



Coronavirus (Covid-19) Emergency Guidance for Parents and Pupils - Use of School Transport from 1 September 2020

On 9 July 2020 the Welsh Minister for Education announced that Schools will reopen in September 2020 with 100% of pupils physically present on school sites.

The plans outlined below set out how school transport in Swansea will resume and these plans will be updated subject to further Government guidance. This guidance should be read and adopted by all pupils who use School Transport services provided by the Council.

Parents and Pupils should be aware of general Government advice stating that we should keep our distance from people outside our households. Public Health Wales recommends keeping a distance of 2 metres where possible. They say that the key thing is to not be too close to other people for more than a short amount of time, as much as you can.

With regard to school transport services, the social distancing requirement that is in place on public transport (<https://gov.wales/travelling-safely-during-coronavirus-pandemic-guidance-public-html#section-42710>), will not apply to children travelling on dedicated home to school transport from the autumn term. The Welsh Government believes this is appropriate because:

- o the overall risk to learners from COVID-19 is very low
- o they do not mix with the general public on those journeys
- o dedicated home to school transport often carries the same group of learners on a regular basis, and those learners may also be together in school.
- o the predictability of dedicated school transport services will allow for planning so that protective measures can be put in place.

Wherever possible a distance of 2m between adults and between adults and children will be maintained.

Allowing space between passengers, or groups of passengers, is still helpful where possible, but transport capacity means that there are many circumstances in which this will not be feasible. Where it is not possible, other control measures become more important.

With regard to the wearing of face coverings on dedicated school transport services, Welsh Government Guidance is that in situations where there is likely to be crowding or unavoidable mixing of year groups, risk assessments should be carried out to evaluate the balance of benefits and harms from wearing face coverings to reduce transmission of Covid 19.

On the basis of the risk assessment of the Council's School Transport services, the following will be implemented:

1. Pupils aged over 11 years will need to wear face coverings on bespoke (closed) school transport services.
2. Pupils up to 11 years old will not need to wear face coverings but may do so if they wish.
3. Pupils with medical exemptions will not need to wear face coverings.
4. All drivers and Passenger Assistants will wear face coverings.
5. Pupils aged over 11 years who travel on public transport will need to wear 3 layer face coverings to comply with Welsh Government Guidance.
6. Pupils with ALN aged over 11 years will be risk assessed on an individual basis to see if wearing face coverings will be appropriate for them.
7. Pupils will be expected to provide their own face coverings and dispose of them appropriately.

Welsh Government Guidance to assist you in travelling on school transport services can be found using the links below:

<https://gov.wales/technical-advisory-group-face-coverings-children-and-young-people-education-settings>

<https://gov.wales/travelling-safely-coronavirus-guidance-public>

<https://gov.wales/back-school-plans-september-coronavirus>

<https://gov.wales/keep-education-safe-operational-guidance-schools-and-settings-covid-19>

The sections below set out the procedures that should be followed when travelling on School Transport:

- **Appendix A** - School Transport Services for mainstream pupils
- **Appendix B** - School Transport Services for pupils with Additional Learning Needs (Special Needs)

These procedures have been developed based on latest Government Guidance and the risk assessments undertaken by Council Health & Safety and Transport Officers.

If you have any queries please contact the Council's School Transport Team

Email : School.transport@swansea.gov.uk
Phone: 01792 636347/636348 (transport for Mainstream pupils)
01792 636328/636593 (transport for ALN pupils)

Parent and Pupil Guidance - School Transport Services for Mainstream Pupils

1. Measures to avoid the Spread of Covid 19

- Where possible, Parents/Carers should travel with their children to and from school, ideally on foot, or by bike, scooter or any other means of active travel
- Parents/Carers can if they wish to do so temporarily opt-out of the school transport contract and take their child to and from school themselves
- Parents/Carers will not send their child to school if they develop Covid19 symptoms. Parents/Carers will follow school absence protocol
- If their child or a member of the same household displays COVID symptoms they will self-isolate as per Public Health Wales (PHW) or NHS guidelines
- If their child develops symptoms at school parents will collect their child and take them home as soon as possible and self-isolate as per PHW or NHS guidelines
- Pupils will continue to adhere to Swansea Council's 'Home to School Transport Code of Conduct'
- Parents/Carers will advise their children to cover their mouth and nose with a tissue or their elbow when coughing or sneezing when away from the household e.g. on school transport vehicle; at school;
- When boarding or alighting the vehicle pupils should be mindful of the following:
 - Be aware of the surfaces they touch. Try to touch as few surfaces as possible Use hand sanitizer if they do
 - Be careful not to touch their face. Carry tissues and cover their mouth with a tissue when coughing or sneezing or use something else like the elbow of their sleeve if they have forgotten any tissues, to minimise the spread of droplets
 - Wash their hands or use hand sanitizer at the start and end of their journey
- Pupils aged over 11 years will need to wear face coverings on bespoke (closed) school transport services
- Pupils up to 11 years old will not need to wear face coverings but may do so if they wish.
- Pupils with medical exemptions will not need to wear face coverings
- Pupils aged over 11 years who travel on public transport will need to wear 3 layer face coverings to comply with Welsh Government Guidance

2. Measures to Ensure Social Distancing

a. At Pick up and drop off points

- Parents/Carers will advise their child of the COVID19 requirements of social distancing and regularly washing their hands
- Social distancing should be maintained wherever reasonably practicable to reduce the risk of the spread of the COVID-19 virus
- Parents/Carers and pupils should act considerately to other passengers by being prepared to queue and respect other people's space when boarding or alighting. Only authorised pupils will be allowed on the vehicle
- Only passengers with a valid bus pass for the route will be allowed to travel so that the correct details of pupils travelling are available for Track and Trace purposes
- There will be no mixing of pupils from different schools on the vehicle with the exception of siblings

b. On the journey to and from school.

- There will be no social distancing on board the vehicle between pupils
- Wherever possible, pupils will be asked to sit with others in the same school year to reduce the number of contact groups
- Passengers will be required to secure their own seatbelts, driver to verbally confirm with passengers that seatbelts are secure
- The wearing of a face covering is mandatory on dedicated school transport for pupils age over 11 years. The wearing of face coverings by younger pupils is a decision for parents/carers to make. Face coverings are not suitable for everyone e.g. young children; asthma sufferers, those with a hearing impairment, as it may inadvertently increase risk of transmission
- It is important that parents and pupils understand that other measures such as social distancing and regular washing of hands remain important and should not be relaxed when wearing a face covering
- Pupils travelling on public bus services which also carry members of the general public, will need to comply with the requirement to wear 3 layer face coverings if they are aged 11 years or over
- Drivers and Passenger Assistants will wear face coverings when in and around the school transport vehicle
- Social distancing should be maintained with any interaction between vehicle staff and pupils during the journey. In instances where this is not possible, contact will be kept to a short amount of time as much as possible and appropriate PPE will be worn
- Pupils will need to continue to adhere to Swansea Council's 'Home to School Transport Code of Conduct'
- No food or drink is to be consumed on school transport vehicles
- The driver will monitor pupil behaviour, check bus passes and communicate with pupils from the driver's seat to reaffirm good behaviour. Where available communication will be via the drivers on board hand held radio
- Pupils to be advised to cover their mouth and nose with a tissue or their elbow when coughing or sneezing

- The driver will ensure there is good ventilation within the bus during the journey
- If a pupil becomes ill on the journey to school the driver will advise the school so that arrangements for parental collection can be made
- If a pupil becomes ill on the journey home, dependant on the circumstances the driver will ensure the pupils safety at the drop off point

c. Pick up and drop off at School

- The Transport Contractor will ensure adherence to the school drop off and pick up arrangements
- To aid social distancing for pupils boarding or alighting school transport, schools may stagger their opening and closing times
- At school drop off:
 - Pupils will be told to leave in an orderly fashion
 - Pupils nearest the front will leave the vehicle first with other pupils leaving sequentially. The pupil sitting at the back will be the last person to leave the bus
- At school pick up:
 - Only passengers with a valid bus pass for the route will be allowed to travel so that the correct details of pupils travelling are available for Track and Trace purposes
 - Pupils will be asked to sit with other pupils in the same school year group wherever possible to reduce the number of contact groups

3. Cleaning

The school transport contractor will ensure cleaning is undertaken as per Welsh Government Guidance:

- Identify high risk areas within the vehicle that are likely to be touched regularly e.g. handrails; door handles; push button for door opening, seatbelts
- Increase the cleaning/disinfection of identified 'Touch' points. As a minimum this should be undertaken before and after every journey
- Vehicle daily clean as per normal procedure
- Vehicle deep clean – weekly
- Spillage kit to be kept on the vehicle to aid in cleaning up bodily fluids e.g. vomit
- Sanitizer spray/wipes kept on the vehicle
- Clean fuel pumps before and after use
- Clean vehicle keys before and after handling
- Ensure that there is waste storage provision for PPE waste on the vehicle

Parent and Pupil Guidance - School Transport Services for Pupils with Additional Learning Needs (Special Needs)

1. Measures to avoid the Spread of Covid 19

- Parents/Carers will not send their child to school if they develop Covid19 symptoms. Parents/Carers will follow the school absence protocol
- If their child or a member of the same household displays COVID symptoms they should self-isolate as per Public Health Wales (PHW) or NHS guidelines
- If their child develops symptoms at school, parents/carers will collect their child and take them home as soon as possible and self-isolate as per PHW or NHS guidelines
- Pupils will continue to adhere to Swansea Council's 'Home to School Transport Code of Conduct
- Parents/Carers can, if they wish to do so, temporarily opt-out of the school transport contract and take their child to and from school themselves
- Only authorised pupils will be permitted to travel on the vehicle so that correct details of pupils travelling are available for Track and Trace purposes
- Pupils attending different schools will be transported separately wherever possible
- Pupils will be seated according to their age group wherever possible except for siblings who can sit together
- The wearing of a face covering by pupils is mandatory for pupils aged over 11 years on dedicated school transport. The wearing of face coverings by younger pupils is a decision for parents/carers to make. Pupils with medical exemptions will not need to wear face coverings Face coverings are not suitable for everyone e.g. very young children; those with special educational needs or disabilities e.g. hearing impairment so pupils with ALN over the age of 11 years will be risk assessed on an individual basis to see if wearing face coverings will be appropriate for them
- It is important that parents; pupils and school staff understand that other measures such as social distancing and regular washing of hands remain important and should not be relaxed when wearing a face covering
- Drivers and Passenger Assistants will wear face coverings when in and around the school transport vehicle
- Where possible to aid understanding, parents and the school will encourage children:
 - to cover their mouth and nose with a tissue or their elbow when coughing or sneezing when away from the household e.g. in school, taxi/mini bus
 - use a tissue or elbow to cough or sneeze and use bins for tissue waste ('catch it, bin it, kill it')
 - not to touch their mouth, eyes and nose
 - to wash their hands on arrival at school, before and after eating, and after sneezing or coughing
- At school, staff will assist those pupils who have trouble cleaning their hands independently

2. Measures to Ensure Social Distancing

a. On the Vehicle

To aid social distancing the Council will:

- Where possible, prioritise larger vehicles for school transport use to allow for 2m distancing between passengers and the driver/ passenger assistant and between the driver and the passenger assistant
- Use vehicles with tail lifts e.g. mini buses, to transport passengers who use battery operated wheelchairs, which tend to be larger and heavier than standard wheelchairs.
- Increase the number of journeys where required to fit with staggered school opening/closing times
- Pupils will be seated and secured into the back passenger seats of the vehicle. Seating will depend on the design of the vehicle; number of seating rows within the vehicle
- Passenger assistants must be seated in the back of the vehicle with the pupil to fulfil their caring/ supervisory role. Where 2m social distancing cannot be achieved or the passenger assistant needs to intervene with a specific in-journey incident, appropriate PPE will be worn e.g. Face Mask, disposable gloves
- No food or drink is to be consumed in the vehicle
- The wearing of a face covering by pupils is mandatory for pupils aged over 11 years on dedicated school transport. The wearing of face coverings by younger pupils is a decision for parents/carers to make. Pupils with medical exemptions will not need to wear face coverings Face coverings are not suitable for everyone e.g. very young children; those with special educational needs or disabilities e.g. hearing impairment so pupils with ALN over the age of 11 years will be risk assessed on an individual basis to see if wearing face coverings will be appropriate for them

b. Pick up and drop off at School

- At the home pick up the driver/passenger assistant can establish with the parent the COVID health status of the pupil and family. If the pupil is showing symptoms of COVID the driver will inform the parent and school they cannot transport them
- For pick up and drop off at the home, where possible, parents will be responsible for the safe boarding and alighting of their child in and out of the vehicle
- The driver/passenger assistant is responsible for securing wheelchairs within the vehicle on boarding and alighting the vehicle
- Pick up and drop off to school will require the passenger assistant to hand over or collect the pupil directly to a member of staff at the school site. Dependant on the support required by the pupil e.g. holding their hand; pushing their wheelchair, good hand hygiene will be undertaken before and after the drop off task. Washing hands for a minimum of 20 seconds; or the use of hand sanitiser is effective. The same hand hygiene will apply even if the transport provider supplies their staff with disposable gloves
- Where possible, drivers; passenger assistants and school staff will keep to the 2m social distance during pick up and drop off at school to minimise adult to adult contact. Where this is not possible appropriate PPE will be worn e.g. face covering

- Where possible pupils should be encouraged to buckle and unbuckle their own seatbelt. Where this is not possible for example when transporting ALN pupils with complex needs who need support to access the vehicle or fasten seatbelts, the passenger assistant will support the pupil and appropriate PPE will be worn

c. On the Journey to and from School

- Social distancing should remain with any interaction between the driver, passenger assistant and pupil during the journey. In incidents where this is not possible and dependant on the circumstances, contact will be kept as short as possible and appropriate PPE will be worn
- Pupils must continue to adhere to Swansea Council's 'Home to School Transport Code of Conduct'
- Pupils to be advised to cover their mouth and nose with a tissue or their elbow when coughing or sneezing
- Driver will ensure there is good ventilation within the vehicle during the journey
- If a pupil becomes ill on the journey to school the driver will advise the school so that arrangements for parental collection can be made. If a pupil becomes ill on the journey home the driver will advise the parent. Dependant on the circumstances social distancing should continue wherever possible to prevent the spread of the infection or if this is not possible staff should wear suitable PPE e.g. disposable gloves; apron; FRSM
- No food or drink is to be consumed on the vehicle

3. Cleaning

- The school transport contractor will ensure cleaning is undertaken as per Welsh Government guidance:
 - Drivers should clean surfaces that are likely to be touched by the passenger e.g. door handles, window winders, seat belts, the rear of the front seats and other surface the passenger(s) may have touched or coughed/sneezed on, after each passenger journey. The driver should then wash/sanitise their own hands after cleaning
 - A thorough clean of the vehicle with normal cleaning products should be completed at the end of each shift/working day
 - Spillage kit to be kept on the vehicle to aid in cleaning up bodily fluids e.g. vomit
 - Use sanitiser wipes to clean fuel pumps before and after use
 - Clean vehicle keys before and after handling
 - Ensure that there is waste storage provision for PPE waste on the vehicle