



**SEN Travel Enablement**  
Gloucestershire County Council  
Shire Hall, Westgate Street  
Gloucester, GL1 2TP

August 2020

Dear Parent/carer

**Re: Home to School Transport for SEN students as schools return in September 2020**

As your child will be returning to school in September I am aware that many of you have questions regarding what their home to school transport will 'look' like in respect of managing the implications of Coronavirus.

The provision of home to school transport in September is being planned in accordance with the latest government guidance '**Transport to school and other places of education: autumn term 2020**', published on 11<sup>th</sup> August 2020. This guidance was developed with advice from Public Health England (PHE) and the Health and safety Executive (HSE). It is possible that our plans may have to change if further guidance is issued but we will continue to keep this document updated. In the meantime, we are making arrangements now to ensure we can transport all eligible children with additional needs to school in September.

The government's aim is for all young people to return to school full time from the start of the autumn term. Guidance for full opening of schools states that social distancing requirements will not be compulsory from the autumn term on dedicated home to school transport as young people 'do not mix with the general public on those journeys and (passengers) tend to be consistent'.

We have been working closely with special school Heads and understand that many schools will be operating in 'bubbles' or zones in September. We will support school 'bubbles' by ensuring any vehicle we use only transports children to one school, but this may include children from another group within the school.

Whilst we will endeavour to keep passenger numbers as low as possible on each vehicle, there is no guarantee that social distancing can be maintained. We will however, adhere to safer travel principles as outlined by the government (please see further details regarding hygiene protocols below) to minimise the risk of infection. We hope this is helpful information for you to consider your child's needs in light of this.

Please note, however, that where contracts came to their natural end in July, routes will be re-tendered for September so there may be a new transport operator taking your child to school from the start of term. You will be advised in advance if there will be any changes and a home visit will be carried out. As a result of this, passengers should be prepared that they may not see the same driver, vehicle, passenger assistant or travelling companions that they are familiar with from before lockdown.



To lower the risk of the transmission of Coronavirus, the following measures will be in place:

- The law regarding wearing face coverings does not apply on dedicated school transport. However, passengers, drivers and passenger assistants are strongly advised to wear face coverings and two washable, re-usable face masks will be provided to each passenger. Whilst highly recommended, wearing a face covering is not mandatory as we understand that some students with additional needs will not tolerate this
- Wherever possible windows on the vehicles will be kept open to aid ventilation and strict hygiene protocols will be in place
- We will endeavour to keep the same passenger assistant (where applicable) and driver on each vehicle so that your child is in contact with a limited number of people each day. However this cannot be guaranteed due to their own shielding requirements and other factors
- Vehicles will be cleaned thoroughly after each use using standard cleaning products such as detergents and bleach. Particular attention will be paid to door handles, handrails, windows and any other surface which will be frequently touched.
- Any equipment kept on the vehicle for the safety or comfort of your child will be cleaned and disinfected twice a day by the passenger assistant. Such items may include the car seat framework, seatbelt clips, books and toys. Any object which cannot be thoroughly cleaned will be removed from the vehicles

If your child is showing symptoms of C-19 such as a new and persistent cough, a high temperature or a loss of taste or smell, or if a member of your household is showing these symptoms, your child must not board school transport and must stay at home.

Passenger assistants are very often required to work in close proximity with and to physically assist passengers for example: hand holding, putting seatbelts on, handling belongings. For the safety of both parties in this situation passenger assistants may use personal protective equipment (PPE) in the form of face masks, gloves, aprons and hand sanitiser if appropriate for the young person they are supporting.

Where a suspected case of C-19 is identified during transport operation, families will be notified and the vehicle will be removed from service pending a deep clean. Where a suspected case of C-19 is identified at school, or a child has come into contact with someone who has tested positive or who may have been exposed to C-19, it will be the responsibility of the parent/carer to collect their child.

I would like to thank you in advance for your co-operation in ensuring the safest possible transport is available for your child, their passenger assistants, drivers and school staff during these challenging times.

We understand that parents, carers and children may remain apprehensive, and you might choose to make your own home to/from school travel arrangements in the short term. If this is the case it would be helpful if you could keep us informed of your plans.

Should you have any further questions or concerns, please email [sen.transport@gloucestershire.gov.uk](mailto:sen.transport@gloucestershire.gov.uk) and we will be happy to discuss them with you.

Yours faithfully

Delia O'Connor  
SEN Travel Enablement Manager