Part of
Education, universities and childcare during coronavirus

Guidance
Transport to schools and colleges: 2020 to 2021 academic year

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Capacity on public transport is still limited given the requirements for social distancing. This may be challenging for children and young people who travel to school or college by public transport, and who may need to travel in larger numbers than usual to access their education. They may need to supplement the public bus network, and existing home to school transport, with extra capacity. This would make sure children and young people can travel to school safely and minimise disruption for all passengers on the public network.

The social consequences on the local transport network will very greatly by area. Solutions that are suitable for children and young people travelling to school and college must be locally led.

Part A: managing capacity and demand on public transport

This section of the guidance sets out what local authorities need to do to increase capacity and manage demand on their children and young people can get to school and college.

You should read this guidance with:

- Coronavirus (COVID-19): safer travel guidance for passengers
- Coronavirus (COVID-19): safer transport guidance for operators

How local authorities can manage capacity and demand

Since the beginning of July 2020, local authorities have successfully administered over schools, colleges and transport operators to ensure there has been enough capacity for children and young people to travel to and from school and college. This has been achieved by:

- a large quota for pupils, pupils and staff to walk, scooter or cycle to school
- a large increase in cycle and scooter provision
- extra authority-to-operator funding to add additional dedicated school services

These measures will still be needed as children and young people return to school and college while the wider society remains.

Local authorities should continue to engage regularly with schools, colleges and transport operators. They should use the quota and cycle funds to ensure there can meet current and forecast demand, particularly on routes used by children and young people travelling to school and college. They should also use the information they have on demand for public transport routes as the economy reopens.

Using transit demand management

The Local demonstration transport interventions toolkit for local authorities provides guidance for meeting the continued challenges of travel demand as a result of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. It sets out how local authorities can manage the changes in travel demand changes as the economy reopens. It sets out how authorities can to support the return of schools after the first lockdown and how cities have expanded to include other transport users and other activities.

In addition, consultants support and funding has been provided to help English local authorities to develop and implement bespoke TDM capabilities.

Local authorities using TDM can aim to:

- understand the nature of likely demand on local transport provision
- identify the enablers/changes to have that provision in demand
- develop necessary travel advice and communications for parents, children, young people and their families
- ensure appropriate monitoring and evaluation

This toolkit has allowed local authorities to take a holistic approach to delivering TDM. This has included transport capabilities to:

- gather data
- target communications campaigns that promote active travel
- reduce reliance on public transport

Local authorities that continue to use the capabilities that they have developed through this programme.

Strategic promoting active travel

During the autumn term local authorities worked with schools and colleges to promote active travel. This will need to be made to cycle to school and for walk and wheel appropriate to do so.

Promoting active travel will be important during the spring and summer, promoting cycling and walking in order to make cycling acceptable for those with longer journeys, which could include:

- building on existing schemes (such as the Walk to School programme and Bikeability training)
- encouraging schools and colleges to communicate directly with the children and young people whose journeys are most appropriate to switch to active travel to encourage them to do so
- implementing 'safe streets' and/or cycle schools

Engaging with local businesses and employers to reduce other demand for public transport and increase capacity for school travel

The TDM capacity toolkit requires authorities to gather the relevant information and develop plans with local businesses and employers.

With this information, local authorities should work with local businesses and employers to promote the Department for Transport's cycling to work measures. This will reduce demand on the public transport network, and increase capacity for school travel.

As the economy opens, local authorities should monitor the transport to work patterns and should work with business and employers who may be able to spread their staff and travel times to avoid conflicting with school times and increase capacity for school travel.

Staggering school and college start and finish times

Staggering school start and finish times has significantly benefited local TDM and is an important part of the recovery.

Where staggering has successfully allowed parents to work and children and colleges to actively encourage neighbouring institutions to work together to stagger start and finish times to ease congestion, this has been a success. This has been a success and should be kept in place where it is appropriate. The last year has shown that:

- spread demand for school and college travel over a longer period
- enable any additional capacity to be used more efficiently
- significantly increase the ability of public transport to support travel to school and college

Staggered start and finish times should not reduce the amount of overall teaching time.

Continuing additional coaches or other appropriate vehicles to provide dedicated school transport services

If there is still a need for dedicated transport capacity after all of the above measures, local authorities should continue to provide additional coaches or appropriate coach vehicles, where they are available at a local level.

The Department for Education has provided additional funding for local authority autocities to procure dedicated, additional transport capacity. Local transport authorities (LTAs) can use this funding to procure additional services, including the allocation of educational institutions in order to ensure continued safe travel.

It is a condition of the funding that local authorities will charge children and young people fares for using the additional transport, unless they are entitled to free home to school transport. The fares should be equivalent to the usual public transport fares for the relevant journey and distance.

Read part B of this guidance for information about the measures that will apply on dedicated school transport services.

Identifying existing bus services used exclusively or predominantly by school children and young people travelling to school

Place local authorities have worked with transport operators to transport the vulnerable some public bus services to school or college only services. This has included transporting children and young people who are vulnerable to the coronavirus (COVID-19) or who are shielding. This has provided school and college staff with assurance that children and young people with minimal impact on members of the public who travel at the same time.

Government will continue to work with local authorities and transport operators to ensure that these changes do not affect the availability of funding to operate these services. Local authorities should continue to work with local bus and coach operators to ensure that sufficient alternative or residual services remain available for members of the public who would normally use these services.

Car use

Local authorities must actively consider the impacts of increased car use on local communities and should consider how to manage the impact of increased car use on local communities and transport networks. The government has provided local authorities with funding to discharge the duty placed on them by section 5(8A) of the Education Act 1996 to promote sustainable travel and transport.

Part B: guidance for dedicated transport to schools and other places of education for the 2020 to 2021 academic year

Dedicated transport to school and colleges offers the opportunity for groups of children or young people on a regular basis. They do not mix with the general public on those journeys. They retain the number of other people with which they come in contact.

This guidance aims to help those responsible for the provision of dedicated transport to schools and colleges to operate safely to further minimise the risk of transmission of COVID-19.

It applies to all dedicated transport to schools and colleges, whether on the public network or provided by the local authority, schools or parent groups. These are services which exclusively carry children and young people travelling to their place of education. This includes transport provided by local authorities and school and college transport. This includes transport:

- commissioned or provided by colleges
- commissioned or provided by local authorities (including those that cannot be used by members of the public when it is carrying children to school or college)

Vehicles that provide transport to members of the public at other times are considered to be providing dedicated transport when they are exclusively carrying children and young people to school or college.

Pool dedicated transport is organised by local authorities. However, this guidance also applies to:

- schools and colleges, where they commission transport for children and young people
- transport operators, where they provide transport directly to children without being commissioned by the school or local authority

In this guidance, the term 'home to school transport' includes dedicated transport to school and college for children and young people.

References to colleges in this guidance include sixth form colleges, further education colleges, sixth form colleges, 16-19 academies, independent training providers, specialist post-16 institutions, adult community learning and designated institutions.

Section 5A of the Education Act of 1996 gives the definitions of:

- the overall role in children and young people of serious illness as a result of COVID-19 is very low
- the overall risk to children and young people of serious illness as a result of COVID-19 is very low
- the probability of home to school transport will allow for planning so that protective measures can be put in place

Where something is essential for public health reasons, as advised by Public Health England, it is deemed to be in the interest of the child or young person and has been deemed 'must'. The guidance does not create any new legal obligations.

The system of controls: protective measures

Local authorities, working with schools, colleges and transport operators as necessary, must review and update their risk assessments as the circumstances and the public health advice change. This is particularly relevant as more children and young people return to school and college.

The risk assessment should identify the risks arising from COVID-19 and take into account the ways this may be transmitted through direct contact, surface transmission and through the air.

They should then work through the system of controls set out in this guidance and implement the measures that are most appropriate to the local area, the local circumstances, and what children and young people travel to attend their school or college.

Under the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974, it is mandatory to implement measures that are reasonably practicable and effective at reducing the risk. This means that, where practicable, you should implement measures as recommended in this guidance, and, where they are, to take these measures.

Local authorities, transport operators, schools and colleges all have a role to play in ensuring effective measures are put in place to minimise the risk of transmission.

This system of controls is equivalent to the PHE endorsed systems of controls set out in the guidance for schools in Public Health England, and the relevant HSE guidance.

When implemented in a way that addresses the identified risk, they create an emergency system of controls that will be sufficient for most settings. It is not a zero risk system. Infection is substantially reduced. The risk of transmission is significantly reduced and overall risk is very low.

They cannot describe every scenario. They provide a set of principles, local authorities will need to vary the measures they implement according to local circumstances.

Local authorities should take into account the particular needs of children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). Where necessary, they should be informed by the views provided by the parents and carers.

1. Minimise contact with individuals who are required to self-isolate

When an individual develops COVID-19 symptoms or has a positive test

Children, young people and staff must not board home to school transport or public transport if:

- they have one or more COVID-19 symptoms
- they are required to self-isolate or have tested positive in their support bubble or village contact (they have tested for COVID-19 symptoms)
- they are regularly required to quarantine having recently visited countries outside the Common Travel Area
- they have had a positive test

Local authorities, schools and colleges and not attend their school or college for at least 10 days from the day after:

- the start of their symptoms
- the test date if they did not have any symptoms but have had a positive coronavirus (SARS-CoV-2) coronavirus test (PCR test) or (PCR test) is taken first, or the test date if they did not have any symptoms and the test result is negative, it overrides the 10 days period can return to school

Anyone told to isolate by NHS Test and Trace or by their public health protection team has a legal obligation to self-isolate, but you may leave home to exercise, but should not go to receive visit or other. For more information, read NHS Test and Trace: what it means.

If a child, young person or member of staff has been identified as a close contact of someone who has tested positive for coronavirus (COVID-19), they should not go to school or college. Instead, they should arrange a test for the child or young person or parent or carer who should make arrangements for the child or young person's journey home.

They should avoid using public transport and, wherever possible, be collected by a member of their family or household.

In exceptional circumstances, if parents or carers cannot arrange to have their child collected, they may be able to make a journey to school or college. This will be in the case of, for instance, alternative arrangements may need to be made, or they are unable to arrange for a child to be able to help source a suitable alternative. Parents should be reassured that the local authority home to school transport team is aware that the individual has tested positive or is displaying symptoms.

Anyone with symptoms or who has tested positive must follow the guidance for households with possible or confirmed coronavirus (COVID-19) infection.

When an individual has tested close contact with someone with COVID-19 symptoms

Children, young people, staff and transport operator employees who have been in close contact with someone who has developed symptoms while at school or on home to school transport, should not board home to school transport if:

- they are required to self-isolate or have tested positive
- they develop symptoms themselves (in which case, they should self-isolate and book a test to see if they have COVID-19)

- they are required to self-isolate, or have tested positive, the PHE advice would be to not board public transport, which is a legal obligation
- they have tested positive from an LFD or PCR test as part of a community or winter programme (if an LFD test is taken first, and a confirmatory PCR test is then taken, the result of the PCR test will override the LFD test, and, in negative, will override and the individual can return to school)

People must wash their hands thoroughly for 20 seconds with soap and running water or use hand sanitiser after contact with someone who has symptoms.

If a person with symptoms has been in a vehicle which provides home to school transport, the vehicle should be cleaned after use. Operators should follow the guidance on the safe use of passing the vehicles on to other people. For more information, read COVID-19: cleaning of non-healthcare settings guidance.

2. Use face coverings, where required

In accordance with advice from PHE, children and young people aged 11 and over must wear face coverings when travelling on dedicated transport to secondary schools or colleges.

Children under 11 may wear a face covering if they are able to handle it as directed. For more information, read guidance on face coverings.

Where our guidance recommends face coverings, transparent face coverings, which allow communication through lip reading, may be preferable. Where this is not practical or appropriate to communicate, can also be worn. Transparent face coverings are not effective in reducing the spread of COVID-19 however. The evidence to support this is limited. Research is ongoing. Transparent face coverings should be used only when required the face to cover the mouth and nose and be made with a breathable material capable of filtering airborne particles.

The public should not wear face coverings in a manner that they can accommodate, such as under the chin or on the forehead. Face coverings should be worn for the duration but this must be considered alongside the comfort and breathability of a face covering and the ability of people, who wear them the face covering is less breathable than fabric of cloth.

Face visors or shields can be worn by those exempt from wearing a face covering but they are not an equivalent alternative in terms of protection and are not a mandatory. They may protect the wearer against physical spread or specific circumstances but are not a mandatory requirement. Face visors or shields should be worn in addition to and not in place of, additional face covering. They should only be used after a risk assessment for the specific situation and should always be cleaned appropriately.

Local authorities, schools and colleges have duties to make reasonable adjustments for disabled pupils and students.

Exemptions

Some individuals are exempt from wearing face coverings.

This includes (but is not limited to):

- people who cannot put on, wear or remove a face covering because of a physical or mental illness or impairment, or disability
- where putting on, wearing or removing a face covering will cause you severe distress
- to allow communication with someone who relies on lip reading, clear speech or British sign sound or facial expressions to communicate
- to assist him or a person, to the left or return or injury, to prevent or others including if it would significantly impact on your ability to carry out or participate in an activity or service

The same exemptions will apply in education and childcare settings and you should be sensitive to those who may be exempt. Public Health England has published guidance on how to create a school face covering.

Access to face coverings

Due to the increasing use of face coverings in wider society, staff and pupils are already expected to have access to face coverings. Public Health England has published guidance on how to create a school face covering.

Safe wearing and removal of face coverings

Students and colleges should have a process for how children and young people remove face coverings:

Safe wearing of face coverings requires the:

- Cleaning of hands before and after touching - including to remove or put them on
- safe storage of them in individual, sealable plastic bags between use
- not touching the front of face coverings during use or when removing them

Where a face covering becomes damp, it should not be worn. It should be put into a bag to be kept in a secure way and should be washed. Staff and pupils may consider bringing a spare face covering if they think they may become damp during the day.

Children and young people should:

- not touch the front of their face covering during use or when removing it
- dispose of temporary face coverings in a bin immediately after they have left
- place reusable face coverings in a plastic bag they can take home with them
- wash their hands again before heading to their classroom

3. Clean hands thoroughly more often than usual

COVID-19 can be spread by hands when it is on skin. This can be done with soap and water or hand sanitiser.

Children, young people, drivers and passenger assistants must clean their hands before boarding transport and again on disembarking.

Drivers and passenger assistants should use hand sanitiser at intervals throughout the journey. They should also do so after performing tasks such as helping a child into the vehicle or handling a child's belongings.

4. 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. Schools will be reinforcing this message with children, and local authorities may also want to consider including it in their communication with families.

Children and young people should be given tissues on home to school transport. They will need to be disposed of in a responsible manner if not used.

Some children and young people with complex needs will struggle to maintain good respiratory hygiene. In some these will be exacerbated by the wearing of face coverings or sensory stimuli. This should be considered when deciding what safeguards should be put in place to protect children and young people and those who care for them and support them. For more information, read 1. Consider how to minimise contact and maintain social distancing wherever possible.

5. Maintain enhanced cleaning, including cleaning frequently touched surfaces often, using standard products such as detergents

COVID-19 is easy to kill on surfaces. Normal cleaning products will do this - specialist cleaning products are not needed. For more information on keeping public and private spaces clean, read Coronavirus (COVID-19): cleaning non-healthcare settings guidance for operators.

Local authorities should work with transport operators to agree the arrangements for cleaning vehicles. Frequently touched surfaces should be cleaned after each journey, wherever possible, and enhanced cleaning should take place at the end of each day.

6. Consider how to minimise contact and maintain social distancing wherever possible

The guidance for schools recommends that, wherever possible, they should reduce the number of contacts between people and staff by keeping groups separate (bubbles) and through maintaining distance between individuals.

Home to school transport should be organised by maintaining groups and maintaining distance will bring benefits and minimise the number of people children and young people need to allow mixing into wider groups in certain circumstances, including on transport. Siblings may also be different groups.

Local authorities should work with schools and transport operators to consider how children and young people travel to school and college and how they can be kept separate from other people on their journey. Local authorities and school and college transport arrangements mean there will often be limits to the extent to which mixing can be avoided.

Minimum practice 1: is recommended that:

- children and young people from different schools do not travel at the same time or, if they do, the children from each school do not together on a journey
- children other of with their 'bubble' on school transport, or with the same contact group as their school
- local authorities and transport providers work with schools to ensure there are arrangements for organised queuing and boarding
- schools, colleges and transport providers take measures in the system of

controls become even more important.

Local authorities, working with schools, colleges, transport operators, and parents as necessary, need to work through the list of measures below to decide on the appropriate package of measures for their circumstances:

- distancing between individual passengers or groups of passengers should be applied wherever possible - distancing is particularly important where children attending different schools travel on the same vehicle, and for certain children with complex needs, for example, those that spit uncontrollably
- working with schools or colleges and transport operators to consider whether children can sit with the other children in their 'bubble' on transport
- working with schools, colleges and transport operators to draw up seating arrangements so that children and young people understand where they need to sit on home to school transport - ensuring the same children always sit together will help to minimise the number of contacts each child has - for example:
  - allocating specific seats
  - having rules such as sitting in ascending year groups - front to back, youngest to oldest
  - 'first in, last out', with those children getting on first seated at the rear of the bus and the bus filling forwards (such arrangements will require clear communication between schools, families and children)
- avoiding the use of face-to-face seating on home to school transport wherever possible
- working with schools to put in place appropriate queuing or other arrangements needed for picking up and dropping off children and young people to ensure they are able maintain distancing when waiting for, boarding and alighting from transport
- providing clear information for families, young people and children about the arrangements needed for picking up and dropping off children and young people at their home destination

Operators should conduct a risk assessment for all their operations including dedicated school transport services. This will determine the most appropriate safety measures to put in place. The guidance for operators provides further advice for staff.

Children with SEND

When deciding on the package of measures that is appropriate on transport for children and young people with special educational needs, local authorities will need to take account the particular needs of the children using the transport, and to be informed by the views of the parents and school.

Special schools tend to be smaller, meaning all the children in a school might be in the same bubble. Also, special schools will typically use smaller vehicles. Both these things will help to minimise the number of contacts children with SEND have on school transport.

Some vehicles carry children to a number of different special schools. Some children with SEND display behaviours such as spitting uncontrollably. In circumstances such as these, maintaining distance on transport is particularly desirable.

We recognise that transporting children and young people with SEND may requirecloose contact. Where this is the case,other measuresin the system of controlsshouldbe put in placeto reduce risk. For example, staff may want to wash or sanitise their hands more frequently.

Some children and young people with SEND will not be able to use a face covering properly and should not be expected to do so as this may increase the risk of transmission. Some children may be distressed by wearing a face covering, or by others wearing them. Others may become distressed if they and other people do not wear them.

Some children and young people may need to be able to lip read, or see people's faces, to communicate.

Staggered starts

Local authorities and schools may wish to consider staggered starts or adjusting start and finish times. This would keep groups of children apart as they arrive and leave and enable more journeys to take place outside of peak hours.

Staggered starts may be helpful where local authorities provide eligible children with a pass for free travel on public transport so that those children are able to avoid using public transport at peak time.

We recognise that it is likely that children and young people in different groups or bubbles will need to travel together on home to school transport so it may not be possible for them to arrive at different times from one another. Schools, colleges and local authorities will need to work together to ensure the arrangements for home to school transport and staggered starts complement one another.

Where there is a safe walking route, schools may want to consider having buses drop children off a short way from the school, to ease congestion around school sites.

7. Keep vehicles well ventilated when occupied

Good ventilation reduces the concentration of the virus in the air, which reduces the risk from airborne transmission.

It is important to ensure vehicles are well ventilated when occupied, particularly by opening windows and ceiling vents. Heating should be used as necessary to ensure comfort levels are maintained.

8. Wear the appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) where necessary

Face coverings are not classified as personal protective equipment (PPE). PPE is used in a limited number of settings to protect wearers against hazards and risks, such as surgical masks or respirators used in medical and industrial settings. A face covering is a covering of any type that covers your nose and mouth.

Most staff on school transport will not require PPE beyond what they would normally need for their work. If a pupil already has routine care needs that involve the use of PPE, the same PPE should continue to be used.

Additional PPE for COVID-19 is only required in a very limited number of scenarios, for example, when:

- a pupil becomes ill with COVID-19 symptoms, and only then if a 2 metre distance cannot be maintained
- performing aerosol generating procedures (AGPs)

When working with children and young people with complex, sick or vomit but do not have COVID-19 symptoms, any PPE that would be routinely worn should be worn.

The guidance on safe working in education, childcare and children's social care provides more information about preventing and controlling infection. This includes:

- when and how PPE should be used
- what type of PPE to use
- how to source it

9. Engage in asymptomatic testing, where available

Rapid testing remains a vital part of our plan to suppress this virus. Anyone in England who does not have symptoms can now get regular asymptomatic lateral flow tests to check for COVID-19. Some people who work on home to school transport may also be able to access testing through their workplace.

There is no change to the arrangements for staff and students in schools and colleges who should continue to collect their home testing kits from school or college as before.

Response to any infection

10. Engage with the NHS Test and Trace process

Children on transport will need to:

- book a test if they have symptoms
- self-isolate immediately if:
  - they develop symptoms
  - they have been in close contact with someone who tests positive for COVID-19
  - anyone in their household or support or childcare bubble develops symptoms of COVID-19
  - they are required to quarantine having recently visited countries outside the Common Travel Area
  - they have been advised to isolate by NHS Test and Trace or the PHE local health protection team
- provide details of anyone they have been in close contact with, if they test positive for COVID-19 or if asked by NHS Test and Trace

Booking a polymerase chain reaction (PCR) test through 119

Anyone who displays symptoms of COVID-19 can and should get a test. Tests for symptomatic illness can be booked online through the NHS testing and tracing for COVID-19 website, or ordered by telephone via NHS 119 for those without access to the internet.

Essential workers, which includes anyone involved in education or childcare and those involved in transporting passengers, have priority access to testing.

All children and young people can be tested if they have symptoms. This includes children under 5, but children aged 11 and under will need to be helped by their parents or carers if using a home testing kit.

NHS COVID-19 app

The app is available to anyone aged 16 and over to download if they choose.

11. Manage confirmed cases of COVID-19

Swift action must be taken when someone tests positive for COVID-19. If someone who uses dedicated transport tests positive, local authorities should work with schools and colleges to identify close contacts.

Schools may receive support on this through the dedicated advice service introduced by PHE, which can be reached through the DfE helpline on 0800 046 8687, or their PHE local health protection team if escalated. Based on their advice, people who have been in close contact with the person who has tested positive must be sent home and advised to self-isolate immediately and for at least the next 10 full days counting from the day after contact with the individual who tested positive. It is a legal requirement for an individual to self-isolate if they have been told to do so by NHS Test and Trace.

A risk assessment may be undertaken to determine this, but a close contact can be anyone who:

- lives in the same household as someone with COVID-19 symptoms or who has tested positive for COVID-19
- has had any of the following types of contact with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19 with either a PCR test or LFD test (if a confirmatory PCR test is negative, provided it was taken within 2 days of the positive LFD, it overrides the lateral flow test and close contacts can stop self-isolating):
  - face-to-face contact including being coughed on or having a face-to-face conversation within 1 metre
  - been within 1 metre for 1 minute or longer without face-to-face contact
  - been within 2 metres of someone for more than 15 minutes (either as a one-off contact or added up together over 1 day)
  - travelled in the same vehicle or a plane

While awaiting for the confirmatory PCR result, pupils, students and staff and close contacts should continue to self-isolate.

If someone who uses transport tests positive, the assessment is likely to take account of factors such as:

- vehicle size
- degree of face-to-face contact
- length of time in close proximity
- whether a perspex screen is in place

Other considerations

Meeting the home to school transport duty in alternative ways

Section 508B of the Education Act 1996 permits local authorities to meet their duty to provide free home to school transport to an eligible child in alternative ways, provided they have the parent's consent. The duty on local authorities for those over 16 is different, but the practices detailed in this section should be considered good practice for that age group as well.

To maximise home to school transport capacity, some local authorities have asked parents to accept personal travel budgets or mileage allowances to take their child to school or college. This is permissible with the parent's consent.

Local authorities should not expect parents to commit to accepting a personal payment or mileage allowance for a specified period of time, particularly in the current economic climate. For example, a parent may feel able to take their child to their school or college while they are furloughed, but subsequently their circumstances may change. However, parents should understand that the local authority will need reasonable notice to put in place home to school transport for their child or young person.

Mileage allowances and personal budgets should cover the cost of the parent's journey to school with their child in the morning, and home again afterwards, and their journey to collect their child in the afternoon, and home again afterwards.

Where a child normally travels on dedicated home to school transport, local authorities should not provide a personal travel budget if that would mean the child then needs to travel on public transport.

Where a child or young person needs a passenger assistant on home to school transport, a local authority may ask their parent to travel with them in place of a passenger assistant. The parent's consent is required for this arrangement to meet the local authority's statutory duty. The parents should not have a role in supervising any other children in the vehicle.

Local authorities should be mindful of their duties under the Equality Act 2010 when asking parents to accept alternative offers.

Workforce

Implementing the measures in this guidance will reduce the risk to all staff.

Drivers and passenger assistants should maintain a distance from their passengers wherever possible. We acknowledge that the nature of school transport and the needs of the children and young people receiving it mean this will not always be possible. Drivers may be able to leave the vehicle to maintain distance while children and young people are getting on and off.

Some drivers and passenger assistants may feel concerned about going to work. Local authorities (or the driver or passenger assistant's employer, where this is not the local authority) should discuss their concerns and explain the safeguarding measures that are in place to reduce risk on home to school transport.

Guidance for the clinically extremely vulnerable is available.

Communication with families, schools and transport operators

Communication is key to make sure everyone involved understands the instructions they need to comply with and can feel confident that risks are being considered and controlled in the most effective way.

Local authorities should consider how to communicate the home to school transport arrangements clearly to children, young people, parents, schools and transport operators. Schools and colleges will also have an important role in communicating with families, children and young people.

Things to consider:

- encouraging parents and children to walk or cycle where possible
- parents will need to understand that their child or young person must not travel if they or anyone in their household has symptoms of COVID-19
- children, young people and their families will need to understand any arrangements for queuing for and getting on home to school transport, and where they should sit in the vehicle
- children, young people and their families will need to understand who is required to wear face coverings on home to school transport
- drivers and passenger assistants will need to understand any rules that they, children and young people need to follow on home to school transport
- local authorities, schools, colleges and transport operators will need a shared understanding of the arrangements for children and young people's arrival at school or college in the morning and collection in the afternoon
- drivers should not be expected to police arrangements such as seating plans, queues, the wearing of face coverings or use of hand sanitiser - their role is to focus on driving the vehicle safely
- some parents, children, young people, drivers and passenger assistants may feel concerned about the risk of infection on home to school transport and may want to be reassured about the safeguards that are in place

Behaviour

We do not expect drivers to police pupil behaviour. Their role is to focus on driving the vehicle safely.

The home to school travel and transport statutory guidance sets out our expectation that schools should promote appropriate standards of behaviour by pupils on their journey to and from school.

Schools may wish to consider updating their behaviour policies with any new rules and policies. This may include rules relating to behaviour on the way to and from school. It also includes the consequences for poor behaviour and deliberately breaking the rules, and how they will enforce those rules, including any sanctions.

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Coronavirus (COVID-19)

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