

Covid-19: Parental Guidance on Aberdeenshire Council School Transport

31 August 2020

The Council is following Scottish Government guidance on school transport, which in turn reflects the scientific advice of the COVID-19 Advisory Sub Group on Education and Children's issues, published on 16 July and available at the following link <http://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-advisory-sub-group-on-education-and-childrens-issues---advisory-note-on-school-transport/>.

Guidance on face coverings was updated on 25 August <https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-preparing-start-new-school-term-august-2020-version-2/>.

Due to the need for distancing with the driver there is a minor reduction in the number of pupils who can travel on most school transport vehicles.

What school transport looks like

- Vehicles will be subject to enhanced cleaning especially frequently touched surfaces.
- Windows or skylights will be left open when possible to improve air circulation.
- Drivers will usually wear a face covering.
- At some pick-up locations pupils may be required to stand back when the vehicle arrives to allow the driver to exit the vehicle and open the passenger door.
- Front seats will not be used, to enable pupils to distance from the driver, except buses/coaches fitted with a screen.
- Pupils may be assigned their own seat which they should always use or they may be directed to a designated seating area to sit with pupils of a similar age or year group. Siblings may also be asked to sit together.
- **All pupils travelling on school transport must wear a face covering unless medically exempt or aged under 5.** Failure to do so may result in your child being refused travel. In the case of pupils with additional support needs there is a presumption that they will be unable to wear a face covering.
- On Additional Support Needs school transport any Personal Assistants will ordinarily wear a face covering or PPE.
- Some schools may stagger bus departure times at the end of the school day to reduce the number of pupils leaving the school at the same time.

Steps that parents or carers can take to help

- Do not allow your child(ren) to travel if they or a member of your household have symptoms of COVID-19 or if they have been asked to self-isolate. If children display symptoms you should arrange for a test.
- Ensure your child(ren) sanitise their hands, either with soap and water or sanitiser, prior to boarding the vehicle to go to school. Note that transport operators are not expected to provide hand sanitiser. Pupils may carry sanitiser on the bus if they wish but should be careful not to spill it on the vehicle floor as this could cause a slip hazard.
- Encourage your child(ren) to follow the "Catch it, kill it, bin it" health advice by carrying tissues and disposing of these responsibly.
- Advise your child(ren) that they must not consume or share food or drink on school transport.
- Remind your child(ren) that they should look after their belongings carefully and not leave anything behind on the bus. Any face coverings found on the vehicle will be destroyed.
- **Make sure that your child(ren) are wearing a face covering before boarding the vehicle** unless they are exempt. Advise them that a face covering must be worn for the entire journey to/from school.
- If your child is exempt from wearing a face covering you may wish to provide them with proof such as the printable card available from Disability Equality Scotland <https://disabilityequality.scot/face-covering/>.

If you have any concerns about your child's school transport please contact the Passenger Transport Unit on school.transport@aberdeenshire.gov.uk or tel. 01467 533 335.