

Information for Mainstream Schools Regarding School Transport for September | Guidance relating to Covid-19

With reference to government guidelines and based on discussions with Children's Services, schools, and colleagues in other local authorities, Dorset Travel will be providing educational transport based on the following principles:

One route one school (OROS)

Each school will be treated as a social bubble, even if the schools are very closely located. The result of this is that school transport vehicles will not be allowed to drop off and pick up at more than one school. This policy may require provision of additional vehicles.

There may be exceptions for schools with more than one site location, eg where siblings are travelling to different schools, or where other conditions cannot be met (eg Passenger Assistant cover) due to the OROS approach.

Use of closed school routes

Most of our school routes are already 'closed' routes in that they do not pick up members of the paying public. However, some routes that are primarily for school pupils in the west of Dorset, are also open to the public. We have requested the operator of these routes – to deregister these routes and turn them into closed routes. This on the basis that they only carry a very small number of public passengers and closing the vehicles will allow them to operate at normal capacity (unlike public routes where social distancing applies).

Social distancing will not be required on closed school routes due to the fact that the passengers are all part of a school social bubble and so the risks of COVID are deemed less. This is in line with the latest guidance from the government. However, having no special social distancing measures on closed routes will be mitigated by:

- Good hygiene/cleaning on the vehicle
- Good ventilation in the vehicle
- Consistent driver used on each route where possible
- No face to face seating
- Students wearing face coverings – highly recommended
- Students use the same seats and stay within their year groups as much as possible – highly recommended
- Orderly pick up and drop off protocols – will require cooperation from the school
- No standing or unnecessary moving around on the vehicle
- Students carry their own hand sanitiser/wipes – highly recommended
- Operators provide some safe means of disposal for any tissues, wipes or masks on the vehicle



- Ensuring that any student - either with symptoms or living with someone with symptoms - does not travel on transport to school

It should be understood that the driver will not be able to police the above arrangements and that cooperation of students, schools and parents will be needed to ensure safe travel.

Use of public transport

At present our policy is to use public transport where possible, but adhere to the need for social distancing (1m plus), wearing of masks, plus other mitigating factors (see above)

However, the lack of capacity on public transport is likely to require duplicate vehicles. Students travelling on public routes will be socially distanced from other students and the travelling public, but will not be part of any identifiable social bubble.

Where a school route is also registered as a public route, it may be possible to deregister the route – where there are very few members of the public travelling (see use of closed routes above)

No staggered start and finish times

The integrated arrangement between public and closed routes in the current contract makes it very difficult to accommodate bespoke start and finish times at schools. This is especially so in a rural county such as Dorset where public routes do not always run very frequently. Closer to the time or where the school transport is on a very limited scale, it may be possible to make some adjustments, but at the moment, we cannot give any guarantees on this.