



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Covid-19 Resilience Plan for the post-16 sector

Transport guidance
for further education institutions

Version 1.1
22 November 2020



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Introduction

Colleges are responsible for implementation of this section of the guidance, working with the operators with whom they contract to ensure necessary measures are put in place in line with risk assessments (which should involve appropriate consultation with trade unions and staff). Parents and college staff should all play a role in educating learners on acceptable behaviour on college and public transport.

This guidance has been informed by the [scientific advice](#) of the Technical Advisory Cell Children and Education Sub Group and with advice from Public Health Wales (PHW).

The guidance will be kept under constant review and will always follow the latest scientific advice.

Whilst post-16 transport is discretionary, it is recognised that many colleges make arrangements for assessing and meeting the travel needs of learners aged 16 and over. This guidance is for those colleges who make transport arrangements for learners. A college may be required to have regard to:

- the needs of disabled learners and learners with Additional Learning Needs; and
- any particular needs of learners who are 'looked after' or formerly looked after by a local authority.

This section provides guidance on putting in place proportionate safeguards to minimise the risk of transmission of infection on dedicated home to college transport to ensure learners can attend.

This guidance applies to all **dedicated home to college transport**. By this, we mean services which exclusively carry learners travelling to college settings. This includes:

- services commissioned or provided by colleges, whether or not the service is provided free of charge; and
- services provided by transport operators (commercial travel routes) which cannot be boarded by members of the public at the same time as they are carrying learners to college settings.

Vehicles that provide transport to members of the public at other times are considered dedicated home to college transport when they are exclusively carrying learners travelling to college settings; this includes taxis and minibuses.

As far as it is safe to do so, the use of active travel routes such as walking and cycling by staff, learners and parents/carers should be encouraged. In view of the potential for capacity constraints on public transport to impact on learners' ability to attend college, all sustainable and active travel modes should be considered.

Learners accessing public transport as part of their home to college journey must follow the [Welsh Government guidance on travelling safely](#). Where something is essential for public health reasons we have said '**must**'.

Key messages

- Colleges and transport operators as necessary, should undertake a risk assessment for dedicated college transport journeys in their local area that takes account of the routes travelled and the users of the services; the nature of the transport used and the opportunity for adaption and local transport capacity i.e. the opportunity to scale up provision. The risk assessment must be signed off by the appropriate person at the college. They must then work through the **system of controls** set out in this section and adopt measures in a way that addresses the identified risk, works in the local circumstances, and allows learners to attend their college setting.
- Face coverings **should** be worn when travelling on dedicated home to college transport. :
 - Wherever capacity allows social distancing should be implemented between learners, or groups of learners, and between drivers/passenger assistants. Where it is not possible, other measures from the system of controls become more important.
 - There is no requirement to maintain contact groups on college transport providing a consistent group of learners travel on the same bus each day they attend. The use of dedicated college transport to serve several campuses should be avoided where possible.
 - Colleges should ensure that attention is made to the safe use of face coverings e.g. hand washing before and after putting on and removing face coverings, safe disposal or storage and that these are not a substitute for other control measures advocated in this guidance.

Advice on face coverings will be kept under constant review and will always follow the latest scientific advice

The System of Controls: protective measures

Reducing the risk of transmission of COVID-19 involves a few simple principles. We recognise that the way in which these controls are implemented will need to vary according to local circumstances.

Colleges should take account of the particular needs of learners with additional learning needs and disabilities and, where necessary, be informed by the views of the parents/carers.

1. Minimise contact with individuals who are unwell

No-one should board dedicated college transport if they or a member of their household has any of the four identified COVID-19 symptoms (a new continuous cough, a high temperature or loss of or change in taste or smell). Learners and parents/carers where appropriate must be advised that if they have any concerns as to their health, they should not attend a college setting. Anyone with symptoms must follow the [self-isolation guidance](#).

Anyone in a household that is required to self-isolate as contacts of a case under test, trace, protect (TTP) or in quarantine if returned from a country specified by the Foreign Commonwealth Office should not board dedicated college transport.

If a learner develops symptoms whilst at college setting, they will be sent home. However, they must not travel on dedicated college transport. The colleges should contact the parent/carer who should make arrangements for the learner's journey home or other arrangements should be made.

Drivers and assistants who become unwell during the working day should be sent home. Learners, drivers and passenger assistants who have been in contact with someone that has developed symptoms whilst at college setting or on dedicated college transport do not need to go home to self-isolate unless they develop symptoms themselves (in which case, they should arrange a test).

Routine monitoring of temperature should not be implemented prior to boarding dedicated college transport, this is not a reliable method for identifying COVID-19.

Colleges, in discussion with college transport providers should consider the availability of hand sanitiser on college transport for use by the driver, passenger assistants and learners when boarding the vehicle.

2. Clean hands thoroughly more often than usual

COVID-19 is an easy virus to remove when it is on skin. Where soap and water is not available an appropriate hand sanitiser can be used.

Learners, drivers and passenger assistants should clean their hands, before boarding home to college transport and when arriving at college or home. Colleges and college transport operators should ensure this message is communicated to all those using dedicated college transport and that appropriate arrangements to enable this are put in place by colleges and transport operators.

Drivers and passenger assistants may wish to use hand sanitiser at intervals throughout the journey, and should always do so after performing tasks such as helping a learner into the vehicle or handling a learner's belongings.

It should not normally be necessary for learners to clean their hands during the journey.

Colleges in discussion with college transport providers and as part of any risk assessment should consider the availability of hand sanitiser for circumstances during the journey where it may be necessary to clean hands.

3. Ensure good respiratory hygiene by promoting the 'catch it, bin it, kill it' approach

The 'catch it, bin it, kill it' approach is very important. Colleges should reinforce this message with learners. Colleges may also wish to consider reinforcing it in their communication with families and on messages clearly displayed on the transport.

Learners should be encouraged to carry tissues on home to college transport. Transport operators may wish to consider keeping a supply of tissues and hand rub

or sanitiser on vehicles. Consideration will also need to be given to the safe disposal of tissues used on college transport.

Many learners with complex needs/learning difficulties will find it difficult to maintain as good respiratory hygiene as their peers without appropriate support, for example those who spit or use saliva as a sensory stimulant. This should be considered when deciding what safeguards should be put in place in order to support these learners and the staff working with them. Alternative dedicated provision may be appropriate for these individuals.

Vehicles should be well ventilated, opening windows wherever possible.

4. Introduce enhanced cleaning, including cleaning frequently touched surfaces often using standard products, such as detergents and bleach

COVID-19 is easy to kill on surfaces. Normal cleaning products will do this. Specialist cleaning products are not needed. See the COVID-19: [cleaning of non-healthcare settings guidance](#) and the 'Keeping public and private areas and modes of transport clean' section of the [transport operator guidance](#) for information on carrying out cleaning procedures and adjusting ventilation.

Colleges should work with transport operators to agree the arrangements for cleaning vehicles for dedicated college transport. **PHW recommend that frequently touched surfaces are cleaned using a specified process after each journey — and that enhanced cleaning takes place at the end of each day.**

5. Minimising contact and mixing

The [safe operation guidance](#) for further education and skills providers recommends that they reduce contact between full-time learners through forming groups or cohorts of learners that remain separate from each other during the course of the day.

Colleges should work with transport operators to consider how mixing might be minimised on college transport. However, we know that vehicle capacity and the complexity of some home to college transport arrangements, mean this may not always be feasible. As a priority mixing between campuses or with other education providers should be avoided where possible. Where this is not possible, appropriate risk assessments should be completed.

For certain learners such as those with complex medical, social or behavioural difficulties, alternative dedicated transport may be considered more appropriate.

These contact groups would need to be identified as potential contacts if any member tests positive. It is, therefore, important to ensure that records are kept of who routinely travels is on what vehicle and that passes or lists of passengers travelling are checked as learners board college transport.

Working with transport operators to draw up seating arrangements so that learners understand where they need to sit on home to college transport. This could be allocating specific seats or having rules such as sitting always filling the vehicle from back to front and then alighting from front to back. Ensuring the same learners always sit together will help to minimise the number of contacts each one has. Such

arrangements will require clear communication between colleges and learners. Drivers are unable to 'police' seating arrangements.

Avoid the use of face-to-face seating on home to college transport.

Provide clear information for parents/carers and learners about the arrangements needed for picking them up and dropping them off at their home destination. Ensure campuses have arrangements in place to manage queuing when waiting to board the bus.

Colleges should ensure that attention is made to the safe use of face coverings e.g. hand washing before and after putting on and removing face coverings, safe disposal or storage.

Face coverings should not be worn by those who may not be able to handle them as directed (for example, those with special educational needs or disabilities) as it may inadvertently increase the risk of transmission. The following points should also be considered:

- Some learners may need to be able to lip-read, or see people's faces, in order to communicate;
- Some learners with additional learning needs may be distressed if the people around them wear face coverings; and
- Face coverings are not a substitute for other protective measures such as good hand and respiratory hygiene and social distancing where possible.

Specific Considerations

A range of specific considerations and control measures may be adopted for specific groups or in response to particular circumstances. These will be for local consideration and adoption following a risk assessment.

Taxis and private hire vehicles

Some learners, including those with additional support needs, rely on taxi transfers to get to college. Where taxis are used solely for the purpose of transporting learners to college, as with dedicated college bus and coach services, physical distancing requirements are not necessary. It is recommended that in private hire vehicles learners' travel on the back seat only.

There should be careful consideration of how learners with additional needs can be provided with safe, bespoke transport arrangements. This could include the use of Perspex shields in taxis (taking into account relevant safety concerns) or finding larger vehicles for transportation. Colleges should liaise with their local private hire providers on the measures they are putting in place to protect passengers, including for the arrangements for carrying multiple passengers.

When travel by taxi or private hire vehicle is necessary, passengers should follow the advice of the driver, including sitting in the back-left hand seat of the car when travelling alone. Appropriate cleaning and sanitising measures will also be necessary. Face to face seating where available should not be used.

Protecting staff working on dedicated college transport

Understandably, staff working on dedicated college transport, including drivers and assistants, may have concerns about their safety. Employers should undertake an individual risk assessment for all staff employed on dedicated home to college transport, which includes an assessment of their clinical risk. Guidance on this can be found [here](#).

Drivers and assistants where social distancing cannot be maintained (less than 2 metres) should be provided with appropriate **personal protective equipment (PPE)**. This should include the provision of an appropriate fluid resistant surgical mask for each journey and facilities for the same removal and disposal including the provision of a recommended hand sanitiser.

Staff working on dedicated college transport should be provided with training and advice on the safe use, removal and disposal of PPE. The responsibility for providing PPE is a matter for the employer. Colleges and providers should discuss and agree how the additional costs of this provision should be met.

Where possible, taking account of the design of the vehicle, a screen should be erected between the driver and the passengers.

Considerations for colleges

Colleges as the commissioner of dedicated home to college transport have a key role in ensuring that:

- A risk assessment for dedicated home to college transport is undertaken or updated from those previously undertaken
- Plans are developed and implemented to address identified risks;
- In addition to working with providers, wherever possible colleges should seek to gauge the views of learners and parents, particularly when any reviews of the measures implemented are undertaken;
- There is a clear plan for communication with families and other education providers and transport operators;
- Consideration is given to building requirements related to this guidance into the contractual arrangements with transport operators; and
- Consideration is given to updating the Travel Behaviour Code.

Where post-16 transport is commissioned by the Local Authority the same considerations have been placed on them, but colleges will still have a role in ensure the above points have been considered.

Communication with families and transport operators

Colleges should consider how to communicate their arrangements for home to college transport clearly to learners, parents/carers and transport operators.

They may wish to consider:

- reminding learners and their parents/carers that they must not travel if they or anyone in their household has symptoms of COVID-19;
- that learners and their parents/carers will need to understand any arrangements for queuing for and boarding home to college transport, and where they should sit in the vehicle;
- that learners and their parents/carers will need to understand that they will be expected to wear face coverings on home to college transport;
- that drivers and passenger assistants will need to understand any rules that they and learners need to follow on home to college transport;
- that colleges and transport operators will need a shared understanding of the arrangements for the arrival of learners at college in the morning and their collection from college in the afternoon;
- that drivers should not be expected to police arrangements such as seating plans and queues. Their role is to focus on driving the vehicle safely;
- that some parents/carers, learners, drivers and passenger assistants may feel concerned about the risk of infection on home to college transport and may want to be reassured about the safeguards that are in place;
- that learners should be encouraged to adopt active travel opportunities where reasonable and practical; and
- that the transport operative will need to have agreed robust cleaning protocols in place.

