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Powys County Council Home to School Transport and Covid-19

Guidance for parents

June 2020

Following the announcement made on 3rd June 2020 by the Welsh Government to reopen schools in Wales on the 29th June 2020, we wanted to let you know what we are doing to make our learners and your child and their siblings journeys to and from school as safe as possible and to reassure you that we, and the operators we work with, have put in place the measures recommended by the Welsh Government and other agencies to protect all those choosing to travel on school transport.

We want to be really clear. **Our message is wherever possible, parents should travel with their children to and from school, ideally on foot, or by bike, scooter or any other means of active travel.** However, we realise that this may not be practical for those who live in our more rural communities and you may want to take them to school in your car. If you have to use Council provided transport, this guidance will help you understand what we are doing, and what we expect of you and your children when being transported to school. The Council takes the health, safety and wellbeing of your children very seriously and we put passenger safety at the front and centre of our decision making. But we also need to make sure that our staff and contractors remain safe too, so we have been working closely with all our transport providers to plan our return to service and make sure that our transport is as safe as possible for all those on board.

It is highly likely that social distancing will be with us for a while, so we all need to adapt to the 'new normal' and change to a new set of behaviours. Below we have set out what we are doing to provide safe transport and what we expect of our passengers, parents and carers.

It is really important that before sending your child to school, check that your child is not displaying any of the symptoms of the coronavirus.

Do not leave home if you or someone you live with has any of the following symptoms:

- A high temperature
- A new continuous cough
- A loss of, or change to, their smell or taste



Check the [NHS Wales](https://www.nhs.uk) website if you have symptoms or need a test

This is not an exhaustive list so please do check the NHS Wales website

Safe transport relies on us all playing our parts

What you can expect from us:

- Our drivers and passenger assistants may wear PPE where it is assessed it is appropriate, and we will provide hand sanitisers on board buses and will be asking them to wash their hands frequently when facilities are available.
- We have asked that vehicles be thoroughly cleaned after each journey, ready for the next. We will, where possible, have the same staff and vehicle delivering your child's transport every day
- Drivers/passenger assistants will give clear instructions to passengers on boarding and alighting
- Social distancing rules will be followed as far as it is practicable to do so – for example, if a learner travels in a wheelchair which needs to be secured, this will be undertaken as carefully as possible but cannot be done from 2 metres away
- Where a student is collected from a home address and will need to wear a seatbelt, ideally a member from the child's household should assist with this if the child cannot fasten the seatbelt themselves. However, we will assist if there is no one to help them. It will remain the responsibility of drivers to ensure that seat belts are worn properly but normally a visual check will be sufficient. Students living in the same household will be able to sit together as before Covid-19, and the appropriate space will be made around them
- Buses will be well ventilated and will travel with certain windows open
- Due to social distancing, there will be fewer passengers travelling on each bus – this may mean providing additional buses to cover journeys.
- The Councils Corporate Transport Service will stay in close contact with you and your children's school to ensure that all arrangements for your child are communicated and will deal with any queries. This may be done via email, Facebook and Twitter
- If your child becomes unwell while travelling, we will contact you straight away. We may ask you to collect your child from school.

What we expect from students:

- Before travelling, ensure that your child has washed their hands for at least 20 seconds or has sanitised them
- Face coverings are not mandatory, but learners may wish to wear one, especially during busy periods.
- Passengers must listen carefully to instructions from staff and behave responsibly
- When travelling, your child should observe social distancing, keeping 2 metres away from others where possible, and try to face away from other passengers. All physical contact with others should be avoided
- Where possible, learners should board the bus and go to the most rearmost available seat
- Where seatbelts are worn, students should attempt to fasten their seatbelts themselves, but staff will assist if they are unable to do this and there is no one from their household to assist.
- Minimal baggage should accompany students
- Once at the destination, they should follow local guidance and wash their hands for at least 20 seconds or sanitise their hands as soon as possible.

Please note: Any children not adhering to the social distancing guidelines or advice

from the driver may face a temporary ban on transport as we have a duty of care to the other passengers on the vehicle. Please see the [All Wales Travel Behaviour Code](#).

We also expect parents to educate their children in the new behaviours required to ensure that everyone travels as safely as possible:

- Ensure that your child is given guidance on good management of coughs and sneezes see the [Public Health Wales](#) guidance.
- Make sure that your child can safely remove any face coverings and gloves they are wearing and that they also have appropriate PPE to wear on return journeys Any PPE to be disposed should be done by following local guidance
- If your child starts displaying coronavirus symptoms while at their setting, they should be collected by a member of their family or household as soon as possible and The Corporate Transport Unit should be informed immediately by phoning 01597 826678 in order to track and trace other service users who may have come into contact with a potentially infectious person
- Where a student is collected from a home address and needs to wear a seatbelt, ideally a member from the child's household should assist with this if the child cannot fasten the seatbelt themselves. Where possible, students should be taught to fasten their own seatbelts to help maintain social-distancing on board transport, but staff will assist if required.
- **Getting onto the bus to go to school** - Learners must follow instructions given to them by drivers and staff. Passengers are will be asked to occupy rearmost seats first while conforming to social distancing and drivers, where safe and appropriate, will vacate their seats before passengers board. Learners should stay in their seats and use the same seat on the return journey home.
- **Getting onto the bus to return home** - every effort will be made to load passengers in reverse of drop off order (ie last drop off on first, etc) and use the same seat (if possible) that they used to go to school in the morning.

If you are driving your children to school:

- Ensure your child has washed their hands for at least 20 seconds or sanitised them before going to school
- Where people from different households need to use a vehicle at the same time, good ventilation (keeping the car windows open) and facing away from each other may help to reduce the risk of transmission
- Make sure you have contacted your school for any special details of drop off/pick up areas or times.
- To reduce the risk of transmission, please refrain from gathering with other parents once at school.

Please contact Corporate Transport Unit by email at buses@powys.gov.uk if your child no longer requires home to school transport.

