

Schools and colleges are reopening for all pupils following the Coronavirus pandemic. We know how important it is that your child can get to and from school or college as safely as possible. We are closely following the Government's guidance and working with school transport providers and local bus companies to make this possible. This guide will help you understand how your child can get to school or college safely.

**If your child or anyone in your household has symptoms of Coronavirus (a new continuous cough, a high temperature or a loss of/change in your sense of smell or taste) you must stay at home and arrange to get a test. Visit [www.durham.gov.uk/covid19TestandTrace](http://www.durham.gov.uk/covid19TestandTrace) to find out more.**

**Remember:** Wash your hands for 20 seconds or use sanitiser regularly, avoid touching your face, mouth and eyes and keep a safe distance from others.

## **My child does not get free home to school transport**

- Where possible, your child should avoid using public transport to get to school or college.
- If you live close enough to your child's school or college, please encourage them to walk or cycle, where it is safe to do so.
- If you are going to drop your child off at school or college in a car, please consider parking away from the school gates to help keep the area around the school safe for pupils.
- If your child needs to use public transport:
  - Please encourage them to keep their personal belongings to a minimum.
  - They will need to practise social distancing while waiting for the bus and when on board.
  - They should wash their hands or use hand sanitiser before and after the journey.
  - They must wear a face covering (unless they are exempt).
- We are working with bus services that are on key routes for schools and colleges to provide either an additional dedicated school bus on that route or a larger bus to allow pupils to be separate from the general public. We may also re-classify one morning and one afternoon bus as a pupils bus, not available to the general public. However, this will not always be possible on every route.

## **My child does get free home to school transport**

We are working closely with the companies that provide our home to school transport services to make travelling to and from school as safe as possible. These are the steps we are taking:

- Extra cleaning of vehicles before and after every trip will take place.
- Drivers and Passenger Assistants will wear face coverings (unless they are exempt) and follow the rules around frequent handwashing and catching coughs and sneezes.
- Only pupils from the same school will travel together.
- Some seats will not be in use and pupils will be asked to sit in the bubbles they are in at school (where possible).
- Social distancing will be practised where possible, though it is not mandatory on dedicated school transport.
- Where pupils are entitled to free home to school transport and are exempt from wearing a face covering, or are unlikely to be able to wear one, an allowance will be offered for parents/carers to take them to and from school.

## What will my child have to do?

- Wear a face covering, unless they are exempt.
- Social distance from other pupils while waiting for the bus.
- Wash their hands or use hand sanitiser before and after their journey.
- Reduce the number of bags that they take to school.
- Get on and off the bus one at a time with no pushing or gathering in a group.
- Follow the instructions of the driver or assistant.
- Remain in the seat they have been asked to use to ensure they are in the correct bubble/maintain social distancing.
- Put on their own seatbelt, unless there is a reason they can't such as, they are too young or have additional needs. In this situation you, or member of staff from their bubble, could assist. They would need to wear a face covering if they were in close contact to other children.

## My child has SEND or specific needs

For children with specific needs we will work with your child's school/setting to implement a risk assessment where necessary. We know that passengers with special needs often prefer to sit in the same seat for each journey and, where possible, this will be supported if it does not risk the safety of the driver or passengers.

There may be occasions when the driver or passenger assistant will have close contact with your child (eg securing a wheelchair). When this happens they will try to work from the sides, avoiding face-to-face contact.

### Wheelchairs:

- Where possible we will require your child to board the vehicle themselves. Where this is not possible the driver or passenger assistant will be responsible for getting the chair onto the transport.
- The driver will secure the wheelchair inside the vehicle.
- It is the driver's legal responsibility to ensure the chair is properly secured in the vehicle.

## What happens if someone shows Coronavirus symptoms?

If your child appears unwell with symptoms on the way to, or whilst at school or college, the school/college will contact you to arrange for you, or a member of your household to collect them. **You must not send your child to school if they or anyone in your household has symptoms.**

In exceptional circumstances the school/setting will take responsibility for transporting them home. Care will be taken to ensure the safety of the driver and your child. This will include asking your child to wear a face mask if they are old enough and able to do so. The driver will use PPE and a vehicle with a screen or large enough to maintain social distancing will be used.

Visit [durham.gov.uk/schooltransport](https://durham.gov.uk/schooltransport) or ask your school for more information.