to support this protocol for boarding, both at the pick-up point and at school.

JOURNEY GUIDELINES

Whilst travelling, we should all endeavour to ensure that the Covid-19 safety rules are applied as best as we can.

FACE COVERINGS

For children over the age of 11, the DfE say that where possible, face coverings should be worn, especially if children are likely to come into very close contact with others outside their year group or who they do not normally meet. We recognise that it may not be possible for all pupils especially for those with a medical condition and/or an exemption.



Ideally pupils should not touch the front of their face covering during use or when removing them. Hands should be washed immediately on arrival, and disposable face coverings placed in a covered bin or, for reusable face coverings, in a plastic bag.

ALCOHOL HAND SANITISER

Pupils should sanitise their hands when boarding buses/taxis – if available, they can use operator provided hand gel and/or they can carry their own (i.e. 60%+ alcohol hand gel); parents may wish to advise pupils to sanitise their hands regularly during the journey as well.



RISK

Where pupils/passengers present an unacceptable safety risk to other pupils/staff, they may be refused transport (e.g. for reasons including displaying illness, deliberate spitting, coughing and sneezing at others, touching others, shouting, singing, not sitting in their 'bubble', standing, seat switching, ignoring verbal safety guidance)



PUBLIC BUSES

Where non-entitled pupils travel on public transport (LBS) also used by the public, because loading capacities on public buses will still be around 50% in September 2020, parents are being encouraged to find alternative ways of getting their children to school – if they live in the same town/community as the school, active travel (walking/cycling) should be the first choice. The second choice should be travel by car. Only if none of these options are available to parents should they attempt to use public transport.



PARK & STRIDE

For pupils not entitled to free school transport, parents will make appropriate arrangements to get their children to and from school. Many pupils walk or cycle to school themselves. Where parental cars are used instead, a 'Park & Stride' strategy can be used – this is a simple solution that allows pupils to walk for part of their journey and where parents safely park a little further away from school, typically within a 5 to 10 minutes walking distance. Parents will decide whether or not to escort their children to and from school on the 'Stride' element of the journey. 'Park & Stride' helps reduce entry risks at the school and eases access overall.



GOVERNMENT SAFER TRAVEL GUIDANCE

For information, key Government guidelines include:



Pupils should not travel if feeling unwell or if they or anyone in their household have any Covid-19 symptoms



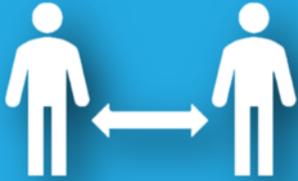
Enhanced bus/taxi cleaning regimes, particularly for regular touch points



Providing the most on-board ventilation possible, consistent with a comfortable journey



Keeping any physical contact to the minimum, where possible



Minimising the time spent close to other people, where possible



Covering mouth and nose with a tissue or the inside of the elbow when coughing or sneezing



Travelling side by side or behind other people, rather than facing them, where seating arrangements allow



Touching as few surfaces as possible



Wash hands for at least 20 seconds or sanitise hands before and after the end of your journey



Facing away from others



Avoiding loud talking, shouting or singing



Avoid touching your face where practical

GOVERNMENT COVID-19 TRAVEL ADVICE

Government Department for Transport (DfT) and Department for Education (DfE) advice should be adhered to and can be found using the following links:

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

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/what-parents-and-carers-need-to-know-about-early-years-providers-schools-and-colleges-during-the-coronavirus-covid-19-outbreak/what-parents-and-carers-need-to-know-about-early-years-providers-schools-and-colleges-in-the-autumn-term>

Face Coverings

<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>



PARENTS CONSIDERATION

Parents need to be aware of these arrangements and if they consider there are specific reasons why their child may not be able to travel on school transport at any one time, they should advise us accordingly. Whilst home to school transport will be available for pupils as it was before, parents do have the choice if they want their child to use the service or not.

COUNCIL GUIDANCE FOR SCHOOL TRANSPORT PROVISION

The Council's 'School Transport and other Council Passenger Transport' should also be followed and this is published on the Council's internet site - it will be updated to reflect the new plans for September 2020.

<https://www.shropshire.gov.uk/school-transport/>



Shropshire
Council

SUMMARY

Finally, we recognise that partnership between schools, parents and the Council's transport team is incredibly important, and we are keen to work actively and closely with everyone on achieving the very best outcomes for our pupils, even more so during this time of national emergency. You can be assured that we will continue working to make safe and satisfactory arrangements for school transport for September 2020 and beyond.

We look forward to welcoming pupils/students back to school transport in September.



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