

DEVON COUNTY COUNCIL – TRANSPORT CO-ORDINATION SERVICE
Additional Guidance for Home to School Transport for September 2020
For Schools/Colleges and Transport Operators
Issued: 12th August 2020 (Version 1.0)

This document has been produced by Devon County Council based on the DfT document: **Guidance for dedicated home to school and post-16 transport for autumn term 2020** ([Transport-to-school-and-other-places-of-education-autumn-term-2020](#)) which should also be read in full. If you have any questions regarding this information, please contact your Transport Officer or email schooltransportservicequeries-mailbox@devon.gov.uk

Guidance was produced following these principals

- In September it is expected that all students will return to full time education.
- DCC remain under a statutory duty to provide free home to school transport for all eligible students.
- DCC, in conjunction with schools and transport operators, have identified the risks arising from the coronavirus, and have worked through a system of controls, (as set out in the DfT guidance – in the “Prevention” section), to develop best practice measures.
- This guidance applies to all **dedicated home to school transport** – meaning services which exclusively carry students to school and other education institutions.
- Parents may also wish to consider, based on their personal risk assessment, whether it is possible and more appropriate to take their child to school in a private car, to walk or cycle to/from school instead of using school transport.

1. Social Distancing

- Social distancing guidance which applies to passengers on public transport will **not** apply on dedicated home to school transport from the autumn term. The government believe this appropriate because:
 - the overall risk to students and young people from coronavirus (COVID-19) is very low.
 - they do not mix with the general public on those journeys.
 - home to school transport carries the same group of students and young people on a regular basis, and those students may also be together in school.
 - the predictability, which public transport does not afford, will allow for planning so that protective measures can be put in places.
- Although many schools will be operating in “bubbles”, it is not feasible to implement this across the Devon school transport network. The guidance for schools acknowledges that implementing 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. Siblings may also be in different groups.
- Although there is no requirement for students to sit with the group of students or “bubble” with which they are educated, we do expect students to sit in year groups as far as possible when travelling – this will be in ascending year groups front to back (youngest students at the front of the vehicle). Some schools may even wish to draw up seating arrangements on vehicles.
- Please note that drivers are unable to “police” any seating arrangements – their role is to focus on driving the vehicle safely.
- Any arrangements will require clear communication between schools and families/students, and school staff should initially be on hand at the end of each day to assist the students.
- In some instances, we may work with individual establishments to maintain “bubble” arrangements within schools, if this can feasible be accommodated on transport.
- Transport operators should keep windows on home to school transport open, where possible, to increase ventilation; or use air conditioning.

2. Face coverings & PPE

- It is now the law that people age 11 and over must wear a face covering on public transport. This law does not apply to school transport. However, DCC, supported by PHE, **recommend** that people 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 ([see DfT guidance on face masks & exemptions](#)). A face covering is a covering of any type which covers your nose and mouth. Students will also need to carry their own plastic/freezer bag so they can put their face covering in their school bag during the day to ensure that it remains as sterile as possible.
- Face coverings should not be worn by those who may not be able to handle them as directed (for example, young students, or those with special educational needs or disabilities) as it may inadvertently increase the risk of transmission.
- Drivers may wear face coverings if they wish to, although guidance indicates that PPE is not normally needed on home to school transport.
- Where a child or young person ordinarily requires the use of PPE, this will continue to be provided.

3. Loading for vehicles above nine passenger seats

- Where reasonably possible and where students pass the driver's seat to board the vehicle, drivers must turn off the engine, remove key and alight from the vehicle (using the driver's door if available) before the students board.
- Students should be asked to respect the driver's personal space and hold back from entering the vehicle until the driver has indicated it is safe to do so, and then do so one by one in an orderly manner.
- Students should hold their bus pass so it is visible to the driver (and produce for closer examination if requested).
- Students should sit in their year groups as far as possible, with older students at the rear of the vehicle.
- Seats alongside or immediately to rear of driver may be out of use and if so would be clearly marked as "out of use" by the operator.
- We will work with operators, schools and parents to manage arrangements for organised queueing and boarding.

4. Children and young people travelling on public transport

- For any children and young people traveling on public transport social distancing measures will continue to be applied and face coverings will be mandatory.
- However, where possible we are working with operators and schools to provide dedicated duplicate vehicles where numbers mean that social distancing is not possible.

5. Behaviour

- Drivers will not be able to manage pupil behaviour whilst driving however, ALL students will be expected to abide by the DCC [Code of Conduct](#)

6. Staggered start/finish times

- Although some schools may stagger start / finish times to keep groups of students apart as they arrive and leave school, it is recognised that it would be impossible to replicate this across home to school travel arrangements.
- Any alternative access arrangements for when students arrive at the school grounds should be communicated via the school to families/students.

7. Seatbelts and car seats

- To avoid close proximity between the driver and students, parents will be asked to encourage their children to put seatbelts on themselves, so far as possible. Where assistance is required (likely to be youngest students), the parent/ responsible adult should be encouraged to assist when boarding at home.

- When boarding at the school, the school staff may be able to assist as required. However, where applicable the legal responsibility of driver to ensure a seatbelt is worn properly remains unchanged; but normally a visual check should be sufficient.

8. Good practice personal care

- Students, drivers and escorts should clean their hands, before boarding home to school transport and when arriving at school or home.
- Drivers and escorts 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 students to clean their hands during the journey.
- Coughs/sneezes – students/parents to be given guidance on good management of coughs and sneezes, in line with the “catch it, bin it, kill it” approach – this will be reinforced in schools.
- Students should be encouraged to carry tissues on home to school transport. These will need to be disposed of in a covered bin. Where it is not possible to have a bin on board, schools should have a suitable disposal process on arrival.

9. Vehicle cleaning

- Coronavirus (COVID-19) is easy to kill on surfaces. Normal cleaning products will do this, specialist cleaning products are not needed. For more information on keeping public and private areas and modes of transport clean, read [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): safer transport guidance for operators](#).
- Frequently touched surfaces should be cleaned after each journey wherever possible and enhanced cleaning of each vehicle takes place at the end of each day.

10. Carriage of passengers with symptoms

- Parents must be advised that students **MUST NOT** board home to school transport, if they or a member of their household has symptoms of coronavirus.
- Any child, young person or other learner who starts displaying coronavirus symptoms while at their setting should be sent home immediately. They must not travel on home to school transport. The school should contact the parent or carer who should make arrangements for the child or young person's journey home.
- In exceptional circumstances, where this is not possible, and where a symptomatic child or young person or other passenger needs to be transported to their home, you must contact the Transport Coordination Service at DCC. We will be working with Public Health colleagues to manage any virus outbreak.
- Other children should not travel on transport at the same time as a child or young person with symptoms.
- Drivers and escorts must not work if they or someone in their household has symptoms. They must go home if they begin to display symptoms at work.
- Students, drivers and passenger assistants who have been in contact with someone that has developed symptoms whilst at school or on home to school transport do not need to go home to self-isolate unless;
 - they develop symptoms themselves (in which case, they should arrange a test) or
 - the symptomatic person subsequently tests positive (see below) or
 - if they have been requested to do so by NHS Test and Trace.

11. Children with Special Educational Needs:

- When deciding on the package of measures that is appropriate on transport for children and young people with special educational needs, we will need to take account of the particular needs of the children using the transport and will work with the parents and school.