

Frequently asked questions: home to school transport and coronavirus

This information is relevant for pupils where they are already eligible to travel on education transport in line with our (Wrexham Council) transport policy.

Do I have to send my child on the school bus/taxi?

You do not have to send your child on the school transport. Guidance from the Welsh Government advises that pupils should be encouraged to adopt active travel opportunities such as walking or cycling where reasonable, practical and safe.

You should only send your child on the school bus/taxi if you have requested a seat on a vehicle to your school and you have received confirmation that they have a place on the vehicle.

If you are going to drive your child to school then please remember there may be increased traffic around schools, so allow extra time and also be very aware of children walking in the vicinity of the school.

What can I do as a parent/carer to support school transport?

Please ensure that you have read, and are familiar with the parental protocol document that supports home to school transport procedures from September 2020.

Regular handwashing is one of the main ways to prevent the spread of the virus. Please ensure that your child washes their hands when leaving home and on arrival home.

What if my child uses public transport?

Pupils accessing public transport as part of their home to school journey must follow the latest guidance set out by Welsh Government. The “essential travel” restriction on public transport has been lifted, and the number of available bus services are being increased. It should be remembered that a face covering must be worn by anyone over 11 years old on all forms of public transport.

Will a face covering be required?

Yes. For all pupils aged over 11 years old a face covering is required on all home to school transport routes. Pupils will not be prevented from boarding the vehicle if they forget a face covering. Anyone found to routinely travel without a face covering will be referred to the school for consideration of disciplinary action.

We understand that not everyone can wear a face covering due to medical reasons. Where this is the case, pupils will not be refused access to transport.

Will the usual home to school transport be operating?

School transport will still be operational but there will be some changes due to social distancing and good hygiene practice. Transport will only run to the specified arrival and departure times set by each individual school.

Will the buses/taxis be cleaned regularly?

Vehicles used for home to school transport will be cleaned prior to picking pupils up in the morning and at the end of the school run in the afternoon. Regular cleaning of frequently touched points will be undertaken during the day, and a deep clean will be carried out in the vehicle once a day.

How many pupils will be able to travel on a school transport?

The numbers of passengers will vary according to the size of the vehicle. We have reviewed all transport provision to calculate how many pupils we can offer a seat to, based on vehicle size and social distancing guidelines. Where necessary alternative or additional transport will be provided.

Will other children be continually passing my child when they get on and off the bus?

There will be a clear seating plan agreed with transport operators in place which ensures that seating on vehicles is arranged in year groups. This will result in some pupils passing each other when boarding or alighting from the vehicle.

When leaving school in the afternoon, where possible the vehicle will be boarded in year group order, so that it is loaded from the rear to the front.

How will children be spaced apart when they are on the bus?

Groups will be sat in year group clusters and, where capacity allows, empty seats will create an additional distance break between year groups.

How do you know who is on a vehicle?

Only pupils who have been accepted on transport, and who have been issued with a travel pass, are permitted to be on a vehicle. This information will therefore ensure that Track, Trace, Protect procedures can be followed, if required.

What happens about social distancing at the bus stop while waiting for the bus?

We will expect pupils over 11 years old from different households to observe social distancing measures in line with the latest advice from the Welsh Government.

Will there always be the same driver and the same bus?

Where practicable the same driver and bus will be used. If for any reason the bus driver is unavailable, there will be another driver. If the bus cannot be used for any reason, then a replacement will be used.

What if children do not follow the social distancing requirements?

Parents will be asked read the September 2020 code of conduct that is expected from their child prior to using school transport. If a child is unable to understand the expectation upon them, parents should then consider alternative means of safe travel.

My child is on the concessionary (charged) seat scheme, will they be able to travel?

We will not be operating the concessionary (charged) seat scheme at present due to social distancing requirements.

What does this mean for learners who do not qualify for free transport?

Students who do not qualify will not receive free school transport from the council and should be encouraged to walk or cycle to school.

What if vehicles are overcrowded?

We are working closely with our transport providers to monitor vehicle capacity levels to maximise capacity in line with current guidance from Welsh Government. Where necessary, transport providers will be asked to make changes to avoid overcrowding and we will inform schools, parents and carers.

Can food or drink be consumed on a bus/taxi?

Consuming food or drink on any form of school transport or public transport is not permitted during the journey.

What if my child usually has a passenger assistant?

If a passenger assistant is needed to travel, this will continue. However, as some staff will no longer be available, staff may change.

If any transport staff are unable to work because they need to isolate themselves, staff may need to be changed at short notice.

If there are any problems with the availability of passenger assistant's available, parents will be contacted.

What if my child becomes unwell during the school day?

You may be expected to collect your child from school.

If my child has a cold will they still be transported?

No. If your child or a member of your household displays any of the following symptoms you should not leave the house:

- a high temperature
- a new, continuous cough
- a loss of, or change to, your sense of smell or taste

It is essential that you ensure your child does not travel if they have any of these symptoms. This is in line with government and NHS advice. If your transport operator is aware of a symptom prior to travel, transport will be declined.