**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.

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 for Mainstream School Transport**

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 will self-isolate as per Public Health Wales (PHW) or NHS guidelines.

Parents/Carers will advise their child of the COVID19 requirements of social distancing and regularly washing hands requirement

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.

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 Neath Port Talbot ‘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~~.~~

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 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.

1. **Guidance**

**a. At Pick up and drop off points**

* 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.
* Pupils will be seated on a last on first off arrangement where the pupils travelling the farthest will be seated toward the rear of 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.
* Face covering must be used by pupils over 11years old in secondary schools and is optional for younger pupils and is a decision for the parent/carer to make, as face coverings are not suitable for everyone e.g. young children; asthma suffers, those with a hearing impairment, as it may inadvertently increase risk or transmission. 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.

* 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
* 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

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**b. On the journey to School**

* 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 and appropriate PPE will be worn by drivers and passenger assistants.
* Pupils will continue to adhere to Neath Port Talbots Council’s ‘Home to School Transport Code of Conduct’
* The driver and or passenger assistant will monitor pupil behaviour and communicate with pupils to reaffirm good behaviour and social distancing message.
* 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 the driver to contact passenger transport who will then contact the parent/carer to arrange safe transfer.

**c. Pick up and drop off at School**

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