Part of
Education and childcare during coronavirus

Department for Education

Guidance

Transport to school and other places of education: autumn term 2020

Updated 29 September 2020

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On 2 July 2020, we set out our plans for all children and young people, in all year groups and places of education, to return to education full time from the beginning of the autumn term. The overall risk to children and young people from coronavirus (COVID-19) is very low. The balance of risk is now overwhelmingly in favour of children and young people returning to school and college.

Capacity on public transport remains limited given the requirements for social distancing; this will be particularly challenging for children and young people who travel to school or college by bus. Local authorities therefore need to put in place local demand management solutions for public services, and supplement the public bus network, and existing home to school transport, with additional capacity, to ensure that children can travel to school safely, and disruption for all passengers on the public network is minimised.

Part A provides guidance for local authorities on managing the capacity of, and demand for, public transport, and increasing capacity of both public and dedicated home to school or college services, so that children can travel safely to and from school or college.

Part B provides guidance about the provision of dedicated home to school or college transport in the autumn term.

Solutions in relation to transport planning for the wider return of school and college students must be locally led. The precise pressures on the local transport network for both home to school transport, and public transport, will vary greatly by area, and solutions will need to reflect local circumstances that apply.

Part A: managing capacity and demand on public transport

The application of social distancing measures to public transport has caused a significant reduction in effective capacity, which provides a challenge in routinely transporting children and students to schools and colleges. Nearly half of all journeys made in the morning peak hour are made for education purposes, and with public transport capacity severely constrained, alternative travel options are required.

This section of the guidance sets out what local authorities need to do so that they can increase capacity and manage demand, so that parents and children can get to school.

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

The Department for Transport wrote to local authorities at the beginning of July 2020 setting out the role of local authorities in planning for transport when schools and colleges return. Unless high quality data already exists, local authorities should be working with schools and colleges to survey parents, carers and students to collect information about travel. This could include data on how students in their areas travelled to school or college before coronavirus (COVID-19); whether they intend to change their mode of travel; and, if not, what measures could persuade them to do so. This information will help develop plans for September 2020.

Local authorities should also work with local transport operators to assess the overall level of current and forecast demand compared to expected capacity, particularly on routes used by children and young people. Local authorities can then make an assessment as to how these routes can be supported using the demand management and capacity interventions outlined below, taking into account the needs of all passengers.

To ensure that all children and young people can attend school and college in September 2020, local authorities should consider all the following actions.

Using Travel Demand Management

The Department for Transport has developed a Travel Demand Management (TDM) policy toolkit, which was sent to local authorities on 31 July 2020. Local authorities using or adopting TDM will be able to:

- understand the nature of likely demands on local transport provision
- identify the necessary changes to how that provision is deployed
- develop necessary travel advice and communications for parents and students
- ensure appropriate monitoring and evaluation.

Additional TDM support, in the form of consultancy support and funding, has been made available to those local authorities in England, outside London, on completion of the TDM self-assessment provided in early July 2020.

Strongly promoting active travel

Schools and colleges should encourage parents, staff and pupils to walk or cycle to school where it is safe and appropriate to do so.

At a national level, at least 50% of journeys to school of 2 miles or less, and which are currently undertaken by public bus, need to switch to cycling and walking in order to make capacity available for those with longer journeys. This 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 pupils whose journeys are most appropriate to switch to active travel to encourage them to do so
- implementing 'safe streets' policies outside schools

Local authorities have been allocated funding for walking and cycling which should be prioritised on those routes most frequently used by children and young people.

Accepting increased use of cars for longer journeys which cannot be accommodated on public transport, contracted provision (coaches or similar) or realistically switched to active travel

While it is strongly advised that parents, staff, and pupils walk and cycle as an alternative to public transport, to further reduce the demand on public transport and the need for additional capacity, local authorities should accept that those who can drive to school may do so.

Local authorities must give active consideration to the impacts of increased car use on local congestion, and ensure that mitigations to minimise these impacts are implemented through their network management duty. Notwithstanding the above, government expects local authorities to continue to discharge their duties in respect of sustainable travel and transport as placed by Section 508A of the Education Act 1996.

Engaging extensively with local businesses and employers to reduce other demand for public transport during peak school travel hours

The TDM policy toolkit and support provided by the Department for Transport helps local authorities to gather the relevant information and develop plans with local businesses and employers.

Staggering school and college start and finish times

Local authorities should work with schools and colleges to consider whether changing or staggering school start and finish times would reduce pressure on transport services. This has the potential, in some areas, to:

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

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

Contracting additional coaches or other appropriate vehicles (where they are available at a local level and necessary) to provide dedicated school transport services

If there is still a need for additional transport capacity after all of the above measures have been considered, then local authorities should procure suitable vehicles.

The government has announced additional funding for local transport authorities to procure dedicated, additional capacity transport system to help students get back to their schools and colleges in time for the education restart in September.

Local authorities must charge pupils and students a fare for using the additional transport capacity, unless they are entitled to free home to school transport, and that fare should be the same as the equivalent fare on normal public transport. From the autumn term, local authorities will not be required to uniformly apply the social distancing guidelines for public transport, on dedicated school or college transport. However, distancing should still be put in place within vehicles wherever possible.

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

Identifying existing bus services used exclusively or predominantly by school children and designating them as school only services

Local authorities may wish to work with transport operators to explore temporarily designating some public bus services as school or college only services. Government will 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 work with transport operators to seek to ensure that sufficient alternative or residual services remain available for members of the public who would normally use these services if this option is explored.

Part B: guidance for dedicated transport to schools and other places of education for autumn term 2020

Dedicated transport to schools and other places of education often carries the same group of children or young people on a regular basis. They do not mix with the general public on those journeys. This helps limit the number of other people with whom they come into contact.

This guidance aims to help those responsible for the provision of dedicated transport to put in place proportionate safeguards to further minimise the risk of transmission of coronavirus (COVID-19).

It applies to all dedicated transport to schools and other places of education, whether on the public network or procured by the local authority, schools or parent groups. These are services which exclusively carry children and young people travelling to their place of education, including mainstream and special schools, colleges and alternative provision settings. This includes transport:

- commissioned or provided by local authorities, whether or not the service is provided free of charge
- commissioned or provided by schools or other places of education
- provided by transport operators (commercial travel routes) that cannot be used by members of the public when it is carrying children to school or other places of education

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 travelling to school and other places of education.

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

- schools and other places of education, 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 other places of education such as further education colleges.

We have developed this guidance with advice from Public Health England

(PHE) and the Health and Safety Executive (HSE). We will keep it under review and update as necessary.

Where something is essential for public health reasons, as advised by PHE, we have said 'must'.

Key points

Local authorities remain under a statutory duty to provide free home to school transport for all eligible children of compulsory school age. They also remain under a duty to publish a transport statement detailing what travel assistance they will provide for young people aged over 16.

Those involved in the provision of home to school transport must do all that is reasonably practicable to maximise social distancing where possible and minimise the risk of transmission. What is practicable is likely to vary according to local circumstances.

Local authorities, working with schools, places of education and transport operators as necessary, should:

- identify the risks arising from coronavirus (COVID-19)
- work through the system of controls set out in this guidance
- adopt measures in a way that addresses the identified risk, works in the local circumstances, and enables children and young people to attend their school or place of education

As set out in the guidance for full opening for schools, for special schools, and for places of further education, from the autumn term local authorities will not be required to uniformly apply the social distancing guidelines for public transport on dedicated school or college transport. However, the full opening for schools guidance also sets out that distancing should still be put in place within vehicles wherever possible.

It is of vital importance to work through the steps set out in this guidance. In particular:

- social distancing should be maximised within vehicles wherever it is possible, between individuals or 'bubbles'
- it is very important to maximise the ventilation of fresh air (from outside the vehicle) on dedicated school and college transport, particularly through opening windows and ceiling vents

It is now the law that children and young people aged 11 and over must wear a face covering on public transport. This law does not apply to dedicated school transport. However, we recommend that local authorities advise people aged 11 and over to wear a face covering when travelling on dedicated school transport to secondary school or college from the start of the autumn term. This does not apply to those who are exempt from wearing a face covering on public transport. For more detail, see 5. Minimising contact and mixing.

We believe this is an appropriate balance, because:

- the overall risk to children and young people of serious illness as a result of coronavirus (COVID-19) is very low
- they do not mix with the general public on those journeys
- home to school transport often carries the same group of children and young people on a regular basis, and they may also be together in school or college
- the predictability of home to school transport will allow for planning so that protective measures can be put in place

The system of controls: protective measures

Local authorities, working with schools, places of education and transport operators as necessary, should identify the risks arising from coronavirus (COVID-19). They should take account of all the ways the virus may be transmitted - through direct contact, surface transmission and through the air.

They must then work through the system of controls set out in this guidance and adopt measures in a way that addresses the identified risk, works in the local circumstances, and enables children and young people to attend their school or place of education.

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 it is mandatory to consider the extent to which measures are reasonably practicable and, where they are, to take these measures.

Local authorities, transport operators, schools and places of education all have a role to play in ensuring effective measures are put in place on home to school transport.

This system of controls is equivalent to the PHE-endorsed system of controls set out in the guidance for full opening for schools, for special schools, and for places of further education.

The controls are grouped into ‘prevention’ and ‘response to any infection’. When implemented in a way that addresses the identified risk, they create an inherently safer environment for children, young people and staff where the risk of transmission of infection is substantially reduced.

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

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

Prevention

1. Minimise contact with individuals who are unwell

Parents and carers must be advised that children or young people must not board home to school transport if they, or a member of their household, has symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19). Children and young people should not routinely have their temperature taken. This is not a reliable method for identifying coronavirus (COVID-19).

If a child or young person develops symptoms whilst at school or their place of education, they will be sent home. They must not travel on home to school transport. The school or place of education should contact the parent or carer who should make arrangements for the child or young person's journey home.

In exceptional circumstances, where it is not possible for the parent or carer to make arrangements for the child's or young person's journey home, transport may be provided. The guidance on safe working in education, childcare and children's social care settings sets out what must be done. Other children should not travel on the transport at the same time as the child with symptoms.

Drivers and passenger assistants must not work if they have symptoms, or if someone in their household has symptoms. If they develop symptoms whilst at work they must go home and get a test.

Anyone with symptoms must follow Stay at home: guidance for households with possible or confirmed coronavirus (COVID-19) infection.

Children, young people, drivers and passenger assistants who have been in contact with someone who has developed symptoms whilst at school or on home to school transport do not need to go home to self-isolate unless (one of these):

- they develop symptoms themselves (in which case, they should arrange a test)
- the symptomatic person subsequently tests positive and they were in contact anytime when they were infectious to others, as defined in PHE guidance (see 8. Manage confirmed cases of coronavirus (COVID-19))
- if they have been requested to do so by NHS Test and Trace

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 that provides home to school transport, the vehicle must be cleaned with normal household disinfectant to reduce the risk of passing the infection on to other people. For more information, read COVID-19: cleaning of non-healthcare settings guidance.

2. Clean hands thoroughly more often than usual

Coronavirus (COVID-19) is an easy virus to kill when it is on skin. This can be done with soap and running 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 alcohol hand rub or sanitiser at intervals throughout the journey, and should always do so after performing tasks such as helping a child into the vehicle or handling a child's belongings.

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

Children should be encouraged to carry tissues on home to school transport. These will need to be disposed of in a covered bin. Where it is not possible to have a bin on board, schools should have a suitable disposal process on arrival, in line with their process for disposing of face coverings. For more information, see 5. Minimising contact and mixing.

Some children and young people with complex needs will struggle to maintain good respiratory hygiene, for example those who spit uncontrollably 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 children and young people and the staff working with them. For more information, see 5. Minimising contact and mixing.

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

Coronavirus (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 areas and modes of transport clean, read Coronavirus (COVID-19): safer transport 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.

5. Minimising contact and mixing

The guidance for schools recommends that they should minimise contact and mixing by implementing 'bubbles' - groups of children between which mixing is minimised. It is for schools to determine how they will do this but, in secondary schools, particularly in key stage 4 and 5, groups may be the size of a year group. At primary school, and in key stage 3, schools may be able to implement smaller groups the size of a class. Special schools are usually smaller and may have groups that cross year groups. For more information, read guidance on minimising contact and mixing in special schools.

The guidance for places of further education recommend that they reduce contacts between individuals by forming groups or cohorts of students that remain separate from each other during the course of the day. The guidance for schools acknowledges that implementing bubbles even partially will still bring benefits, and that schools may need to allow mixing into wider groups in certain circumstances, including on transport. Siblings may also be in different groups.

Local authorities should work with schools and transport operators to consider how mixing might be minimised on school transport. However, we know that vehicle capacity and the complexity of some home to school transport arrangements mean there will often be limits to the extent to which mixing can be minimised.

Wherever possible, it 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 should sit together as a group
- children either sit with their 'bubble' on school transport, or with the same constant group of children each day
- local authorities and transport providers work with schools to put in place arrangements for organised queuing and boarding

We acknowledge that distancing and grouping may sometimes not be possible. Where they are not possible, other measures in the system of controls become even more important.

Local authorities, working with schools, places of education, 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/places of education and transport operators to consider whether children can sit with the other children in their 'bubble' on transport
- working with schools, places of education 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 and families and children)
- avoiding the use of face to face seating on home to school transport wherever possible

- ensuring good ventilation of fresh air wherever possible by keeping windows, or roof lights, on home to school transport, open
- 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

Face coverings: In accordance with advice from PHE, from the autumn term, we recommend that local authorities advise children and young people aged 11 and over to wear a face covering when travelling on dedicated transport. This does not apply to people who are exempt from wearing a face covering on public transport.

Until the start of the autumn term, children and young people have not been expected to wear face coverings on dedicated transport, although they have been able to if they wish. We are adopting this new position in light of all children returning to education full-time. As well as the fact that it will not always be possible to apply the social distancing measures that apply on public transport.

A face covering is a covering of any type which covers your nose and mouth. Reusable or single-use face coverings are available for parents and carers to buy. A scarf, bandana, religious garment or hand-made cloth covering may also be used but these must securely fit round the side of the face.

Face coverings:

- may be particularly useful where measures such as distancing and sitting in bubbles or year groups are not possible
- may help children to feel more confident about using home to school transport, and parents to feel more confident about their child using home to school transport
- should not be worn by those who may not be able to handle them as directed (for example, young children, or those with SEND) as it may inadvertently increase the risk of transmission
- are not a substitute for other protective measures such as good hand hygiene

Ensure that any additional risk associated with their use are identified, for example, children and young people will need to understand how to handle their face covering properly. Children under 11 may wear a face covering if they are able to handle it as directed. For more information, read how to wear a face covering.

Some children and young people may need to be able to lip-read, or see people's faces, in order to communicate (there are companies now making lip-reading friendly face coverings).

Some children and young people with special educational needs may be distressed if the people around them wear face coverings; others may become agitated if people do not wear face coverings.

Schools should have a process for children and young people to remove face coverings when they arrive at school. This should enable them to wash their hands immediately on arrival (as is the case for all pupils) and then wash their hands again after removing their face covering. Disposable face coverings should be disposed of in a covered bin. They should not be put in a recycling

bin. Children should keep reusable face coverings in a plastic bag they can take home with them.

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 such as for social distancing and face coverings. 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 requireclose 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. There are companies now making lip-reading friendly face coverings.

Although drivers and passenger assistants will not normally require personal protective equipment (PPE) on home to school transport (see below), where the care a child or young person ordinarily receives on home to school transport requires the use of PPE, that should continue as usual.

Staggered starts: The guidance for schools and other places of education asks them to consider introducing staggered starts or adjusting start and finish times to keep groups of children apart as they arrive and leave and to enable more journeys to take place outside of peak hours.

Staggered starts may be helpful where local authorities fulfil their duty to provide free transport for eligible children by providing with them 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 that it may not be possible for them to arrive at different times from one another. Schools, places of education 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.

6. Personal protective equipment (PPE) is not normally needed on home to school transport

By PPE, we mean equipment such as fluid-resistant surgical face masks, disposable gloves, disposable plastic aprons and eye protection such as a face visor or goggles. We do not mean face coverings, advice on which is set out above.

Drivers and passenger assistants will not normally require PPE on home to school transport, even if they are not able to maintain a distance from the children and young people on the transport. This is because, as set out above, children and young people with symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19) must not board home to school transport.

If the care a child or young person usually receives on home to school transport requires the use of PPE, that should continue. For more information, read:

- How should I care for children who regularly spit or require physical contact?
- Guidance on the specific steps that should be taken to care for children with complex medical needs, such as tracheostomies (this includes aerosol generating procedures)

Response to any infection

7. Engage with the test and trace process

Local authorities must ensure they understand the NHS Test and Trace process and how to contact their local Public Health England health protection team.

They should expect drivers and passenger assistants to book a test if they display coronavirus (COVID-19) symptoms and expect families to get a test if children are displaying symptoms.

They should ensure that drivers, passenger assistants and families, on behalf of children, understand that they will need to be ready and willing:

- to provide details of anyone they have been in close contact with if they test positive for coronavirus (COVID-19) or if asked by NHS Test and Trace
- to self-isolate if they have been in close contact with someone who tests positive for coronavirus (COVID-19), or if anyone in their household develops symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19)

8. Manage confirmed cases of coronavirus (COVID-19)

Swift action must be taken when someone tests positive for coronavirus (COVID-19). Local authorities should contact local health protection teams. Local health protection teams will identify people who have been in close contact with a person who tests positive for coronavirus (COVID-19) and tell them what they need to do. Further information is available on the NHS website.

Close contact means:

- direct close contacts - face to face contact with an infected individual for any length of time, within 1 metre, including being coughed on, a face to face conversation, unprotected physical contact (skin to skin)
- proximity contacts - extended close contact (within 1 to 2 metres for more than 15 minutes) with an infected individual
- travelling in a small vehicle, like a car, with an infected individual

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.

We know that, to maximise home to school transport capacity, some local authorities have started to ask parents to accept personal travel budgets or mileage allowances to take their child to their school or place of education. 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 place of education in September because 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.

Guidance for clinically extremely vulnerable people who were shielding has been paused from 1 August, with the exception of any areas where local lockdown means that shielding will continue.

Some drivers and passenger assistants may feel concerned about returning 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.

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 places of education 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 coronavirus (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 whether they will be expected 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, places of education and transport operators will need a shared understanding of the arrangements for children and young people's arrival at school or place of education 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.

The guidance for schools on returning in the autumn term sets out that schools should 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 includesthe consequences for poor behaviour and deliberately breaking the rules and how they will enforce those rules, including any sanctions.

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