

Home to School Transport for Pupils with Special Educational Needs & Disabilities (SEND)

Important information for parents, carers and pupils about COVID-19 measures

September 2020

The COVID-19 situation means that the way your child travels to school in September will need to change.

You may have already responded to a survey and be making your travel plans for September. Derbyshire County Council has been working hard with schools and colleges across Derbyshire in planning for the wider opening of schools in September. This information is based on government guidance at the time of going to print. We will be updating the relevant changes on our website. We hope you find this guidance useful in helping you to plan how your child is going to travel to school from September onwards.

If it is possible for your child to be able to travel to school safely by accompanied walking or by car, we would encourage them to do so. Where this is not possible, school transport will continue to be provided for entitled pupils in line with the latest Government guidance.

Some children or young people with SEND may not be able to understand or adhere to the expectations in this guidance. We would ask that parents and carers do all they can to try and explain to them within their level of understanding and reinforce/practice on a regular basis where possible. An easy read version of this leaflet is available to download from derbyshire.gov.uk/septschooltransport

The vast majority of SEND journeys occur on dedicated vehicles where there are no members of the public travelling. Many are single occupancy journeys where there is just one student and a passenger assistant in the vehicle. In these situations, the risk of virus transmission is low if control measures are followed.

There are however, a significant number of services where larger groups of pupils travel together, typically in a minibus with one or more of the pupils being a wheelchair user. In this scenario, it is likely that these children will have been travelling together for some time and with increased controls where possible, the county council will look to provide these mixed year groups travelling together. If numbers are too large to ensure safe distancing, we will look to provide additional vehicles, however this may not always be possible given the availability of vehicles, drivers and trained passenger assistants.

Operators are working hard to ensure that preventative measures are in place to ensure maximum safety, such as the removal of face to face seating and reduced numbers on some services. In line with national guidance, the following control measures will be in place on all school transport services.

What we will do

- Derbyshire County Council will issue updated safety guidance about home to school and college transport to all taxi and bus operators
- The county council will issue the expectations on home to school transport to all schools and colleges before September
- Transport operators will have an enhanced vehicle cleaning programme in place
- Transport operators will provide a hand sanitiser in the vehicles for those who are able to use it although it would be helpful if your child has their own sanitiser as well as some tissues in case they need to cough or sneeze
- Windows will be open to improve ventilation where possible and weather dependent
- Drivers and passenger assistants are not required to wear a face covering but some may choose to do so dependent upon their own company risk assessments and the individual requirements of some children
- There are considerable challenges around staggered opening times including the limited availability of vehicles and drivers and the rural locations of many of Derbyshire's pupils. Therefore all routes will operate in September 2020 as normal pre-Covid 19 timetables – there will be no staggered arrival or departure arrangements for any school or setting
- Drivers will be required to do what they reasonably can in terms of promoting Covid-19 safety measures on their vehicles, however they will not be expected to enforce seating plans, or the wearing of face coverings if worn, as they have to concentrate on the road

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- Drivers will report any safety concerns to the school or to their manager so that appropriate action can be taken.

What will be expected of your child

- Your child must not travel if
 - They are experiencing any Covid-19 symptoms
 - They are self-isolating as a result of Covid-19 symptoms or sharing a household or bubble with somebody with symptoms
 - They are clinically extremely vulnerable and live in an area where additional public health measures mean they have been advised to resume shielding
 - They have been advised by the NHS test and trace service that they should self-isolate
- There are a number of children and young people who may have legitimate reasons not to wear a face covering. These include those who:
 - have a physical or mental condition or impairment
 - have a disability that means they cannot put on, wear or remove a face covering
 - if putting on or wearing a face covering would cause severe distress
 - if travelling with, or providing help to, someone who relies on lip reading to communicate. Further information about all exemptions can be found at:

www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-safer-travel-guidance-for-passengers#exemptions-face-coverings

- If possible, your child should wash their hands for at least 20 seconds or sanitise their hands both before the journey and as soon as possible after the journey when they get into school or home
- Where possible, your child should be encouraged to have their own sanitiser as well as some tissues in case they need to cough or sneeze (if they don't have tissues but need to sneeze or cough, they should do this into the crook of their elbow, to protect the other passengers in the vehicles)
- Where possible, your child should sit with children or young people from within their "bubble"
- Your child should sit facing forwards and not turn around to talk to their friends
- Your child should try not to shout, talk loudly or sing, as this may help spread the virus
- Where possible, your child should sit in the same seat each day
- Where possible, your child should avoid touching anything other than their own possessions.

And finally

This is a challenging time for everyone. Every effort will be made to resolve issues as they arise and to adapt services in accordance with any changes to Government advice. Everyone's co-operation would be greatly appreciated.

This is the latest information at the time of going to print and is based on Government advice. We regularly update our website at derbyshire.gov.uk/septschooltransport with the latest information for parents.

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