

# Protocol for Primary and Secondary School home to school transport

Children must not travel if showing any symptoms. Follow isolation of whole household for 10 days if anyone in the household has symptoms.

All to be reviewed with effect from May 2021 or earlier if called for.

## 1. Context

- 1.1. This protocol is based on guidance from Transport Scotland and The Covid-19 Advisory Sub-Group on Education and Children's Issues and should be read alongside their arrangements for the full reopening of schools in April 2021. The advice is contingent on current levels of infection within Scotland and is subject to change in response to any notification or instruction given by the Scottish Government.

## 2. Reduction in travel on school transport

- 2.1. As far as it is safe and practicable to do so, children and their parents/carers should be encouraged to travel to school on foot, bike or scooter.
- 2.2. Parents may wish to consider whether it is possible and appropriate for their child to cycle to/from school instead of using our school transport. This will depend on agreement with the school regarding arrangements for storing bicycles, and parents' own assessment of the safety and capabilities of their child.

## 3. Social distancing and Face Covering

- 3.1. There will need to be flexibility in the use of this advice and variation among areas depending on transmission in their local community. This could mean that further distancing may be required on transport if prevalence of Covid-19 increase.
- 3.2. A distance of 1 metre is to be maintained between the driver and pupils or other adults on the vehicle where possible in situations where both adult and child wear a face covering or where there is a screen between the driver and passengers.

- 3.3. Where other preventative measures are not in place, drivers should maintain 2 metre distancing from children and other adults.
- 3.4. Pupils will not be expected to practice physical distancing from each other but should maintain the required distancing from any adults.
- 3.5. It is accepted that for the welfare and safety of children with Additional Support Needs, it may not always be possible for escorts to social distance from the children in their care. In these situations, the school will undertake a risk assessment.
- 3.6. All passengers aged 5 years or older are to wear face coverings (unless exempt).
- 3.7. Where an operator wishes to install a screen, they should refer to the Updated Guidance on the use of partitions or screens dated 18<sup>th</sup> June 2020 (or any such guidance that may be issued at a later date).
- 3.8. The front seats, next to the driver, are to be out of use to maintain social distancing.
- 3.9. Where a screen has been fitted, the seat behind the driver may be used if necessary when considered alongside other requirements for social distancing.
- 3.10. Pupils travelling on Public Transport Routes are required to practice physical distancing according to their age in line with the requirements on dedicated transport. Buses that are registered to serve the public and also provide school transport may have segregated areas for pupils and the public.
- 3.11. Where possible, students from different schools should not share transport unless they are from the same household. Operators are to discuss this with THC Transport Officer and have clearly defined segregated zones for each school.
- 3.12. Vehicles that are used for one school and then go on to serve another school (where children are not mixing) are to maintain high cleanliness standards and clean all handles and regularly touched areas before picking up the second set of pupils.
- 3.13. The table below is a **guide only**, allowing for distancing between pupils and driver where other mitigations such as face coverings and/or screens are in place. Please refer to your own risk assessments and the distancing available on your particular vehicle. Children from the same family or household may sit side by side.

(Typical equivalent seating if all seats used) ^ alongside driver * 2 behind driver	Theoretical seating capacity of vehicle net of seats out of use	Allowable seat occupancy to maintain distancing (where vehicle layout allows)
4 seat saloon (1^+3*)	2	2 passengers, seated rear nearside and rear centre.
6 seat people carrier (1^ +3*+2)	4	2 seated in middle row (nearside and middle) and 2 in rear.
8 seat minibus (2^+3*+3)	<b>Up to 6</b>	2 seated in middle row (nearside and middle) and 3 in rear. 1 Person may sit behind the driver if a screen has been fitted and a distance between pupil and driver of 1m can be maintained.
10 seat minibus (2^+2*+3+3)	<b>Up to 8</b>	2 seated in middle row (nearside and middle) and 3 in each row behind. 1 Person may sit behind the driver if a screen has been fitted and a distance between pupil and driver of 1m can be maintained.
14 seat minibus (2^+2*+2+3+3)	<b>Up to 12</b>	2 seated in middle row (nearside and middle), and all seats filled in row behind. 1 Person may sit behind the driver if a screen has been fitted and a distance between pupil and driver of 1m can be maintained.
16 seat minibus (0^+3*+3+3+3+4)	<b>Up to 14</b>	2 seated in middle row (nearside and middle), and all seats filled in row behind. 1 Person may sit behind the driver if a screen has been fitted and a distance between pupil and driver of 1m can be maintained.
Coaches and buses	Varies	Front row of coaches seated only on nearside to preserve separation from driver, unless there is a screen behind the driver.

## 4. Boarding and alighting

Drivers are to be responsible for opening and closing passenger doors; this reduces the number of contacts with the door handles.

## 5. Seatbelts and car seats

To avoid close proximity between driver and children, parents to be asked to encourage their children to put seatbelts on themselves, so far as possible. Where assistance is required (likely to be youngest children), the parent/ responsible adult should be encouraged to assist when boarding at home (as the first children to board will be seated at the rear, there should be no need for parents to pass other children to carry this out). When boarding at the school, the school staff may be able to assist as required (again loading and securing children at the rear of the vehicle first). However, the legal responsibility of drivers of non-PSV vehicles to ensure seatbelts are worn properly is unchanged; normally a visual check should be sufficient.

## 6. Parent-provided Equipment

Parent-provided equipment such as car seats and booster seats are to be cleaned before entering the vehicle. Please speak to the parent to request that this happens before installation every day (parents are to be responsible for this cleaning). Each afternoon all plastic and metal areas of parent-provided equipment are to be wiped down again with disinfectant before being returned to the vehicle for the homeward journey.

## 7. Ventilation

Ventilate vehicle with opened windows wherever possible (but be aware of need to avoid risk of children leaning out of windows etc).

Operate extractor systems where available.

**Do not** set controls to recirculate air.

## 8. Cleaning

All driver areas are to be cleaned with a disinfectant at least on a daily basis. If more than one driver utilises the vehicle, then cleaning should take place between driver changes as well as daily. If there are facilities to steam clean a vehicle, this can be utilised.

Hard surface areas that are utilised or touched by passengers should be wiped down with disinfectant or hot soapy water **before and after each trip**.

Drivers are to focus in particular on the inside and outside door handles as well as the steering wheel and dashboard when cleaning the driver's cabin. Focus on metal, plastic and other hard parts of head restraints, armrests, seatbelts and handrails when cleaning the interior of the vehicle.

If possible, wear disposable gloves and aprons when cleaning the vehicle and remove and dispose of these safely before moving onto any other work. If gloves are not available, make sure that your hands are washed thoroughly with soap and water or use disinfectant hand sanitiser.

If a face covering, or any rubbish, is found on the vehicle after the children have alighted, this is to be bagged and disposed of safely. The same rule applies whether it is an expensive reusable face covering or a single-use mask.

## **9. Hygiene**

### **9.1. Driver**

All drivers are to maintain good hygiene practices, washing their hands frequently or using hand sanitiser. Hands are to be cleaned every time the driver enters or leaves the vehicle.

Transport staff must wear face coverings when loading, securing and unloading wheelchairs or car seats and may choose to do so while driving. Where face coverings are required drivers are to use them safely:

- Wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water for 20 seconds or use hand sanitiser before putting a face covering on, and after removing it.
- When wearing a face covering, avoid touching your face or face covering, as you could contaminate them with germs from your hands.
- Change your face covering if it becomes damp or if you've touched it.
- Continue to wash your hands regularly.
- Change and wash your face covering daily.
- If the material is washable, wash in line with manufacturer's instructions. If it's not washable, dispose of it in your usual waste, making sure it is securely bagged.

### **9.2. Passengers**

All children are to maintain good hygiene practices, washing their hands often and using hand sanitiser before boarding transport.

Children must wear face coverings when travelling on transport (unless medically exempt) and are to follow the advice below:

- Wash hands thoroughly with soap and water for 20 seconds or use hand sanitiser before putting a face covering on, and after removing it.
- When wearing a face covering, avoid touching your face or face covering, as you could contaminate them with germs from your hands.
- Change your face covering if it becomes damp or if you've touched it.
- Continue to wash your hands regularly.

- Face coverings should be bagged separately while at school (do not allow contact with books etc)
- A clean face-covering should be used for the return journey.

Parents are to provide face coverings for their children and drivers are not expected to have disposable face coverings on board for children who have forgotten or misplaced theirs. Schools **may** have additional supplies for these scenarios. Please remember that children without face coverings are not to be refused travel.

## 10. PPE - other

Disposable gloves and aprons to be considered when cleaning the vehicle between journeys.

## 11. Personal belongings

Children to minimise the transport of bags etc on transport and are not to carry large musical instruments or art equipment.

## 12. Carriage of passengers with symptoms

Any child, young person or other learner who starts displaying coronavirus symptoms while at their setting should wherever possible be collected by a member of their family or household.

In **exceptional** circumstances, where this is not possible, and where a symptomatic child or young person or other passenger needs to be transported to their home, you should do the following:

- If possible use a vehicle with a full height partition screen between the driver and the passenger;
- The driver and passenger should maintain a distance of 2 metres from each other;
- The driver should use PPE (face mask as opposed to face covering);
- The passenger should wear a face mask if they are able to do so;
- No other child is to travel in the vehicle;
- An escort may travel if required but must wear PPE and maintain distancing where possible.

## 13. Use of consistent driver

The same driver should be used for the operation of the contract unless operational circumstances make that impossible on a given occasion. The vehicle must be cleaned between any change of driver.

## **14. Seating Plans**

Schools are encouraged to provide seating plans for their pupils so that children are kept in particular bubbles and remain in the same seats for each journey. In a situation where a case of Covid is identified, this also provides better information as to which children were in closest proximity. Contractors are asked to support schools by reminding children about where to sit and by trying to avoid changes to the vehicle used where possible. Schools are to provide copies of their seating plans to contractors.

## **15. Lateral Flow Testing**

Drivers on home to school transport are eligible to participate in the home testing scheme. Details of the scheme have been sent to operators who will be able to collect kits from schools by prior arrangement, however it must be noted that participation in the scheme is voluntary.

## **16. Other**

In a small number of cases reduced social distancing, or variations to other mitigating factors will be required for the health and welfare of the child (for example, when close contact with a transport escort is required). In these cases, THC Transport Officer will provide further instructions.