

Learner Transport Protocol

September 2020 (mainstream and ALN settings)

Introduction

This protocol sets out expectations and key guidance for parents/carers, their children and for transport contractors and their staff.

The protocol reflects Welsh Government guidance. It can be applied across schools and settings in the county and in colleges, and be used by contractors who provide learner transport.

Please note that this protocol could be affected by changes to national guidance.

Parents and Learners

It is the parents' responsibility:

- (a) To ensure learners do not travel if anyone in the household is symptomatic, in which case the learner(s) shall stay isolated for the prescribed 10 days unless contacted by the Track Trace Protect team (in which case, 14 days).
- (b) To ensure that your child aged 11 or over has a supply of face coverings before travelling each morning and afternoon. Your child aged 11 or over is required to wear a face covering unless medically exempt.
- (c) To acknowledge a zero-tolerance for poor behaviour on transport (to include circumstances where a learner fails to follow instructions given).
- (d) To ensure learners wash their hands (or for younger learners that parents do that for them) or use appropriate-strength sanitiser to the appropriate British Standards thoroughly before leaving their home or school to board their vehicle.
- (e) To remind learners to board and alight transport single file, for those over 11 years of age maintaining a 2m distance at all times, while waiting and queuing.
- (f) To remind learners they must ensure they follow any instructions given by their driver or school/college staff.
- (g) To remind learners that they will be allocated a specific seat on their vehicle and that learners must remain in that seat for their entire journey. There will need to be different arrangements for those travelling on local bus services.
- (h) To remember that the School Travel Code and behaviour framework will continue in operation and any learner that misbehaves, risks or causes damage or injury to the

Transport Protocol

vehicle, driver or passengers or in any way threatens the health & safety of other passengers or vehicle will be subject to an immediate ban from Denbighshire School Transport for the learners involved.

Type of Transport	Dedicated learner transport vehicle	Publicly available bus service
Primary schools	All seats available for use except immediately beside the driver or in taxis where seats are face to face Coverings need not be worn	Not applicable
Secondary schools and colleges	All seats available for use except immediately beside the driver or in taxis where seats are face to face Face coverings are required	Loading in accordance with operator's instructions. Face coverings are required
ALN School settings (primary and secondary)	Face coverings need not be worn	

Transport Protocol

On dedicated school transport vehicles over eight seats, learners will load from back to front and unload from front to back.

Learners who qualify for free transport who travel on local bus services will need to follow the respective operator's instruction.

Use of Face Coverings

These are required for all learners in secondary and tertiary education no matter the vehicle on which they travel.

Your child aged 11 or over is required to wear a three-layer face covering at all times while travelling. It is your responsibility to ensure that your child has a supply of face coverings before travelling each morning and afternoon.

Some learners, however, need not wear a face covering. This includes those for whom doing so would create a medical risk, cause distress, and in some situations where a learner has additional learning needs.

Drivers may wear face coverings if they or their employer feel this is of benefit and where this is individually assessed. Drivers may wish to apply sanitiser frequently.

Where drivers have to assist in the buckling of seat belts for small children or in loading wheelchairs then face coverings alongside the frequent application of hand sanitiser and or use of appropriate gloves may be considered appropriate if instructed by their employing contractor through a risk assessment.

Staying as Safe as Possible

Learners should take the following precautions:

- When 11 or over, keep a 2m distance from people outside of your own household while waiting for your transport
- Face away from other people when waiting for and using transport
- Try to minimise the number of surfaces they touch
- Wash or clean hands with appropriate sanitiser for the prescribed time before boarding transport
- Immediately upon finishing your journey, washing or sanitise hands again as soon as possible
- Ensure that if a child is symptomatic that they do not use transport or attend school
- Ensure your child follows all instructions from drivers and staff, sits and remains in an allocated seat for the duration of the journey
- If the face covering is removed upon leaving the transport it must be placed in the bin provided.
- Have a contingency in place should the transport not arrive (e.g. if a driver is unwell at short notice).

Transport Protocol

If your child develops symptoms at school, you will need to make arrangements for your child to be collected. Symptomatic children shall not be permitted to use learner transport or local bus services.

Expectations for Learners

Learners will board calmly and one at a time, without pushing.

Parents in allowing their children to use learner transport accept and agree to the terms set out in this protocol. Parents will need to share this document with their children and discuss it with them.

On public health grounds, there shall be a zero-tolerance policy regarding behaviour and seating on learner transport, including at stops, at education locations and the boarding and alighting of passengers. Learners who do not comply with these requirements will have their transport withdrawn with immediate effect.

Learners shall comply with the requirements and instruction of school/college staff when on site.

Parents will need to discuss with their children a contingency should a learner at a bus stop not be picked up by the driver (e.g. if the driver has become ill and as a consequence the transport is aborted last minute) or if the child's name is not on the Council's list of those who may travel. Secondary and college learners should ensure that they carry with them their bus passes at all times. Only those who are eligible may use dedicated school transport.

If you have not received a bus pass or confirmatory phone call/letter specifically about your child's transport, your child will not be allocated a seat and will be unable to travel. The driver is under instruction to take only those learners on the list. This is for public health reasons. Please do not allow your child to go out for the vehicle. If you do and if your child is left on the roadside, you will need to ensure your child knows what to do and you should discuss this with your child.

We need to maintain an accurate list of learners to be able to cooperate with the Test Trace Protect procedures and if necessary we shall share your details with the appropriate agencies who help to stop the spread of coronavirus.

Where a child travelling on transport has symptoms, they should not use learner transport or go to school for a 10 day period or 10 days after a positive test. If another member of the household is symptomatic, children using school transport should not travel or go to school for 14 days.

All learners will need to wash their hands thoroughly in accordance with national guidance before leaving their home for the learner transport journey and again in the afternoon at school.

Transport Protocol

If a learner at a bus stop in the morning/inward journey is symptomatic with recognised signs of covid-19 or is presented for travel with indications of covid-19, the driver will need to contact his/her employer before allowing the learner to travel.

If a child becomes symptomatic at school, including during the period immediately after the final bell (i.e. before boarding a learner transport vehicle), learners shall not board the vehicle. Instead, schools will invoke their own policies for virus containment and deal with the learner without their boarding a vehicle. Parents will need to collect their child.

Expectations for Contractors

Contractors will have a revised and enhanced risk assessment and safe systems of work pertaining to the use of vehicles and employment of drivers during coronavirus. The Council has provided a model risk assessment to assist contractors. The contractors' assessment will include good practice at contractors' premises. Contractors shall share their completed assessments with the Council.

In order to reduce the possibility of infection, contractors will normally dedicate the same driver and same vehicle to each contract.

Drivers will consider their own fitness before undertaking each learner transport journey. Drivers are to be aware of their contractors' risk assessments, safe systems of work and national guidance.

On dedicated school transport vehicles over eight seats, drivers will load passengers back to front and must unload from front to back.

For non-service buses or for vehicles without an appropriately approved screen, should operators deem it appropriate, having secured their vehicle, drivers may leave their cab to wait 2m outside the vehicle while learners board and alight. This is recommended. Learners will need to allow the driver to leave by keeping a minimum distance of 2m from the entrance.

To assist with the compliance and enforcement of the above, all vehicles with a capacity of over 16 seats will be fitted with operational CCTV. Contractors shall notify the Council if this not the case. Failure to provide a vehicle with such working equipment shall result in the application of financial deductions as specified under the Conditions of Contract.

Parking at establishments and settings will be at the direction of schools and colleges.

Schools will be encouraged to ensure there are appropriate numbers of staff available to meet vehicles/leaners and upon arrival staff will escort learners from the vehicle to the building and, for the afternoon return, from the building to the contract vehicle in boarding order.

Transport Protocol

While on education premises as elsewhere, drivers shall remain a minimum of 2m from all other drivers and staff.

Vehicles should be naturally ventilated by use of opened windows or where available roof lights rather than climate control, air conditioning or forced air systems that recirculate air. Drivers of coaches that do not allow openable windows should ensure air conditioning is not set to recirculate air.

Schools may require staggered start and finish times, with arrivals expected to observe strict time slots. Local authorities and schools will inform contractors accordingly. Drivers should be instructed not to prejudice these times by waiting at stops (for late learners), and the contractor should notify the transport staff immediately if specified arrival times cannot be adhered to.

Cleaning

Contractors will ensure all vehicles are thoroughly cleaned once a day to a standard above that usually undertaken. Surfaces requiring special attention include steering wheel; handbrake, switchgear and fascia; door handles (inside and out); window handles/buttons; seats and hard surfaces around seats that have been occupied.

Normal cleaning products are sufficient for the purpose, including easily disposed of disinfectant wipes, though “fogging” remains a preferred and additional method of cleaning.

Additionally, contractors will ensure that all internal and external touch points are wiped down between trips.

Drivers should wash hands frequently or use a suitable sanitiser gel can that should be a minimum of 70 per cent alcohol. Drivers must not leave cleaning products/sanitiser where passengers can reach them.

Seatbelts

Wherever possible, learners should be responsible for buckling their own seat belts. This may not always be possible for young children or those with specific additional needs. In such circumstances, where a pick up is at a home address, parents should ensure their children are safely buckled. A member of the school staff should do so at school.

The contractual responsibility nevertheless continues to rest with drivers and, where a driver would be expected to assist contractors, contractors should assess how drivers do this and what additional steps are required as a result.

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