

## **Home to school transport – questions and answers (September 2020)**

### **Planning your journey**

#### **Q. Where can I find out about travelling to school?**

A. All the information you need about travelling to and from school or college safely is on our [school travel webpages](#)

#### **Q. Where can I find out about school buses?**

A. Information about school buses running from September 2020 in South Yorkshire is available on our [school buses webpage](#)

#### **Q. Are there extra buses for pupils travelling to school?**

A. We're running extra, dedicated school buses to help pupils get to schools and colleges across South Yorkshire, which aren't available for the general public to use. In line with government guidelines, social distancing is not required on school services, so capacity is not limited.

Get all the information about school buses, including timetables, on our [school buses webpage](#)

#### **Q. Will there be more public transport services running as schools return?**

A. From September 2020, most of South Yorkshire's bus services will run at the same level as they did before the COVID-19 pandemic.

#### **Q. How will I get to school if there isn't a school bus?**

A. Public transport is available for most school or college journeys where there isn't a school bus or you don't have alternative travel options.

You'll need to plan your journey ahead and, where possible, think about whether you can walk, scoot or cycle instead.

We want you to be confident that you can choose to travel by public transport. Services will continue to be different while social distancing measures are in place, journeys may take longer, and some routes may be busier. Please follow public transport guidance, wear a face covering and keep yourself and others safe.

#### **Q. How do I give feedback about school buses?**

A. Together with schools, parents, operators and local authorities, we've worked hard to try to ensure every child can get to school safely and on time. But we recognise that, at first, some services may not be quite right.

As you and your school settle into your new routine over the coming weeks, we're encouraging families or pupils that have any issues to [let us know online](#) or tell a

teacher, so we can look at improvements.

We'll be listening and responding to feedback from customers, operators, schools and colleges, to make adjustments where needed.

### **Q. What happens if the bus is full?**

A. Our priority is to ensure that every young person who relies on public transport can get to school or college safely, and on time. We're providing dedicated buses to get children to school, and to create more capacity on the public transport network.

While the majority of our public transport network is now running at at the same level as it did before the COVID-19 pandemic, social distancing measures mean room onboard local buses is still reduced.

We're still asking everyone to play their part to help keep South Yorkshire moving – by planning your journey in advance, and thinking about the times, routes and ways you travel, so everyone has more space to stay safe.

We'll be listening and responding to feedback from schools and passengers to make timetable adjustments or add extra buses, where services aren't quite right.

### **Q. Can I travel to school by tram or train?**

A. Yes, but remember that social distancing measures means capacity on public transport, including trams and trains, is limited. We're providing dedicated buses to get children to school, and to create more capacity on the public transport network.

We're asking you to plan your journey ahead and, where possible, think about whether you can use a dedicated school bus, walk, scoot or cycle instead. Please follow public transport guidance if you're travelling by tram or train, wear a face covering and keep a safe distance.

All the information about school buses, including timetables, is on our [school buses webpage](#)

## **Travelling safely**

### **Q. What are the rules for using a school bus?**

A. if you're using a school bus, please help everyone to travel safely by:

- sitting with your year group 'bubble' where possible
- washing or sanitising your hands before and after using the bus
- wearing a face covering while on board (unless you're exempt or aged under 11)
- keeping a safe distance where possible on board and at bus stops
- carrying tissues to catch coughs and sneezes and hand sanitiser to keep clean
- not eating or drinking on the bus or coach

Members of the public can't use school buses and, in line with government guidelines, social distancing is not required onboard.

**Q. Do social distancing rules apply on school buses?**

A. Department for Education guidance states that social distancing does not apply on dedicated school buses.

This is because dedicated transport to schools and other places of education often carries the same group of children or young people on a regular basis. They do not mix with the general public on those journeys. This helps limit the number of other people they come into contact with.

Schools have been asked to create bubbles for separate classes or year groups where possible. This makes it quicker and easier in the event of a positive case to identify people who may need to self-isolate and keep that number as small as possible.

In line with this guidance we're asking that, if you use a school bus, you sit with people from your school 'bubble' where possible. We're also asking you to regularly wash or sanitise your hands, wear a face covering, and keep your distance on public transport and school buses, wherever possible.

You can find guidance about school operations and transport on [the gov.uk website](#).

**Q. Will I need to wear a face covering on school buses?**

A. Yes. All passengers aged 11 and over must wear a face covering while using public transport, including on dedicated school bus services, unless you're exempt because of a health condition or disability, which could be hidden. You can find details of exemptions on the [gov.uk website](#).

As social distancing limits on capacity do not apply on school buses, government guidance advises that all passengers wear a face covering, unless you're exempt, to protect yourself and others.

**Q. Will you be providing face coverings or hand sanitiser on school buses?**

A. We won't be providing face coverings or hand sanitiser on school buses. You should bring your own face covering, tissues and hand sanitiser when travelling on public transport and school buses to help to keep yourself and others safe.

**Q. Are you enforcing safety measures on school buses?**

A. Bus drivers can't police safety arrangements on school buses or public transport, including seating plans, queues, face coverings or use of hand sanitiser. We're asking parents and schools to help educate pupils about the rules on school buses to keep themselves and others safe.

## Tickets and fares

### Q. Do I have to pay to use the school bus?

A. Yes, the fare for travelling on a school bus is the same as for travelling on public transport, unless you're entitled to free home to school transport.

With an [Under 16 MegaTravel](#) or [16-18 Travel Pass](#), you can pay a reduced fare of 80p per single journey, either by cash or with a pre-purchased ticket, such as a GetAbout ticket. If you don't have a pass you may be asked to pay full fare.

You can see which pre-purchased tickets are valid on which services on our [school buses webpage](#).

### Q. Do school buses take contactless payment?

A. Some school buses don't have the technology to scan passes or take contactless payment. If you have a pre-paid ticket on your pass, please keep your proof of purchase from your online or ticket machine transaction and show it to the driver.

You can see which pre-paid tickets are valid on which services on our [school buses webpage](#).

### Q. Can I travel without an Under 16 MegaTravel Pass/16-18 Travel Pass?

A. You will need an Under 16 MegaTravel or 16-18 Travel Pass to travel for an 80p reduced fare. If you don't have a pass, you can still travel but you may be asked to pay full fare on public transport and on school buses. We've been promoting passes throughout the summer and we're processing online applications in line with our usual timescales. You can apply for a pass [on our website](#).

### Q. Can I travel for free without a Zero Fare Pass?

A. If you're entitled to free home to school transport you'll need a Zero Fare Pass to travel for free. To see if you're eligible for a Zero Fare Pass, visit our [Zero Fare Pass webpage](#).

## Other information

### Q. How have you planned home to school services?

A. We've worked with schools, colleges and families to plan bus services to meet increased demand for this new academic year. We also worked with bus and coach companies to add more journeys at peak school travel times, where possible, and extra dedicated school services across the region.

**Q. As some buses are now school-only services, what is the impact on customers on the general bus network?**

A. We've worked hard to balance the demand for school services with the need for other customers to travel in the period before and after the school day. If you feel we haven't got this quite right please [tell us](#). We'll be listening and responding to feedback from passengers to make adjustments if needed.

**Q. How are you funding extra school buses?**

A. The Department for Education announced funding in August to support additional bus or coach services specifically for travel to mainstream schools and colleges. A separate funding allocation for transport to Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) schools was made directly to each district in the region.

**Q. What happens if my health condition means I can't use a school bus?**

A. Please contact your local authority education transport team if you have concerns about the suitability of home to school transport for medical reasons.

**Q. Will you provide taxis for pupils to get to school?**

A. We've used funding from government to provide additional school bus or coach services, where local bus services aren't suitable. We don't plan to make transport for individual pupils, over and above this, available. We will monitor school buses closely to make sure they're meeting pupils' needs and to review any problems.