

Arrangements for providing School and College transport from 8th March 2021

Having considered the guidance issued by the Departments for Education and Transport we will be putting the pre-COVID outbreak school transport network back in place from 8th March 2021, where circumstances allow. This is seen as the most practical and workable solution for everyone involved but to make transport arrangements work in March we need the co-operation of schools, transport providers and parents/carers and pupils.

The government guidance can be found by clicking here:

[school and educational transport guidance](#)

[safer transport guidance for operators](#)

[Guidance for parents and carers, students and university students, teachers and educational settings leaders](#)

We think this approach is manageable as

- the overall risk to children from coronavirus (COVID-19) is low
- home to school transport usually carries the same group of children on a regular basis, and those children may also be together in school
- contact will be minimised with individuals who are unwell
- we can introduce additional measures to our services to assist with reducing risk
- we can identify who was travelling on which vehicle so can comply with any contact tracing, isolation and testing requirements

In North Yorkshire, transport for pupils entitled to free transport is provided in two ways, NYCC contracted services that carry only school pupils “Dedicated Education Transport” and Public Transport services that carry members of the public as well.

In addition to this we also have pupils not entitled to free home to school transport who use our services and pay for a bus pass and many other non-entitled pupils who use the commercial public transport network.

Dedicated Education Transport

Dedicated transport to schools or other places of education means services which are not available for public use. The DfE states that social distancing guidance which is in place for public transport will **not** apply to dedicated school transport. Whilst there is no requirement for the separation or social distancing of pupils on the vehicle we ask that the following is adhered to **wherever practical and possible:**

- Pupils and their parents/carers should ensure that pupils have washed and or sanitised their hands prior to boarding the transport service each morning
- Pupils should queue at their designated bus stop/collection points in the usual orderly manner and take particular care not to make unnecessary contact with other pupils
- Pupils board the vehicle and sit on the furthest rear seat available and try and use the same seat and sit with the same group of pupils each day.

- On the return journey home pupils should wash and or sanitise their hands at school and queue up with the last to get off at the front of the queue followed by those getting off first
- All pupils, aged 11 and over must wear a face covering. This does not apply to pupils who would be exempt from wearing a face covering on public transport. Pupils who are exempt from wearing a face covering could be asked why they are not wearing one by the driver so to avoid the risk of challenge or being refused travel, it is advisable to carry documentation to prove an exemption if it is available.
- Where school transport is shared by children attending different schools we would ask that pupils sit together based on the school they are attending wherever possible.

Please note that the guidance above for dedicated education transport services also applies to those non entitled pupils who pay for a bus pass to travel on one of those services.

Requirements for SEND pupils

- Pupils who have a special needs requirement will be transported in the usual way by bus or taxi but any additional special arrangements as a result of COVID will be detailed in their individual risk assessment where relevant (e.g. pupils with a Health Care Plan requiring close contact intervention) Parents, schools and transport providers should liaise to ensure that any special requirements over and above that, can be met wherever possible for these pupils.
- Additional personal protective equipment (PPE) will need to be worn by some drivers and passenger assistants on contracts where a risk assessment for the pupils being transported states that it is necessary
- As with other pupils we would ask that schools and parents/carers assist pupils to undertake hand hygiene at home or in school before boarding the vehicle
- Where it is possible for them to do so we advise pupils to use a face covering but it is understood that some pupils will not be able to do this due to the nature of their individual needs

Public Transport Services (Bus & Rail)

These services are used by some of our entitled pupils to get to their educational setting. Some but not all of these services are also available to the public and government mandatory social distancing of 1 metre therefore applies on these services.

To help with social distancing we have worked with transport providers and have put arrangements in place to minimise contact with members of the public. In some cases, we have been able to “close” the services to school children only (on those services social distancing will not need to apply but the guidelines above for Designated Education Transport will) and where that isn’t possible we are increasing vehicle capacity where we anticipate demand will require it so that social distancing can be met where relevant. As with dedicated school transport we ask the following is adhered to:

- Pupils and their parents/carers should ensure that pupils have washed and or sanitised their hands prior to boarding the vehicle each morning
- Pupils board the vehicle and find a seat ensuring that they follow the mandatory 1m social distancing guidance
- On the return journey home pupils should wash and or sanitise their hands at school and again follow social distancing guidance whilst on the vehicle.
- It is mandatory for all passengers on public transport over the age of 11 to wear a face covering, where their individual needs allow it. The Council will not provide face coverings so it is up to pupils and parents/carers to ensure they have one before boarding the vehicle. Pupils who are exempt from wearing a face covering could be asked why they are not wearing one by the driver so to avoid the risk of challenge or being refused travel, it is advisable to carry documentation to prove an exemption if it is available. The exemptions to wearing a face covering can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-safer-travel-guidance-for-passengers#exemptions-face-coverings>

We also recommend the above guidance for all non-entitled pupils who pay a daily fare or buy a pass from a public transport provider to use a commercial public transport bus service.

Where we are aware of capacity issues on those commercial services we have continued to work with providers to increase capacity and find solutions to ensure that non entitled pupils can still access those transport services safely from 8th March.

Specific guidance relating to the use of public transport during COVID can be found here:

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

Steps that Transport Providers will take to reduce the risk for their staff and their passengers

- For the protection of their staff they will implement their own risk assessments around the use of staff PPE, plastic screens and the promotion of hand and respiratory hygiene for staff
- Drivers and passenger assistants should 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.
- Enhanced cleaning of vehicles and frequently touched surfaces (eg. door handles, handrails etc) on vehicles will be undertaken on a regular basis.
- Windows and other ventilation to be kept open, where possible
- Where vehicles have some face to face seating, other seats should be used first and only pupils wearing face coverings should use them wherever possible

- Where a specialist seat or booster is used for an individual pupil it should be labelled with the pupils name, stored in the usual way and be used by that pupil only. Seats should be wiped after each use at the end of the day.
- Where a pupil uses the front seat of a taxi vehicle they will be asked to wear a face covering during the journey
- Adhere to NYCC COVID Transport risk assessment and government guidance.

Covid Testing in Schools

If a child receives a positive covid test whilst at school it is the responsibility of parents and the school to make arrangements for the pupil to be transported home. They will not be able to use their normal home to school transport.

Government guidance and policy are being updated regularly during the COVID situation and this guidance will be reviewed and amended as and when necessary