**Coronavirus (Covid-19) Emergency**

**Guidance for Parents and Pupils - Use of School Transport**

**from 3rd September 2020**

On 9 July 2020 the Welsh Minister for Education announced that Schools will reopen in September 2020 with 100% of pupils physically present on school sites.

The plans outlined below set out how school transport in Neath Port Talbot will resume, 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>

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 : passengertransport@npt.gov.uk

Phone: 01639 686939 - 686095 (transport for Mainstream pupils)

 01639 686657- 686093 (transport for ALN pupils)

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

**Measures to avoid the Spread of Covid 19**

* + Parents/Carers will not send their child to school if they develop Covid19 symptoms.
	+ 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 Neath Port Talbot 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.
	+ Face covering must be used by pupils over 11years old and is optional for younger pupils. 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. Proof of exemption will be required for pupils over 11 years old. Face coverings will be made available at the school early in the autumn term.
	+ When the face covering is not being used the parents should provide a suitable sealable bag for storage of the face covering
	+ Parents should be mindful of the need for more than one face covering per day if they are the single use disposable type
	+ 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

**2. Measures to Ensure Social Distancing**

1. **On the Vehicle**
* 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 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.
	+ 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 to be made. If a pupil becomes ill on the journey home the driver will advise the parent or Passenger Transport who will then contact the parent/carer. 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.