

Dear Headteacher

I am writing to you with further details about our school and college transport arrangements for next term. Detailed transport guidance from the DfE which we have been waiting on for some time has now arrived and can be read in full below:

[Transport to school and other places of education: autumn term 2020 - GOV.UK](#)

I recognise that getting the advice so close to schools and colleges reopening in September is challenging but can assure you our teams have been and continue to work flat out planning the travel arrangements for students.

What is certain is the need for us to work together. I ask for your help in getting messages across to parents that they should consider the travel arrangements for their children carefully for the Autumn Term. The transport section of our back to school transport pages <https://www.eastsussex.gov.uk/educationandlearning/schools/backtoschool/travel/> will be regularly updated to reflect the below measures, as well as the latest Government advice relating to COVID-19. I would be grateful if you could point your parents/carers to this resource, so they are fully aware of the arrangements before the start of the new term. We have written to transport operators to outline the guidance for the delivery of school transport.

Summary

The guidance is proportionate in its approach. It acknowledges that not every mitigation is possible everywhere. We would like to work with you and parents/students on the following areas, summarised here and in full below:

- Social distancing is not required on dedicated school transport. Public buses continue to have social distancing requirements
- Precautions and general hygiene
 - not travelling if anyone in the household has symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19)
 - hand washing before and after each journey
 - encouraging the wearing of face coverings
 - additional cleaning of vehicles especially hard surfaces
- When travelling on or waiting at a bus stop for vehicles
 - following any loading/unloading instructions, being seated and use of allocated seating areas if provided
 - sitting on board with others in their bubbles/year groups if possible
 - Keeping distance between students not in their bubbles/year groups as well as other passengers
 - Use of face coverings on public transport and dedicated school transport
- Looking at bus operators websites to check timetables to understand options for the start and location of school journeys
- Active travel – encouraging walking and cycling, particularly if pupils live up to two miles from school
- Congestion – not driving to the school gates, dropping off elsewhere

Additional school buses

We have worked with the bus companies to change a large number of bus services to 'school/college student only' services and provided extra vehicles to the busiest journeys. This will mean that only school/college pupils can travel on those routes reducing the risk of overloading. We've written to schools and colleges to explain the details and to share the information with parents/carers. We're also asking parents/carers to check bus operators and/or ESCC websites regularly for any updates.

Details will be available on our Back to School Services website page

<https://www.eastsussex.gov.uk/roadsandtransport/public/buses/bus-service-changes/>

Social distancing

Whilst social distancing is required by law on public transport it is not required on dedicated school and college transport. However, the guidance does state that social distancing should be maximised within vehicles where possible. This won't always be possible on our transport so other mitigations will be required to reduce risk of transmission.

Face coverings

Face coverings are required by law for all pupils aged 11 and over on public transport, in line with [government policy](#).

Children aged 11 and over should wear a covering on all school transport if they can, as well as younger children who are able. If a child has a reason which makes them exempt, we are asking that families let the school know this. We need everyone's help to make this workable - so please discuss the importance of wearing a face covering with you child.

We won't expect our operators to refuse travel if pupils don't wear a face covering. Where reported, we would appreciate your support in helping us to manage such situations. We know parents have told us they would like to make sure we are doing everything possible to make the transport arrangements as safe as possible. Pupils/students wearing face coverings will help families feel more confident about using transport.

Seating on dedicated school transport

We are working with our operators on suitable seating arrangements in their vehicles. Our intention is to have groups seated together so that they mirror your arrangements of bubbles/year groups if possible. Your assistance in working with us on how pupils are loaded and seated to comply with your school's bubble arrangements will be appreciated. Otherwise our general principle will be to direct students to sit in year groups, from the older at the back to the younger at the front. On double deck buses the older year groups will be directed to sit upstairs.

Where students from more than one school or college travel on the same bus, students will need to sit within their own educational establish grouping.

Hygiene on vehicles

Across all types of transport, we will ensure the operator is fully aware of their responsibilities to report any passenger (or staff) who may have symptoms of COVID-19. We will also instruct them to ensure vehicles are properly cleaned and ventilated.

I appreciate there's a lot of challenges for you within the school itself, but I do ask for your support in making school and college transport work this coming term. We may find these arrangements need to continue for some time and changes may be needed. Most important is that we continue to work together to ensure transport is provided safely.

Yours sincerely



Gillian Laughlin
Team Manager Transport Hub