



Coronavirus (Covid-19) Emergency Guidance for Parents and Pupils - Use of School Transport from 29 June 2020

In response to the global Coronavirus/Covid-19 pandemic emergency, the Welsh Government closed schools in mid-March 2020 to all pupils, apart from the children of key workers.

On 3 June 2020 the Welsh Minister for Education announced that Schools will reopen from 29 June for all year groups to allow pupils to 'Check in, catch up and prepare for Summer and September'. Pupils will attend schools in small groups due to social distancing and it is anticipated that no school will have any more than a third of pupils in school at any one time.

The plans outlined below set out how school transport in Swansea will resume and these plans will be updated subject to further Government guidance and re-circulated as the return to school programme progresses. This guidance should be read and adopted by all pupils who use School Transport services provided by the Council.

Parents and Pupils should be aware of general Government advice stating that we should keep our distance from people outside our households. Public Health Wales recommends keeping a distance of 2 metres where possible. They say that the key thing is to not be too close to other people for more than a short amount of time, as much as you can. The risk of infection increases the closer you are to another person with the virus and the amount of time you spend in close contact: you are very unlikely to be infected from just walking past another person.

They also state that if you need to be near other people you should avoid physical contact, try to face away from other people, and keep the time you spend near other people as short as possible. You should also be aware of the surfaces you or others touch.

Welsh Government Guidance to assist you in preparing to resume using school transport services can be found using the links below:

<https://gov.wales/travelling-safely-coronavirus-guidance-public>

The sections below set out the procedures that should be followed when travelling on School Transport:

- **Appendix A** - School Transport Services for mainstream pupils
- **Appendix B** - School Transport Services for pupils with Additional Learning Needs (Special Needs)

These procedures have been developed based on latest Government Guidance and the risk assessments undertaken by Council Health & Safety and Transport Officers.

If you have any queries please contact the Council's School Transport Team

Email : School.transport@swansea.gov.uk
Phone: 01792 636347/636348 (transport for Mainstream pupils)
 01792 636328/636593 (transport for ALN pupils)

Parent and Pupil Guidance - School Transport Services for Mainstream Pupils

1. Measures to avoid the Spread of Covid 19

- Where possible, Parents/Carers should travel with their children to and from school, ideally on foot, or by bike, scooter or any other means of active travel.
- Parents/Carers can if they wish to do so temporarily opt-out of the school transport contract and take their child to and from school themselves.
- Parents/Carers will not send their child to school if they develop Covid19 symptoms. Parents/Carers will follow school absence protocol
- If their child or a member of the same household displays COVID symptoms they will self-isolate as per Public Health Wales (PHW) or NHS guidelines.
- If their child develops symptoms at school parents will collect their child and take them home as soon as possible and self-isolate as per PHW or NHS guidelines
- Pupils will continue to adhere to Swansea Council's 'Home to School Transport Code of Conduct'
- Parents/Carers will advise their children to cover their mouth and nose with a tissue or their elbow when coughing or sneezing when away from the household e.g. on school transport vehicle; at school;
- When boarding or alighting the vehicle pupils should be mindful of the following:
 - Be aware of the surfaces they touch. Try to touch as few surfaces as possible. Use hand sanitizer if they do.
 - Be careful not to touch their face. Carry tissues and cover their mouth with a tissue when coughing or sneezing or use something else like the elbow of their sleeve if they have forgotten any tissues, to minimise the spread of droplets.
 - Wash their hands or use hand sanitizer at the start and end of their journey.

2. Measures to Ensure Social Distancing

a. At Pick up and drop off points

- Parents/Carers will advise their child of the COVID19 requirements of social distancing and regularly washing hands requirement
- Social distancing must be maintained wherever reasonably practicable to reduce the risk of the spread of the COVID-19 virus this includes waiting at the designated bus stop. Social distancing at the pickup and drop off point should be maintained wherever possible.
- Pupils should queue in single file observing the 2m social distance when boarding or alighting the vehicle.
- Parents/Carers and pupils should act considerately to other passengers by being prepared to queue and respect other people's space when boarding or alighting.
- At the drop off points on the journey home pupils will alight the bus one by one at a social distance, under the supervision of the driver, with those at the front of the vehicle alighting first.

- With the controlled reduction in passengers using school transport, social distancing within the vehicle is achievable. The wearing of a face covering is optional and is a decision for the parent/carer to make, as face coverings are not suitable for everyone e.g. young children; asthma sufferers, those with a hearing impairment, as it may inadvertently increase risk or transmission.
- Pupils can wear their own face covers when using school transport if they choose to. It is important that parents; pupils and school staff understand that other measures such as social distancing and regular washing of hands remains of critical importance and should not be relaxed when wearing a face covering
- Pupils from the same household can sit next to each other on the vehicle if they choose to.

b. On the journey to and from School.

To accommodate social distancing within the vehicle the following controls will be in operation:

- Reduction in the number of pupils allowed onto the school bus e.g. 49 seater bus will accommodate up to 12 passengers dependant on seating layout.
- Increasing the number of journeys to fit with staggered school opening/closing times.
- Use of more vehicles.
- One seat in each row in a zig zag fashion will be available and others will be 'out of user'. These will be taped off or marked appropriately.
- Pupils should only sit on the available designated seats.
- Information signage will be displayed on the vehicle.
- Social distancing should be maintained with any interaction between vehicle staff and pupils during the journey. In incidents where this is not possible, contact will be kept to a short amount of time as much as possible and appropriate PPE will be worn.
- Pupils will continue to adhere to Swansea Council's 'Home to School Transport Code of Conduct'
- The driver will monitor pupil behaviour and communicate with pupils from the driver's seat to reaffirm good behaviour and social distancing message. Where available communication via the drivers on board hand held radio.
- Pupils to be advised to cover their mouth and nose with a tissue or their elbow when coughing or sneezing.
- Driver will ensure there is good ventilation within the bus during the journey
- If a pupil becomes ill on the journey to school the driver will advise the school so that arrangements for parental collection can be made. At the school social distancing should continue wherever possible to prevent the spread of the infection.
- If a pupil becomes ill on the journey home, dependant on the circumstances the driver will ensure the pupils safety at the drop off point..

c. Pick up and drop off at School

- Transport Contractor will ensure adherence to the school drop off and pick up arrangements.

- To aid social distancing for pupils boarding or alighting school transport, schools may stagger their opening and closing times.
- At school drop off:
 - The driver or passenger assistant will remind pupils to keep to social distancing when leaving the bus.
 - Pupils will be told to leave in an orderly fashion, one at a time, keeping to social distancing requirements
 - Pupils nearest the front will leave the vehicle first with other pupils leaving sequentially. The pupil sitting at the back will be the last person to leave the bus.
- At School pick up :
- Pupils who are to be dropped off last will get on first and sit at the rear of the vehicle so that those who live nearest the school will sit in the seats nearest the front of the vehicle.

3. Cleaning

- The school transport contractor will ensure cleaning is undertaken as per Welsh Government Guidance:
 - Identify high risk areas within the vehicle that are likely to be touched regularly e.g. handrails; door handles; push button for door opening, seatbelts.
 - Increase the cleaning/disinfection of identified 'Touch' points. As a minimum this should be undertaken before and after every journey.
 - Vehicle daily clean as per normal procedure
 - Vehicle deep clean – weekly
 - Spillage kit to be kept on the vehicle to aid in cleaning up bodily fluids e.g. vomit
 - Sanitizer spray/wipes kept on the vehicle
 - Clean fuel pumps before and after use.
 - Clean vehicle keys before and after handling.

Parent and Pupil Guidance - School Transport Services for Pupils with Additional Learning Needs (Special Needs)

1. Measures to avoid the Spread of Covid 19

- Parents/Carers will not send their child to school if they develop Covid19 symptoms. Parents/Carers will follow school absence protocol
- If their child or a member of the same household displays COVID symptoms they should self-isolate as per Public Health Wales (PHW) or NHS guidelines.
- If their child develops symptoms at school, parents/carers will collect their child and take them home as soon as possible and self-isolate as per PHW or NHS guidelines
- Pupils will continue to adhere to Swansea Council's 'Home to School Transport Code of Conduct
- Parents/Carers can, if they wish to do so, temporarily opt-out of the school transport contract and take their child to and from school themselves.
- The wearing of a face covering is optional. Face coverings are not suitable for everyone e.g. young children; those with special educational needs or disabilities e.g. hearing impairment. It is important that parents; pupils and school staff understand that other measures such as social distancing and regular washing of hands remains of critical importance and should not be relaxed when wearing a face covering
- Where possible to aid understanding, parents and the school will encourage children:
 - to cover their mouth and nose with a tissue or their elbow when coughing or sneezing when away from the household e.g. in school, taxi/mini bus
 - use a tissue or elbow to cough or sneeze and use bins for tissue waste ('catch it, bin it, kill it')
 - not to touch their mouth, eyes and nose
 - to wash their hands on arrival at school, before and after eating, and after sneezing or coughing
- At school, staff will assist those pupils who have trouble cleaning their hands independently.

2. Measures to Ensure Social Distancing

a. On the Vehicle

To aid social distancing the Council will:

- Not use 5 seater saloon type vehicles for transporting ALN Pupils unless the 2m social distancing can be achieved.
- Limit passengers to 1 pupil per car-type vehicle.
- Use larger vehicles such as multipurpose vehicles (MPV); people carriers; London type taxis, to transport pupils with ALN.

- Use vehicles with tail lifts e.g. mini buses, to transport passengers who use battery operated wheelchairs, which tend to be larger and heavier than standard wheelchairs.
- Increase the number of journeys where required to fit with staggered school opening/closing times.
- The first pupil will be seated and secured into the back passenger seat of the vehicle. Seating on the left or right passenger seat will depend on the design of the vehicle; number of seating rows within the vehicle and consideration of the seating of the passenger assistant to ensure as far as is practicable the 2m social distance within the vehicle. For example;
 - In London style taxis the passenger assistant can sit on the small seat behind the driver (who is protected by a plastic partition) and the pupil can sit on the left in the back seat
 - For MPV or people carrier type taxis, passengers can sit in a zig zag in the 2 rows of seats behind the driver.
- Passenger assistants must be seated in the back of the vehicle with the pupil to fulfil their caring/ supervisory role.
- Where 2m social distancing cannot be achieved or the passenger assistant needs to intervene with a specific in-journey incident, appropriate PPE will be worn e.g. Face Mask, disposable gloves

b. Pick up and drop off at School

- At the home pick up the driver/passenger assistant can establish with the parent the COVID health status of the pupil and family. If the pupil is showing symptoms of COVID the driver will inform the parent and school they cannot transport them.
- For pick up and drop off at the home, where possible, parents will be responsible for the safe boarding and alighting of their child in and out of the vehicle.
- The driver/passenger assistant is responsible for securing wheelchairs within the vehicle on boarding and alighting the vehicle.
- Pick up and drop off to school will require the passenger assistant to hand over or collect the pupil directly to a member of staff at the school site. Dependant on the support required by the pupil e.g. holding their hand; pushing their wheelchair, good hand hygiene will be undertaken before and after the drop off task. Washing hands for a minimum of 20 seconds; or the use of hand sanitiser is effective. The same hand hygiene will apply even if the transport provider supplies their staff with disposable gloves.
- Where possible, drivers; passenger assistants and school staff will keep to the 2m social distance during pick up and drop off at school to minimise adult to adult contact. Where this is not possible appropriate PPE will be worn e.g. face mask
- Where possible pupils should be encouraged to buckle and unbuckle their own seatbelt. Where this is not possible for example when transporting ALN pupils with complex needs who need support to access the vehicle or fasten seatbelts the passenger assistant will support the pupil and appropriate PPE will be worn

c. On the Journey to and from School

- Social distancing should remain with any interaction between the driver, passenger assistant and pupil during the journey. In incidents where this is not possible and dependant on the circumstances, contact will be kept as short as possible and appropriate PPE will be worn.
- Pupils must continue to adhere to Swansea Council's 'Home to School Transport Code of Conduct'
- Pupils to be advised to cover their mouth and nose with a tissue or their elbow when coughing or sneezing.
- Driver will ensure there is good ventilation within the vehicle during the journey
- If a pupil becomes ill on the journey to school the driver will advise the school so that arrangements for parental collection can be made. If a pupil becomes ill on the journey home the driver will advise the parent. Dependant on the circumstances social distancing should continue wherever possible to prevent the spread of the infection or if this is not possible staff should wear suitable PPE e.g. disposable gloves; apron; FRSM.

3. Cleaning

- The school transport contractor will ensure cleaning is undertaken as per Welsh Government guidance:
 - Drivers should clean surfaces that are likely to be touched by the passenger e.g. door handles, window winders, seat belts, the rear of the front seats and other surface the passenger(s) may have touched or coughed/sneezed on, after each passenger journey. The driver should then wash/sanitise their own hands after cleaning.
 - A thorough clean of the vehicle with normal cleaning products should be completed at the end of each shift/working day.
 - Spillage kit to be kept on the vehicle to aid in cleaning up bodily fluids e.g. vomit
 - Use sanitiser wipes to clean fuel pumps before and after use.
 - Clean vehicle keys before and after handling.
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