

School transport advice during the Covid-19 pandemic – Autumn Term 2020

This guidance covers Herefordshire Council provided school and college transport during the Autumn term 2020, and more widely the use of public transport by students traveling to and from school or college.

We recommend that you follow the Government guidance summarised in this letter to help to keep your child safe and talk to your child about the general advice and rules for their particular type of service before they travel.

This guidance is effective from 1st September 2020 and will be subject to review. We expect further Government guidance to be issued before the start of the Autumn term and a further update to schools and parents may be issued during the Summer holidays.

General Advice

- To help keep your child and fellow students safe, your child should not travel if:
 - They are experiencing any [coronavirus symptoms](#)
 - They are self-isolating as a result of coronavirus symptoms or sharing a [household or support bubble with somebody with symptoms](#)
 - They are [clinically extremely vulnerable](#) and cannot shield during their journey
 - They have been advised by the [NHS test and trace service](#) to self-isolate
- The requirements for social distancing on board vehicles will depend on the type of service your child is using. You will need to ensure that your child is aware of the requirements for their particular service. Where possible children should keep their distance from others who are not in their household. Public Health England recommends that people stay two metres apart from others who are outside their household or support bubble, or a '[one metre plus](#)' approach where this is not possible. If this isn't possible children should avoid physical contact, face away from others, and keep the time spent near others as short as possible
- Social distancing should be maintained whilst queuing, boarding and alighting a vehicle where possible

Dedicated school and college transport vehicles

- All routes will operate in September as per their normal pre-Covid-19 timetables
- Government guidance has confirmed that social distancing on dedicated school and college transport vehicles will not be mandatory from September 2020 (unlike travel on the public transport network). However, where possible distancing within vehicles should be maintained.
 - The Government has stated that this takes into account that pupils on dedicated school or college services do not mix with the general public on those journeys and tend to be consistent. This means that the advice for passengers on public transport to adopt a social distance of two metres from people outside their household or support bubble, or a 'one metre plus' approach where this is not possible, will not apply from the autumn term on dedicated transport
 - Where possible how pupils are grouped together on transport should reflect the bubbles that are adopted within school. You should ensure that your child sits with

peers from their own school and their own school bubble, mixing with children from other schools or bubbles should be avoided. How school bubbles are arranged will vary by school and you can discuss the specific arrangements with your child's school

- Face coverings for students aged 11 and over are recommended but not mandatory
- If your child does wear a face covering they must be able to use a face covering as per the directions below and will require 2 face coverings per day one for the journey there and one for the journey back
- Some people may not be able to wear a face covering, for example primary aged children, people with breathing difficulties and people whose disabilities makes it difficult for them to wear or manage a face covering
- Your child should wash their hands for at least 20 seconds or sanitise their hands before the journey and as soon as possible after the journey
- Transport operators will follow [Government guidance on vehicle cleaning](#) by cleaning regularly-touched objects and surfaces (like door handles, handrails and ticket machines) more often than usual
- We will ask transport providers to use air-conditioning to increase the flow of ventilation around the vehicle, and where it is safe to do so to keep vehicle windows open
- Government guidance exempts employees of the transport operator from wearing face coverings when they are acting in the course of their employment, however some employees may choose to wear a face covering as a personal choice
- Passenger records will be maintained and made available for the purpose of the [NHS test and trace service](#)
- When traveling in taxis or private hire vehicles your child should follow the advice of the driver. For example, they may be asked to sit in the back left hand seat if travelling alone. If they need to be near other people they should avoid physical contact, try not to be face to face with other people, and keep the time spent near other people as short as possible

Public bus and rail services

- The Government advises that you consider all other forms of transport before using public transport, and that public transport capacity will continue to be constrained during the Autumn term. Its use, particularly at peak times, should be kept to an absolute minimum
- Covid-19 Personal Transport Budgets may be available to parents of students entitled to free school transport in lieu of a provided public transport ticket, more details are available in the 'Personal Transport Budgets' section below
- Face coverings are mandatory on public transport for children aged 11 and over
- Colleges in particular are aware of the constraints on public transport capacity and will be taking this in to account in their planning for the start of the Autumn term in September

Face Coverings

- A cloth face covering should cover your child's mouth and nose whilst allowing your child to breathe comfortably. The covering can be as simple as a scarf or bandana that ties behind the head
- Your child should wash their hands or use hand sanitiser before putting on the face covering or taking it off. Your child should avoid touching their eyes, nose, or mouth at all times and should store used face coverings in a plastic bag until you have an opportunity to wash them
- They should not touch the front of the face covering, or the part of the face covering that has been in contact with their mouth and nose. Once removed, any surfaces that have been in contact with the covering will need to be thoroughly cleaned
- Face coverings must be washed regularly and can be included with other laundry, using your normal detergent
- When wearing a face covering, your child will need to tuck away any loose ends
- The Government has provided guidance on [how to make a face covering](#)

Personal Transport Budgets

A Covid-19 Personal Transport Budget is an allowance paid to parents and carers of students entitled to free transport assistance. The payment replaces a public transport ticket provided by the Council, and is designed to reduce the demand for public transport during the pandemic. A fixed amount will be paid to parent and carers to enable you to transport your child to school. You can use the budget in any way which ensures that your child attends school every day and is able to arrive on time and ready to learn. For example, the budget can help towards covering the cost of running a family car.

To be eligible for a Covid-19 Personal Transport Budget your child must be attending a Primary or Secondary school, be entitled to free school assistance as defined by the Council's [Home to School Transport Policy](#), and they must normally travel to and from school on a public bus or train. Covid-19 Personal Transport Budgets are not available to parents and carers of students who use dedicated school transport vehicles or to college students.

To apply for the Personal Transport Budget, or for more information contact Transport.Support@herefordshire.gov.uk

Further Guidance

The latest school transport information relating to the coronavirus visit: www.herefordshire.gov.uk/schooltransportcovid19

For advice on the coronavirus visit: www.herefordshire.gov.uk/coronavirus

For the latest Government advice on the coronavirus pandemic visit: www.gov.uk/coronavirus

School Transport Team
Herefordshire Council

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