



BEDFORD BOROUGH COUNCIL

A PARENT/ CARER GUIDE TO MAINSTREAM SCHOOL TRANSPORT DURING COVID 19

Introduction

This guide has been prepared to assist parents with how we are providing school transport in line with the current public health guidelines. It is of paramount importance that we all work together to achieve a safer transport provision for the students, the transport providers and the schools/academies.

This document is meant as a general guide to parents but is not exhaustive and any specific concerns in regards to the measures should be raised with a member of the transport team.

It is the responsibility of all of us to understand the need for change at the moment and to adapt our behaviour accordingly, although this may be difficult for some of our students to understand we hope that we have your full cooperation to make the school transport environment as safe as possible in the current circumstances.

Drivers and Passenger Assistants (where applicable)

- All staff have been issued with regular reminders not to attend the workplace if they are showing symptoms of coronavirus, these being a new continuous cough, a high temperature, shortness of breath or loss of taste and smell. We would ask that if your child or anyone in your household is showing signs of the virus that the transport service is not used and the appropriate government guidance is followed in relation to isolation periods.
- For vehicles of up to 16 seats drivers and passenger assistants (where applicable) will be allocated to a route and will not change unless there is the need to do so through sickness or injury. The teams allocated may not be your child's usual driver or passenger assistant. On larger vehicles over 16 seats it may not always be possible to allocate a dedicated driver due to driver shift patterns and hours.
- Where there is a passenger assistant on the route they may be wearing a face covering. Currently guidance states that drivers are not required to wear a facemask but should they require to do so this is down to their own personal preference.
- All drivers and passenger assistants will be wearing gloves which will be changed frequently as they assist individual passengers. Hand sanitiser will also be provided to all teams which will be kept in a safe place away from the passengers. Staff will also be observing hand washing frequently where facilities are available.
- Advice posters for handwashing, face coverings and disposal of tissues are displayed in work premises and within each vehicle carrying contracted school route passengers.

The Journey to and from school

- The amount of passengers permitted to travel on each vehicle, have been allocated depending on vehicle size/capacity.
- Drivers have been asked to use the quickest/shortest route to limit the journey time. This will mean that there will be changes to the timetable. Many schools/academies are returning on a transitional basis, which in some cases means a staggered start and finish time or a reduced timetable. All transport companies have been asked to arrange collection and drop off times in line with the school requirements and you will be notified of your new timings.
- Vehicles will be well ventilated with the windows open where possible.
- Drivers are to stay in vehicles where this does not compromise their safety or existing working practises whilst students board or alight the vehicle.
- Bus pass checks will not be undertaken to limit driver contact with students and prevent students waiting in groups to board. Instead operators will carry customer lists and will check names.
- School bags / belonging to remain with students and stowed under the seat in front. Luggage rack not to be used.
- Vehicles will be cleaned following every journey.
- Parents will not be permitted to board the vehicle under any circumstances and must observe the social distancing guidelines when waiting for their child to board the bus or collect their child from it.
- Some bus stops have markings for social distancing for passengers who are waiting to board, please ask your child to ensure that they follow the advice provided and do not crowd or rush to the vehicle when it arrives.
- Face masks for passengers are not provided, however if it is your personal choice for your child to wear a face covering they may do so but we are unable to offer support with adjusting or maintaining the item.

We thank you for your continued support throughout this time. If you have any concerns or queries in relation to school transport services please contact us at client.transport@bedford.gov.uk