

Travel Assist - Home to School Transport

Guidance for Operators contracted during Covid 19, Coronavirus outbreak

Guidance issued May 2020

Important information before you provide services.

Before you offer your services, you must consider whether it is appropriate to do so.

- Are any of your drivers/guides or anyone in their household in a high-risk group?
<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/people-at-higher-risk-from-coronavirus/whos-at-higher-risk-from-coronavirus/>

- if any of your drivers/guides have a
 - new, continuous cough (that's lasted for an hour OR had 3 or more episodes of coughing in 24 hours OR are coughing more than usual)

and/or

- a fever/high temperature (37.8C or greater)?
- <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/check-if-you-have-coronavirus-symptoms/>

If 'yes' to any of the above, do not use the driver. You will also have to discuss if drivers/guides are willing. There is a lot of fear about the current outbreak and you must not pressurise your staff into carrying out journeys they do not want to make.

DBS

Existing DBS Scheme rules apply so, if drivers/GUIDES's are transporting children on behalf of the Council, they must have an Enhanced DBS for working with children. Delivery of goods only e.g. shopping, medicines or other items, does not require DBS membership.

Vehicle Hygiene/Cleaning

To help reduce possible spread of the virus amongst passengers and your staff, please clean key areas as often as possible. Clean surfaces regularly with sanitising wipes or disinfectant spray to get rid of germs. Focus especially on areas of the vehicle which receive the most regular contact:

- door handles (exterior and interior)
- handrails/grab handles
- headrests/armrests
- seat backs
- seatbelts (tongue/buckle/webbing)
- driver controls (e.g. steering wheel, gearstick, handbrake, indicators, push buttons etc) if drivers share vehicles in your fleet
- shared mobile phones or radio handsets (be careful using liquids on electronic devices)

We would recommend cleaning before the first passenger boards and after all passengers have alighted at the destination, on each journey.

When cleaning your vehicle, there are a few things to bear in mind:

- Using too much water/liquid can make interior fabrics damp, which will increase the likelihood that germs will collect and thrive. This can be overcome by being careful with the amount of water/disinfectant being used and maintaining good ventilation during cleaning and journeys
- Be careful, if using disinfectant spray, not to breathe-in any of the spray. Keep the vehicle ventilated
- Make sure wet floors and surfaces are dried before passenger's board

In addition, if drivers/guides have to manoeuvre wheelchairs, clean the wheelchair handles and brake levers prior to pushing the wheelchair. Likewise, if installing car seats or booster seats, clean the hard surface areas (e.g. outer shell, buckles) before installing in the vehicle and clean them after use.

Driver/GUIDES Personal Hygiene

Face coverings and gloves must be worn when working in enclosed spaces:

Drivers/GUIDES's can reduce the risk of getting and spreading the virus by:

- maintaining good hand hygiene (washing hands with soap and water or alcohol hand sanitiser)
- avoiding direct hand contact with eyes, nose and mouth
- using tissues to catch coughs and sneezes (or at least to cough/sneeze into the crook of their elbow) and dispose of tissues in a bin immediately
- use a facial covering of the mouth and nose, made of cloth or other textile (not surgical/medical masks) e.g. a scarf. It may be prudent to notify passengers in advance that a driver/guide is wearing one to avoid any surprise at pick-up time, all items should be washed after use.

Drivers should wash their hands with soap and water as often as is practical and be equipped with hand sanitiser, disposable tissues and a bag or container, which used, or potentially contaminated material can be dropped into for secure disposal later.

Drivers/guide should also use disposable gloves,

- hands should be cleaned before putting them on
- they should change them if heavily soiled or torn
- try not to touch surfaces if gloves are contaminated (e.g. after a sneeze), otherwise follow cleaning procedures
- they should not touch their face with contaminated gloves
- they should never reuse gloves once removed
- they should not remove one glove and then pull the other glove off by the fingertips. See how to take off disposable gloves without touching the outer surface here: <https://www.globus.co.uk/how-to-safely-remove-disposable-gloves>

Drivers/guide using a facial covering, when applying or removing it, it is important that they wash their hands first and avoid touching their face. After each use, the face covering must be washed at 60°C or disposed of safely.

At the end of their shift, drivers should minimise possible contamination in their own home by doing the following, which is based on advice given to NHS staff returning home after their own shifts:

- wipe down vehicle steering wheel, controls and handles
- Enter your home, touching as little as possible. Do not embrace anyone in the house just yet
- Drop your shoes, clothes, keys, bag, glasses, pens and anything else you have brought inside from your vehicle, into a plastic crate or box. Wipe them down with a damp soapy cloth. Be careful with any gadgets like mobile phones

- Go to the sink or shower, touching as little as possible on the way. Get someone else to open doors for you, if possible. Wash or shower, especially hands, arms and face with soap and hot water

Carriage of Passengers

Unless several passengers have been verified as belonging to the same household, the agreed number of passengers should be carried on each journey according to the size of the vehicle. The exception to this is where a passenger requires a guide and the guide has been agreed by the Council. Minimise contamination by doing the following:

- if passengers do not come out to the vehicle at boarding time, the driver should wait the standard 5 minutes and then contact their base for further instruction. Drivers/guides should not approach house doors, knock or ring doorbells. Stay with the vehicle
- at boarding/alighting time, drivers/guides should open the vehicle door, stand back 2m and close the door after the passenger is aboard
- in vehicles with one row of back seats, the passenger should be seated in the rear nearside seat, diagonally behind the driver
- in vehicles with two or more rows of back seats, the passenger should be seated in the rearmost row
- if a passenger is unable to fasten their seatbelt on their own, encourage a parent/carer from the same household to do it. If not possible, and as a last resort, approach the passenger from the side where the seatbelt buckle is located (i.e. do not lean across the passenger) and fasten the seatbelt for them, minimising contact as best possible. Do not, under any circumstances, drive off without all passengers wearing seatbelts.
- ensure good ventilation during the journey
- Loading of vehicles should be done with consideration to the proximity of seating, for example the first in should be seated at the back and the last in at the front then the child at the front should get off first, especially on larger vehicles
- In smaller vehicles children must not climb over other pupils to access seating

Pupil Guides

Pupil Guides duties, by their nature, may require close contact with those requiring assistance. If there is no physical, behavioural or medical need to sit beside the passenger being escorted then guides should sit on the opposite side of the same row of seats and, if there are two or more rows of back seats, the guide should sit in the nearside seat, diagonally behind the driver with the passenger in the offside seat in the back row, diagonally behind the escort.

In some cases, it may be necessary to sit beside and have physical contact with the passenger being escorted. Pupil Guides should, therefore, follow any additional advice given by Education or Social Work staff over and above the basic advice in the *Driver Personal Hygiene* section, above.

Deliveries/Carriage of Goods

It may be that, instead of carrying passengers, drivers are redeployed to deliver meals, food, medicines, foodbank boxes or other essential items to help vulnerable people in the community. Special instructions will be issued by those arranging transport. However, some basic considerations are:

- recipients should be asked to name the best drop-off point e.g. behind the gate or on the doorstep
- the driver should not touch the door or ring the bell with a bare hand – use a disposable tissue/glove as a barrier. The driver should then step back from the doorway and remain at least 2m away
- any conversation with the recipient should be kept brief and at least 2m separation maintained at all times
- drivers must not enter the property unless they have been given specific instruction to do so

- drivers should not accept any cash or other items from the recipient
- delivery crates/bags should not be taken back by the driver for re-use

Useful Links

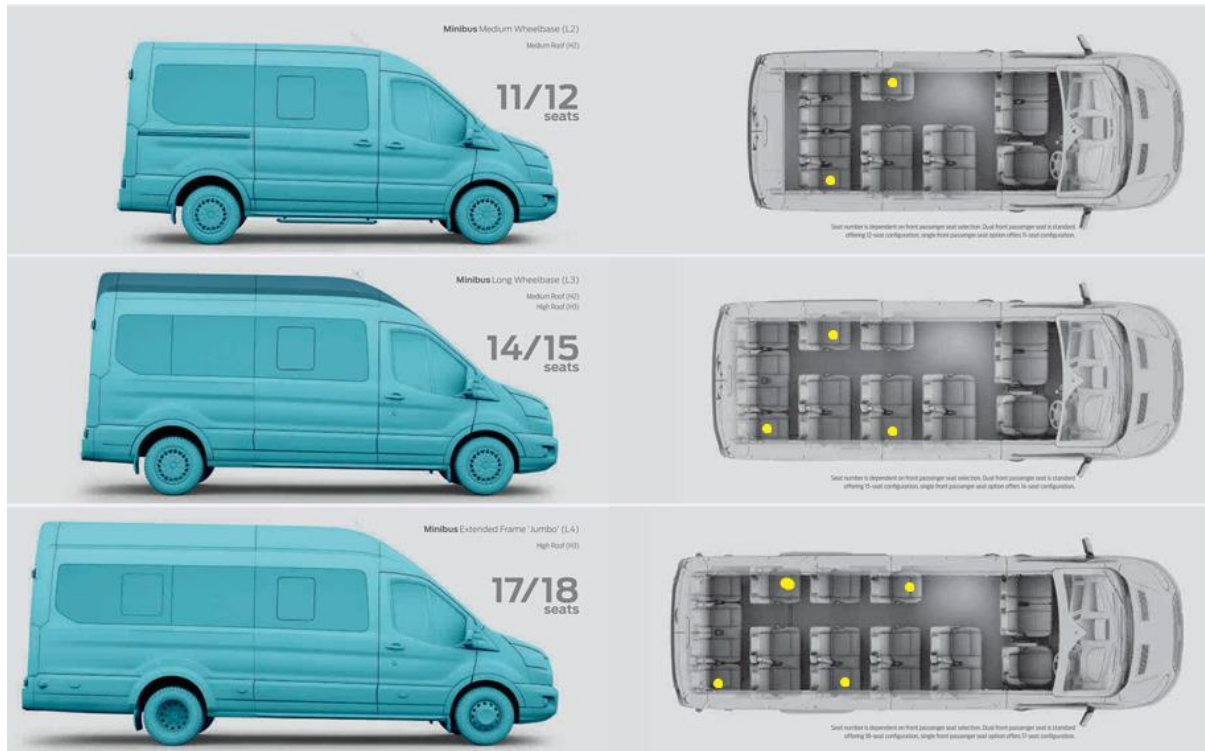
- *COVID-19 Information and Guidance for Non-Healthcare Settings* here:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-decontamination-in-non-healthcare-settings>
- NHS Inform website: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/>
- Government website: <https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus>

Seating Plan Options (Passengers in addition to the Guide)

Suggested Seating Plans for vehicles for guidance, options may vary due to seat plans.

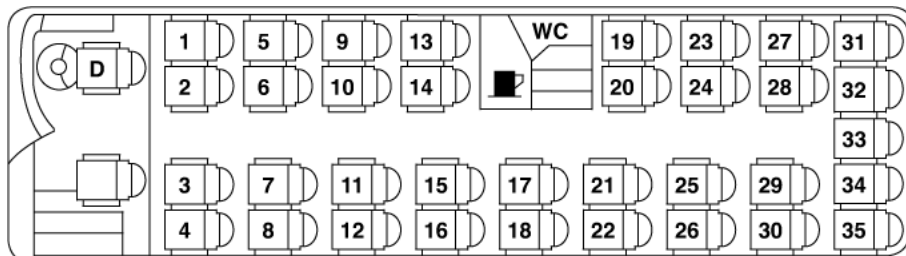
These are by no means definitive as all vehicles may have different layouts, wheelchairs will need to be considered on a vehicle by vehicle basis.

For wheelchair accessible vehicles a maximum of 2 wheelchairs per vehicle



35 Seater maximum 9 not including same family

Seats 4 - 5 - 12 - 13 - 18 - 19 - 26 - 27 - 35



41 seater maximum 11 not including family members

Seats 5 - 12 - 13 - 20 - 21 - 25 - 32 - 33 - 45 - 46 - 41