

Covid-19 – Guidance in Safer Working for Home to School Transport

The Government has produced updated guidance for transport operators operating during the current period, although it may of course be updated before or after the 1st June. It is very difficult to adhere to social distancing guidelines on transport, particularly in taxis and where Passenger Assistants are required. All other forms of transport should be considered before using public transport. Therefore we understand that many families may prefer for their children to be transported to school over the coming weeks by a member of the same household and this is the safest way for the child to attend school. If the parental preference is to get their own children to school, then to facilitate this, families will be able to access petrol reimbursement. Where Home to School Transport is taken by families, it comes with the understanding that social distancing may not be possible at all times.

This guidance is based on the latest national guidance and may be updated in the future following any further national guidance publications. This guidance comes from a summary of the relevant information contained in the Department for Transport and Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy publications ‘Coronavirus (COVID-19): Safer transport – guidance for operators’ (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-safer-transport-guidance-for-operators/coronavirus-covid-19-safer-transport-guidance-for-operators>), ‘Working safely during coronavirus (COVID-19) in or from a vehicle’ (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19/vehicles>) and ‘Coronavirus (COVID-19): Safer travel guidance for passengers’ (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-safer-travel-guidance-for-passengers>). It should be used when assessing any risk to drivers, passenger assistants and passengers on routes to and from education establishments and day centres alongside these Government publications.

Public Health England (PHE) recommends trying to keep 2 metres away from people, where possible, as a precaution. However, this is not a rule and the science is complex. It is recognised that compliance with the ‘2 metre social distancing rule’ is impossible on transport in most cases, but action must be taken to minimise any risk.

It is important to bear in mind that service providers have a duty to ensure that individuals with a protected characteristic, such as a physical disability or learning difficulties, are not disadvantaged in any way, as all equality and discrimination law continues to apply. It is, therefore, necessary to ensure that any action taken as a result of assessments do not disproportionately impact those with protected characteristics. It is also essential to ensure that any measures taken as a result of attempting to increase protection against the Covid-19 pandemic do not result in non-compliance with Health and Safety legislation.

Using the government guidance on safer travel, transport providers should assess the risk present in each of the routes that they operate taking account of the needs and nature of every passenger on that route, coupled with the factors contained in the guidance below.

Guidance for Operators, Drivers and Passenger Assistants

- If a driver / passenger assistant or anyone within their household displays any symptoms of Covid-19 then they must not be placed on Home to School Transport and must isolate for the advised period.
- Advise families that if the parental preference is to get their own children to school, then to facilitate this, families will be able to access petrol reimbursement and they should contact the TCC at passenger.transport@surreycc.gov.uk.
- Reduce the number of people each person has contact with by using 'fixed teams or partnering' (so each person works with as few others as possible).
- Wearing a face covering may be marginally beneficial as a precautionary measure. Drivers and Passenger Assistants must, where safe to do so, wear face coverings. Government guidance does not encourage the precautionary use of extra personal protective equipment (PPE) to protect against coronavirus outside of clinical settings or when responding to a suspected or confirmed case.
- Minimise physical contact and keep as much distance from passengers, and between passengers, as possible. Apply social distancing as best possible with the space allowed.
- Where social distancing is not possible, keep time in close proximity to others to a minimum, avoiding face-to-face contact.
- Where possible, alter seating arrangements to ensure as much distance as possible between vehicle occupants. This may include: In a car, maximise separation for example by seating a single passenger in back left hand seat; in buses and coaches block off seats that are in close proximity to the driver; remove any face-to-face seating; use floor tape, signs or paint in passenger areas to help people keep 2 metres, or as far as possible, apart, always keeping in mind the particular needs of each passenger.
- Consider the use of screens or barriers where possible.
- Supplying standard cleaning products for regular cleaning and making sure there are adequate disposal arrangements for used cleaning products.
- Carry a supply of tissues and sanitizer in the vehicle – if sanitiser is not available then please take soap and bottles of water.
- Using disinfectant or similar cleansing agent, clean any part of the vehicle that has come into contact with a passenger as soon as possible after completing the journey, with particular attention to touch points (for example buttons to open doors, hand rails and other parts of the vehicle likely to have been handled).
- Wash hands thoroughly before each journey and as soon as possible after completing the journey or the vehicle clean.
- Where possible, ensure that a fresh air supply is consistently flowing through the vehicle, by opening windows where possible and safe to do so, again always keeping in mind the particular needs of each individual passenger.

- Consider the boarding and alighting arrangements taking in to account where passengers should be seated to minimise passing or contact, and direct passengers / families on where they should be seated.
- Be careful not to touch your face after touching any surface, or any article belonging to a passenger.
- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or your elbow when coughing or sneezing.

Guidance for Passengers and Families

- If a passenger or anyone within the household displays any symptoms of Covid-19 then they must not be placed on Home to School Transport and must isolate for the advised period
- Consider all other forms of transport before taking Home to School transport. If the parental preference is to get their own children to school, then to facilitate this, families will be able to access petrol reimbursement and they should contact the TCC at passenger.transport@surreycc.gov.uk.
- Wearing a face covering may be marginally beneficial as a precautionary measure. We strongly recommend that where possible and safe to do so passengers wear a face covering.
- Some passenger’s needs may mean that it is unsafe to operate transport – for instance where passengers display behaviours such as spitting, etc. In this circumstance Surrey County Council will consider if it is appropriate to provide transport.
- Families will be expected to assist the passenger to board / alight the vehicle, seat the passenger and fix seatbelts where necessary.
- Follow the advice of the driver.

HAZARD	FOR WHO?	LOW / MED / HIGH	ACTIONS TAKEN TO MITIGATE
Unable to socially distance	Driver / PA / Passenger	HIGH	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arrange seating plan to maximise space between passengers, driver and PA. • Use of fixed teams of staff. • Face coverings to be worn by drivers/PAs and encouraged to be worn by passengers, where safe to do so. • Ensure that a fresh air supply is consistently flowing through the vehicle where possible. • Touch points (door handles, arm rests, etc.) cleaned after every trip. Seats sprayed with disinfectant.

Boarding & alighting	Driver / PA / Passenger	MED	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider the boarding and alighting arrangements taking in to account where passengers should be seated to minimise passing or contact • Driver to direct passengers / families on where they should be seated. • Driver to open / close car door and ensure regular cleaning of touch points. • Families / school staff seat the passenger where necessary – with the exception of wheelchair users. • Sanitizer and disinfectant available in the vehicle. • Touch points (door handles, arm rests, etc.) cleaned after every trip. Seats sprayed with disinfectant.
Fitting of car seat / equipment	PA / Passenger	HIGH	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Families / school staff to be responsible for fitting of seat belts where necessary – with the exception of wheelchair users. • Drivers and PA's to endeavour to face away from passenger when fitting harnesses / securing wheelchairs.
Accident	Driver / PA / Passenger	LOW	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If alighting the vehicle is required, ensure passengers are moved to a safe place and social distancing measures are followed where possible.
Transporting a passenger home that has started displaying Coronavirus symptoms whilst at School	Driver / PA	HIGH	<p>Should do one of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use a vehicle with a bulkhead • The driver and passenger should maintain a distance of 2 metres from each other

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