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Pembrokeshire County Council



## **EDUCATION**

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# **Coronavirus (Covid-19) – The Recovery Phase**

## **Operational Guidance for School Transport Provision from Spring Term 2021**

# February 2021

## Version Control

Version	Date issued	Brief summary of Change
0.1	05/02/21	First draft issued to Huw Jones, Education & Large Bus Operators for initial feedback

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## 1. Introduction

In response to the global Coronavirus/Covid-19 pandemic emergency, the Welsh Government (WG) closed all Welsh schools/colleges for a second time from 18<sup>th</sup> December 2020. From the 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2021 the WG plan to start a phased return of pupils to face to face learning starting with foundation aged pupils in primary schools. This will be dependent on the scientific evidence allowing this to happen. Following this and once again dependant on the scientific evidence plan will be made to increase the numbers of learners allowed back in schools/colleges, further details on this will be published in due course.

The Minister for Education announced on 5 February 2021 that schools will begin a phased return for foundation phase learners from 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2021. The latest Welsh Technical Advisory Group (TAG), briefing sets out clearly the position across Wales in relation to Covid-19 and the steady positive decline in almost all the indicators. This evidence suggests that there is sufficient headroom to enable the return of our youngest learners to schools.

Small numbers of vocational learners, including apprentices, will also be able to return to colleges.

The NHS Test, Trace, Protect system is now running more efficiently, and we are clear about the measures that need to be in place to create safer environments within schools.

We also know that the risk to children themselves of becoming severely ill from COVID-19 is very low. Current evidence points to “Infection with SARS-CoV-2 appears to take a milder course in children than in adults: most infected children present with mild symptoms or are asymptomatic, and very few develop severe or life threatening disease. There remains some on-going uncertainty in transmissibility of the disease by children, but real world observation of schools opening in England and other countries has shown little transmission by children”.

These risks have to be carefully balanced with the negative health impacts of being out of school. School is also an important point of contact for public health and safeguarding services that are critical to the well-being of children and families.

Although it is not possible to ensure a totally risk-free environment, the Office of National Statistics’ analysis on COVID-19 related deaths linked to occupations suggests that staff in educational settings tend not to be at any greater risk from the disease than many other occupations. There is no evidence that children transmit the disease any more than adults. There is currently a very low prevalence of positive tests among education workers at 3.8% cumulative, among the lowest rates of critical workers.

Taking into account the improving situation we now find ourselves in, the balance of risk is now overwhelmingly in favour of children starting to return to schools/colleges once again. Being out of school/college is detrimental for children’s cognitive and academic development and their health and well-being, particularly for children from a disadvantaged background; and, can have an impact both in the short and longer term. We know that lower academic achievement also translates into long-term economic costs. We also know that school closures have affected some families’ ability to work. By getting our learners back into school as quickly and as safely as possible will bring positive benefits on a number of fronts not least their mental and emotional well-being.

This guidance document provides a framework and puts in place proportionate protective measures for children and staff. School leaders will need to make judgments at a school level about how to balance and minimise any risks from COVID-19 with providing a full educational experience for children and young people. In doing so schools will be asked to minimise the number of contacts that every learner has during the school day as part of implementing the system of controls to reduce the risk of transmission.

The Spring Term will now start from 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2021 for learners in Pembrokeshire. This will be a phased return starting with the groups already mentioned above, this will followed by the rest of the primary school year groups and those in years 11 & 13 and any pupils due to take exams in years 10 & 12 providing the scientific evidence allows. The remainder of secondary aged pupils will then hopefully start back after the Easter holidays again subject to the scientific advice. Primary schools will be given a planning day on the 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2021 to allow the safe return of foundation phase children on the 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2021.

There cannot be a one size fits all approach, it is recognised that each school and setting will have local challenges to address. We will therefore be working with all our schools and settings to plan for the remainder of the spring term and summer term, recognising that the guidance will evolve over the coming weeks to reflect the latest Welsh Government policies.

Local authorities will not be expected to continue to provide emergency childcare provision in the summer term.

This guidance sets out the public health advice schools and settings must follow to minimise the risks of COVID-19 transmission. It also includes the process that should be followed if anyone develops COVID-19 symptoms while at school. The guidance provides a set of principles to help schools and settings do this, and in turn minimise risks.

A recent report by the Public Health Agency of Sweden found that “Children are not a major risk group of the COVID-19 disease and seem to play a less important role from the transmission point of view...The negative effects of closing schools must be weighed against the possible positive indirect effects it might have on the mitigation of the COVID-19 pandemic”.

We will continue to monitor the situation carefully and every school will also need to plan for the possibility of a local lockdown and how they will ensure continuity of education within a broader framework of local restrictions.

This guidance will be kept under constant review and will always follow the latest scientific advice.

The plans outlined below set out how provided school transport in Pembrokeshire is to resume and these plans will be updated and re-circulated as the return to school programme progresses. This guidance should be read and adopted by all PCC passenger transport contractors/operators. Clearly, it is intrinsically relevant to schools, parents/carers and learners.

PCC greatly appreciates all the support and effort from schools/colleges, parents, school transport operators and our other partners in these difficult times and we are always here to support you.

For any queries please contact the Council’s Integrated Transport Unit (ITU), using the contact details shown at the foot of this guidance.

Pembrokeshire County Council, Integrated Transport Unit

## School transport key messages – Summary

- 1.1 This advice is based on a balance of evidence specifically about Covid-19 together with that relating to the wider wellbeing of children and benefits of education.
- 1.2 In line with WG guidance the LA is still asking parents to take their own children to school wherever possible, making use of active travel (such as walking or cycling) to school brings a range of benefits for children's health and the environment. It is also the mode of travel that carries least risk of transmission of coronavirus. As far as it is safe to do so, children young people and their parents/carers should be encouraged to travel to school or college on foot, bike or scooter.
- 1.3 Dedicated school transport should be regarded as an extension of the school estate. Children and young people using the transport daily should be grouped into cohorts so reducing the number of contacts.
- 1.4 Public transport journeys are likely to bring together those at lower risk of contracting and transmitting Covid-19 (younger people) with those at higher risk. This situation is unlikely to occur on transport provided for school learners only.
- 1.5 School transport will involve mixed age groups of learners, but the risk of transmission between them is likely to be acceptably low as long as a range of mitigations are in place.
- 1.6 Important mitigations include: hygiene, ventilation, improved cleaning regimes including regular and thorough cleaning of surfaces, and regular handwashing.
- 1.7 Drivers and staff on school transport, are at relatively higher risk of exposure and particular attention should be paid to ensuring that they are protected from airborne and surface transmission by social distancing where reasonably practical and the use of PPE.
- 1.8 Where public transport (including bus, taxi, train, ferry) is required for school aged children (up to the age of 19) to attend school, the general advice and guidance from Welsh Government and Transport for Wales should be followed. This currently includes the mandatory use of face coverings for those aged 11 and over, and physical distancing where possible. Please note that those learners entitled to free school transport who usually travel on public transport route will be transported on a dedicated vehicle reserved only for school learners where ever possible.
- 1.9 Local Authorities and schools should continue to work with transport providers to increase capacity as far as is reasonably possible. Plans should where possible avoid mixing learners/students from different schools/colleges on the same transport.
- 1.10 This advice assumes no significant worsening in the low background levels of infection in the Welsh population as monitored by 'circuit breaker' measures, and on prompt and well-functioning systems for close monitoring, rapid testing and tracing of suspected cases.
- 1.11 Precautions may become more relaxed as the prevalence and incidence of Covid-19 in Wales reduce. Conversely, measures may need to be strengthened or reintroduced if there is evidence of a resurgence, or in the light of localised outbreaks. Where other relevant new evidence has implications for this advice, it will also need to be taken into account.
- 1.12 If the further unlocking of restrictions, including indoor settings and tourism, results in an increase in cases in August and September, this advice will need to be used flexibly in local areas depending on local transmission patterns. This could mean that distancing may be required if prevalence increases in local areas. Local data on community transmission should be actively used to inform risk assessments and decision making.
- 1.13 The Covid-19 Children and Schools Technical Advisory Cell (C+S TAC) has advised that, subject to continued low background rates of the Covid19 virus, and to effective TTP and mitigations being in place, the balance of the evidence suggests that no distancing should be required between children in primary schools.
- 1.14 The evidence is less clear for older learners but at present we support the same approach being taken in secondary schools on the basis of the balance of known risks and the effectiveness of mitigations.

- 1.15 Two metre distancing should remain in place wherever possible between adults, and between adults and children who are not from the same household.
- 1.16 Dedicated school transport can be considered to be part of the greater school estate and therefore all mitigations which apply in school should also apply on dedicated school transport. Adult members of the public do not travel on dedicated school buses and therefore the physical distancing measures that should be applied are those relating to distances between learners.
- 1.17 Mitigations include: hygiene, ventilation, improved cleaning regimes within dedicated school transport, including regular and thorough cleaning of surfaces, and regular handwashing and sanitising.
- 1.18 Schools should engage with all children and young people to establish shared understanding and ownership of hygiene rules for the protection of all, and regularly reinforce the importance of these key social responsibility messages.
- 1.19 Hand washing and /or hand sanitising should be done regularly throughout the day including on every entry to the school building.
- 1.20 As far as possible school-aged children should be assigned seats which they use consistently.
- 1.21 The consumption – and especially the sharing – of food and drink (including snacks) should not be allowed on school transport.
- 1.22 Children or young people must not board dedicated school or public transport if they, or a member of their household, have symptoms of coronavirus.
- 1.23 If a child or young person develops symptoms while at school they should be sent home and must not travel on regular school transport. The school should contact the parent/carer to make appropriate and safe arrangements to collect the child or young person. In this situation, use of a face covering by the child or young person with symptoms should be considered to reduce risk of transmission.
- 1.24 Many children with Additional Support Needs may require adult carers to travel with the children, often in close proximity. In general, these adults should be very alert to symptoms, and should use appropriate PPE at all times.
- 1.25 Drivers and staff on public transport, and to a lesser extent on school transport, are at relatively higher risk of exposure and particular attention should be paid to ensuring that they are protected from airborne and surface transmission. In some situations environmental changes within a vehicle may be appropriate, such as the installation of protective barriers or safety screens between the driver and passengers. It is for the relevant licensing authorities, operators and the firm or individual to make decisions on whether changes within a vehicle are required, based on their own assessment of risk.
- 1.26 Drivers and other staff assistants should follow general hygiene guidance. Where hand washing is not possible hand sanitiser should be used regularly throughout the journey, in particular after performing any tasks that involve touching a surface that may have been touched by someone else.
- 1.27 Drivers and other staff must not continue to work if they have symptoms, or if someone in their household has symptoms. They should make appropriate arrangements to go home as soon as possible if they begin displaying symptoms while at work, and should follow the Test Trace and Protect guidance.
- 1.28 School-aged children on public transport should follow the generic guidance from Transport for Wales. This includes wearing face coverings for children aged 11 and over, and social distancing where possible.
- 1.29 Schools should work with all children and young people to develop their capacities as responsible citizens particularly when preparing to travel on public transport. Encouraging effective use of hand sanitisers, wipes and touch-free bins should be viewed as essential to reduce the transmission of the virus.

- 1.30 Local Authorities should work with transport providers to increase capacity and introduce dedicated seating or carriages for school-aged children where possible, so that school-aged children may be grouped together.
- 1.31 Local Authorities are recommended to work with transport providers to gain assurance that infection prevention and control measures are in place.
- 1.32 Face coverings will be mandatory for secondary school learners (those clinically advised not to wear a covering would be an exception) travelling on dedicated school transport.
- 1.33 Drivers and staff on school transport, are at relatively higher risk of exposure and particular attention should be paid to ensuring that they are protected from airborne and surface transmission, with mitigations such as Perspex screens and PPE as necessary.
- 1.34 On public transport, adults from the same household travelling with school-age children should wear face coverings. Adults who are travelling with the child in a work capacity should use the recommended PPE. In all cases, the needs and wellbeing of the child may determine some modification of these requirements.



## **2. Welsh Government and Public Health Wales advice to minimise COVID-19 risks**

Local Authorities, schools and settings and operators must comply with health and safety law, which requires them to assess risks and put in place proportionate control measures.

Local Authorities and operators should thoroughly review their health and safety risk assessments in collaboration with trade unions, and draw up plans for the autumn term that address the risks identified using the system of controls set out below. Essential measures include:

- a requirement that people who are unwell with symptoms of COVID-19 stay at home
- robust hand and respiratory hygiene including ventilation
- continue increased cleaning arrangements
- active engagement with Test, Trace, Protect strategy
- formal consideration of how to reduce contacts and maximise social and physical distancing between those in school wherever possible and minimise potential for contamination so far as is reasonably practicable.

How contact between learners, learners and staff, and between staff are reduced will depend on differing circumstances but should include:

- grouping learners together
- avoiding contact between separate groups as much as possible
- staff maintaining distance from learners and other staff as much as possible.

### **3. Risk assessment & Protective Measures**

#### **Risk Assessment**

Local Authorities (as the employers) and operators, must protect people from harm. This includes taking all necessary steps to protect staff, learners and others from COVID-19 within school transport.

As part of planning for full return in the autumn term, it is a legal requirement that LA's and Operators should revisit and update their risk assessments by building on the learning to date and the practices they have already developed. This will enable them, to consider the additional risks and control measures to put in place for a return to full capacity in the autumn term.

A national template risk assessment has been developed to ensure that, where practicable, Wales adopts a common approach to managing COVID-19 risk on school transport. PCC's risk assessment can be found in Annex A.

LA's will communicate the control measures to schools, operators and parents so that there is clarity on what and how the revised arrangements will work in practice, and have active arrangements in place to monitor that the controls are:

- Effective
- Working as planned
- Updates appropriately considering any issues identified and changes to public health advice

#### **Protective Measures**

Having assessed their risks, LA's and Operators as far as reasonably possible must work through the following measures, adopting them in a way that addresses the risk identified in their assessment, works for their setting, and allows them to deliver for all learners. If LA's and operators follow the guidance set out here, they will effectively reduce risks in their setting and create an inherently safer environment.

#### **Measures**

This is the set of actions LA's and operators must take, wherever possible:

#### **Prevention**

- Minimise contact between all individuals wherever possible. For learners the emphasis will be on social distancing from adults and forming groups of learners and ensuring separation of those groups;
- Staff should remain unchanged on each route wherever possible. All staff should adhere to the social/physical distancing measures as far as possible from learners and other transport and school staff;
- Ensuring staff, learners and parents/carers fully understand that any staff member or learner who has possible symptoms of COVID-19 must not attend the school setting but must remain home and self-isolate, arrange a COVID-19 test and notify the ITU & school of this;
- Additionally, any family/household member of any member of staff member or learner who displays possible symptoms of COVID-19 then the staff member or learner must not attend the school setting but must remain at home and commence a period of household isolation. Again the ITU & school should be notified of this;

- Where a staff member or learner becomes unwell at the school setting with possible symptoms of COVID-19 they should be sent home immediately where they should self-isolate and arrange a COVID-19 test. Until they leave the school setting (in the case of a learner waiting to be collected by a parent/carer) their contact with all other individuals at the setting should be minimised. If possible ensure they remain in a separate room until they are able to leave the setting;
- Clean hands thoroughly more often than usual;
- Ensure good respiratory hygiene by promoting the 'catch it, bin it, kill it' approach;
- Ensure enhanced cleaning, including cleaning frequently touched surfaces often, using standard products such as detergents and disinfectants;
- Where required wear appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) as set out later in guidance;
- Where possible ensure appropriate ventilation.

### **Response to any infection, engage with the Test, Trace, Protect (TTP) strategy**

The new Test, Trace, Protect strategy (<https://gov.wales/test-trace-protect.html>) published on 13 May was implemented across Wales from 1 June. This strategy set out the next phase of our approach to tackling coronavirus; testing people with symptoms in the community, tracing those who have come into close contact with people who have tested positive for coronavirus, and protecting family, friends and our community by self-isolating.

Test, Trace, Protect works by:

- testing those people who have coronavirus symptoms, asking them to isolate from family, friends and their community while taking a test and waiting for a result. People can apply for a test for themselves or someone in their household with symptoms. This includes adults and children including the under 5s. Information and guidance for staff and parents on how to apply for a test can be found here <https://gov.wales/apply-coronavirus-test>
- tracing those people who have been in close contact with people that have tested positive for the virus, requiring them to take precautions through self-isolation. Further information on contact tracing and how it operates can be found here <https://gov.wales/contact-tracing-your-questions>
- ensuring that if the symptoms are not due to coronavirus, individuals and their contacts can cease their period of self-isolation and get back to their normal routines as soon as possible;
- providing advice and guidance, particularly if the person who has symptoms or their contacts were previously in the 'shielding group' or are in the increased risk group.

By reducing transmission in our communities, and quickly identifying and isolating those at risk of developing COVID-19 following their close contact with a positive individual (e.g. a known contact or family member) we will support the wider opening of schools, colleges and early years' settings.

Schools and settings should reinforce these messages and in particular, remind all those who show any of the COVID-19 symptoms to self-isolate immediately and book a test. Those living with someone showing symptoms or who has tested positive for COVID-19 should also self-isolate. Where possible it would be helpful for schools and settings to keep a record of anyone who comes in to a contact group (e.g. intervention teams). This can be a simple book in every classroom recording anyone coming in from 'outside'.

In the event of a positive test, a contact tracer will contact the person tested to help identify potential contacts. A second contact tracer will then get in touch with those contacts and advise them to self-isolate for 14 days from their last contact with the person who tested positive. These people will only be required to take a test if they develop symptoms. The NHS TTP team will be

notified automatically of a positive test result via their CRM system. There is no requirement for the school/setting to notify the TTP unless specifically asked to following a cluster managed by an Incident Management Team. If such an instance occurs then the school/setting will be provided with a dedicated TTP contact person managing the cluster to whom they can report new cases or raise any other concerns such as increasing numbers of possible cases.

People are considered as potential contacts if they were in contact with the person who has tested positive during a period beginning up to two days before symptom onset and ending when the case entered home isolation. This is based on current understanding of the main period of infectivity.

A contact is defined as someone who has had close contact during this period, specifically:

- within one metre of the person who has tested positive and has been coughed on, had a face-to-face conversation, had skin-to-skin physical contact, or been in other forms of contact within one metre for one minute or longer
- within two metres of the person testing positive for more than 15 minutes
- having travelled in a vehicle with the person who has tested positive.

Where staff have maintained social/physical distancing rules and adhered to hygiene measures during work and where required have used PPE or worked behind an appropriate screen or partition, they would not be regarded as part of a contact tracing exercise for these purposes.

A positive test on site therefore does not require closure of that site. The process of testing and contact tracing is part of the 'new normal' and where schools and settings follow these guidelines carefully, there is no cause for alarm. The latest information can be found here <https://gov.wales/guidance-testing-and-contact-tracing-education-settings>

### **Manage confirmed cases of COVID-19 among the school community**

Building upon the Disease Outbreak Plan for Wales (2020) Public Health Wales has provided specific advice regarding the investigation and management of clusters and incidents of COVID-19 in educational settings <https://phw.nhs.wales/topics/latest-information-on-novel-coronavirus-covid-19/information-for-healthcare-workers-in-wales/>.

The advice outlines what steps should be taken to protect individuals and communities where clusters and incidents are occurring, as well as reducing spread to other communities.

1. Identification of cases in possible cluster;
2. Gathering of minimum information;
3. Initial cluster management and risk assessment;
4. Identification of incident;
5. Incident management;
6. Escalation.

### **Prevention**

Ensure that any staff member or learner who has symptoms or who is tested positive for COVID-19, or who has someone in their household who has symptoms or has tested positive for COVID-19, does not attend the school setting. Under no circumstances should learners or staff attend schools/settings if they:

- feel unwell with any of the identified COVID-19 symptoms. They should remain at home and self-isolate and arrange a COVID-19 test;
- have tested positive for COVID-19;

- live in a household with someone who has symptoms of, or has tested positive for COVID-19  
New sentence: All schools and settings must follow this process and ensure all staff are aware of it.

LA's, Schools and Operators should have a clear escalation policy and procedures in place if learners or staff begin to show symptoms of COVID-19 while on transport. These need to be fully understood by staff, learners (where able) and parents/carers. Those showing symptoms should be kept separate until they can be collected and taken home. Ideally, this should be somewhere where they can socially distance, supervised at a distance of two metres where possible, but recognising this may not be possible with younger learners. If they need clinical advice, they (or a member of staff or their parent/carer) should go online to 111 Wales (or call 111 if they don't have internet access).

Surfaces that learners or staff with symptoms have come into contact with should be carefully and thoroughly cleaned. Further cleaning guidance is provided at point 4 below.

Anyone displaying symptoms of COVID-19 should stay at home and begin to self-isolate for the timeframe set out in the guidance while making arrangements to be tested. Anyone who lives with someone displaying COVID-19 symptoms, or is in an extended household arrangement with someone displaying symptoms must also self-isolate at home for the appropriate time periods set out in the self-isolation guidance.

The present advice is that it is not necessary to screen temperatures. Learners' parents/carers can check for signs of a high temperature. In any case, screening will not identify all cases of COVID-19 and the means of checking temperature may put staff at greater risk of transmission, as well as cause worry or concern for learners. We will keep this under review. Staff should of course be vigilant for changes to learners' temperatures and signs of fever.

### **Clean hands thoroughly and more often than usual.**

COVID-19 is an easy virus to kill when it is on skin. This can be done with soap and running water or using a hand sanitiser. Operators supported by LA's must ensure that learners clean their hands regularly, including when they board and alight school transport vehicles and before entering and when leaving school buildings. Regular and thorough hand cleaning is going to be needed for the foreseeable future. Points to consider and implement include:

- whether the operators has enough hand washing or hand sanitiser 'stations' available so that all learners and staff can clean their hands regularly;
- supervision of the use of hand sanitiser given the risks around ingestion. Young learners and those with complex needs should continue to be helped to clean their hands properly;
- building these routines into the staff and learners culture, supported by behaviour expectations and helping ensure younger learners and those with complex needs understand the need to follow them;
- Bins should be emptied daily

### **Ensure good respiratory hygiene by promoting the 'catch it, bin it, kill it' approach.**

The 'catch it, bin it, kill it' approach continues to be very important, so operators must ensure that they have enough bins available on vehicles to support learners and staff to follow this routine. As with hand cleaning, LA's, schools and operators must ensure younger learners and those with complex needs are helped to get this right, and all learners understand that this is now part of how settings operate. Some learners with complex needs may find it difficult to maintain good respiratory hygiene as effectively as their peers. This should be considered in risk assessments in order to support these learners and the staff working with them, and is not a reason to deny these learners face-to-face education.

**Increased cleaning, including cleaning frequently touched surfaces often using standard products, such as detergents and disinfectant.**

LA's and operators should follow the latest advice on cleaning in non-healthcare settings. Frequently used touch points should be cleaned thoroughly after each journey and a deep clean should be performed on every vehicle at the end of each day

**Lateral Flow Testing**

The Welsh Government has recently announced that it will start a programme of asymptomatic COVID-19 testing in education and childcare settings across Wales. It has now been agreed that School Transport Staff can also be included in this testing programme

Along with the primary protective measures we are taking, testing will allow us to take further measures to help you and other staff members to continue working in as safe an environment as possible. Up to one in three people who have COVID-19 have the virus without symptoms so could be transmitting the virus unknowingly.

Tackling the pandemic requires identifying asymptomatic, infectious individuals. Lateral Flow Device (LFD) tests have been widely and successfully used to detect COVID-19 in asymptomatic individuals. The speed and convenience of LFD tests supports detection of the virus in asymptomatic individuals who would not otherwise be tested. They are clinically approved and are crucial in the fight against the virus.

As the tests are more sensitive with higher viral loads, there is a risk of returning a negative result when viral loads are low (e.g. in the early stages of infection). This is why it is recommended that two LFD tests are taken 3 to 4 days apart, or regular testing, to enhance detection by picking up any cases which were not detected during the first test and to catch any new infections.

If you test positive using a LFD, it is likely that you are infectious at that moment, and you must self-isolate and book a polymerase chain reaction (PCR) test. Contact tracing will be triggered following a positive LFD and your close contacts will be required to self-isolate until you receive your PCR test result, if the PCR test result is positive you and your close contacts will have to self-isolate. A negative LFD result should not be read as a means to relax or ignore social distancing or other virus prevention measures intended to reduce transmission – LFD is an additional tool that contributes to reducing risk.

**How the tests work**

If you agree to take part, you will be able to collect LFD test kits from your workplace (school, college, childcare setting) which will enable self-testing from home. Slightly different arrangements will need to be put in place for childminders, which could include collection of tests from a central location within their area. You would conduct the test, before coming into work, twice a week. The LFDs supplied do not require laboratory processing and can provide a quick result in around 30 minutes. Comprehensive guidance on self-testing is contained in the 'Instructions for Use' leaflet which comes with the test kit. There are further resources and guides on the Welsh Government Online Document Platform which we, as a setting, have access to.

Once the test has been conducted you will log the test result online at [www.gov.uk/report-covid19-result](https://www.gov.uk/report-covid19-result) and need to also, separately, inform us, as your setting, of the test result. You will also receive a

[text/email] notification of a positive or negative result from NHS Test & Trace. Tests are free of charge and will be provided by the setting.

### **Consent / Privacy**

Once you have understood the testing process and read a privacy notice, if you choose to participate, you are committing to self-administer the test and provide your results. Settings should ensure that staff provide their results (positive, negative or void) to NHS Test and Trace via the self-report gov.uk page. Results should also be shared with the setting to support local contact tracing.

With our primary protective measures and testing, we will help to reduce the spread in education and childcare settings. We therefore strongly encourage all staff to take the tests. However, staff who decline to participate can still attend their workplace or setting if not symptomatic.

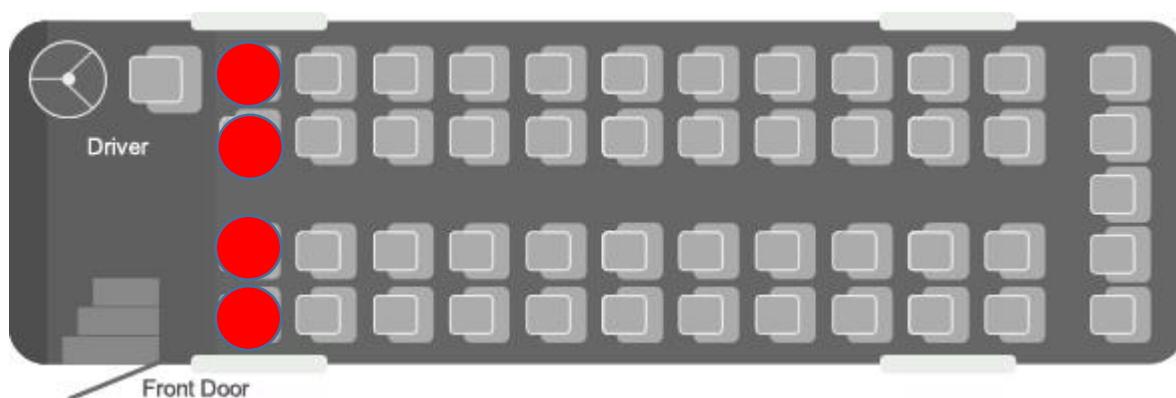
People who decline to participate in this testing programme should follow the usual national guidelines on self-isolation and anyone should get tested if they show symptoms.

We will support our operators and their throughout but let us know if you have any questions. Further information is available from the link below:

<https://wales.assetbank-server.com/assetbank-wales/images/assetbox/8b9f2efc-5dd6-497f-8dde-3822223ec356/assetbox.html>

#### 4. General Guidance to School Transport Operators re Coronavirus (Covid-19)

- 4.1 Safety of staff, learners and the public will be paramount
- 4.2 Operators should be aware of advice from the WG on 'Workplace guidance for employers and employees: Covid -19' which can be found at <https://gov.wales/workplace-guidance-employers-and-employees-covid19>
- 4.3 Drivers, Passenger Assistants and learners should not travel on transport if they are feeling unwell, particularly if they have symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19) which include a new, continuous cough, high temperature, or loss of taste or smell, or if they live in a household with someone showing any of these symptoms – they should self-isolate and stay at home. Any learners becoming ill at school should be taken home by their parent/carer (NB parents should have transport contingency arrangements in place to do this).
- 4.4 Children who are considered extremely clinically vulnerable, may not be expected to attend school; parents of children clinically vulnerable (but not clinically extremely vulnerable) of severe illness from coronavirus should follow medical advice about attendance.
- 4.5 The Government's specific Covid-19 advice for staff in the transport sector should be followed and can be found at <https://gov.wales/coronavirus-travel>.
- 4.6 Face coverings will be mandatory on dedicated home to school transport vehicle for secondary aged learners and transport staff. Operators should carry a quantity of masks for emergency use for learners when boarding vehicles in the event that they have not been able to gain access to them. However, evidence remains clear that the most effective way to protect yourself and others from infections is to follow social distancing rules, avoid touching surfaces and your face and to wash your hands regularly. Young children and those with ALN may not be able to safely wear a face covering and may be exempt from wearing them, these learners should be respected by everyone else travelling on the vehicle.
- 4.7 Operators should ensure that all touch points on school transport vehicles have been cleaned to protect against Coronavirus/Covid-19 prior to and after every new journey – this includes door handles, keys, handrails, armrests, seat backs, seatbelts, driver controls, etc.
- 4.8 Social distancing between the driver and learners will mean a slight reduction in the vehicle capacity with the front row of seats on all large mainstream vehicles being out of bounds. Learners will be instructed to not sit in the seat marked with a red circle on the plan below. In smaller vehicle like taxis it will not be practical to socially distance and therefore all seat will be used.



- 4.9 Schools/colleges will start reopen to learners from 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2021, initially this will be for foundation phase pupils in primary schools and some vocational learners in colleges with further groups being added later on in Spring/Summer terms 2021. It is appreciated that not all learners from designated year groups may require transport. Schools/colleges and parents are encouraged



to let the ITU know of any learners who will definitely not be using school transport when schools/colleges return.

- 4.10 Learners waiting for buses should do so safely and this is a parental responsibility. Boarding buses should be done one at a time, the vacant seat nearest the rear of the bus must be used first; disembarking buses should be undertaken one at a time, from the most forward seats first, working back in turn to the rear seats (i.e. so that learners walking down the aisle do not pass any other seated learners). These rules apply for both inbound and outbound journeys. Drivers should report learners who do not adhere to these guidelines via the normal channels.
- 4.11 Where primary school learners have difficulty fitting seat belts themselves, the driver should offer verbal guidance and support from a safe distance – seat belts should be pre-adjusted for learner use.
- 4.12 Use social distancing where possible in a transport hub/school site where multiple vehicles may be present where loading and unloading is required – when boarding at a hub, drivers may stand off the bus 2 metres away from boarding learners/passengers; drivers should not congregate; schools may wish to supervise on-site unloading/loading.
- 4.13 Where school 'feeder' transport is provided, the operator should contact the ITU to discuss the available options, the ITU may consider possible revised arrangements, one of which may be to provide the transport directly to the end destination, and the reverse of this on the return journey.
- 4.14 Operators should provide good vehicle ventilation as much as practicably possible when carrying passengers.
- 4.15 On-board disposable cleaning fluids/cloths/disposable gloves and a suitable secure on-board bin for disposal of any cleaning items, tissues or PPE, for in-journey use, should be provided, all vehicles to be subject to 'deep cleaning' at the end of each day.
- 4.16 All staff and learners should maintain good hand hygiene (e.g. washing hands with soap and water or alcohol hand sanitiser, particularly straight before and straight after journeys), avoid direct hand contact with eyes, nose and mouth, and use tissues to catch coughs and sneezes (or at least to cough/sneeze into the crook of their elbow) disposing of tissues in a bin as soon as possible. Hand sanitiser should be made available to learners when boarding vehicles with both the Driver/PA and signage encouraging them to use it.
- 4.17 All operators staff including Drivers, PA's and Cleaners should have access to the appropriate PPE required to carry out their duties, further details can be found in the risk assessment for the provision of school transport during the Covid-19 pandemic.
- 4.18 To maintain on-vehicle social distancing protocols, concessionary passes will only be issued if it is clearly identifiable from the passes issued that there are going to be spare seats available on a particular route.
- 4.19 Where learners/passengers do not behave in accordance with transport guidance and/or generate an unacceptable safety risk to staff, it should be reported through the normal channels and persistent misbehaviour may result in withdrawal of their right to travel.
- 4.20 Safely dispose of any PPE if it is contaminated and straight after use.
- 4.21 At the end of their shift, drivers and Passenger Assistants (PAs) should minimise possible contamination before entering their own home – key things to do include washing with soap and water, and isolating clothes and personal effects in a bag/box prior to cleaning.

## **5. Additional Coronavirus (Covid-19) Guidance for Special Educational Needs Transport**

- 5.1 It is particularly important that ITU is informed by schools and parents which learners are returning and requiring provided transport. It should be noted that to enable us to provide the required transport, social distancing restrictions may be minimal, parents are requested to contact the ITU if they have any concerns.
- 5.2 Where taxi transport is normally provided in a normal sized 'car' for 1-3 learners with a Passenger Assistant, it will be impossible to maintain the current social distancing protocols, larger vehicles may be used where resources allow, however, this will not always be possible and therefore parents are advised to seek clarification for the ITU or the operator should they have any concerns.
- 5.3 The Passenger Assistant (PA) should be allocated a seat in the rear of the vehicle that is closest to the driver so that learners can be sat further away from the driver. If there is a specific physical, behavioural or medical need the PA should sit as close as practicably possible to the relevant learner/passenger. The PA may need to intervene if there is a specific in-journey incident. Full level 2 PPE should be worn by all PA's.
- 5.4 At pick up points, where staff receive passengers from their parents/carers, social distancing guidance must be adhered to and PPE, alcohol hand sanitiser and cleaning deployed appropriately straight before and after passenger handover has occurred; keep a maximum distance from and minimum time with parents/carers - there should be no physical contact with their doors, gates or parent/carer property or belongings.
- 5.5 An additional risk assessment should be carried out where circumstances change or where there are additional issues present.
- 5.6 For learners/passengers who may require rescue medication it is possible that transport will not be able to be provided because of the potential infection risks that this may cause. Please contact the ITU for clarification
- 5.7 If the PA needs to fasten a passenger's seat belt/harness, this should be done with minimal physical contact, wearing appropriate PPE.
- 5.8 When applying or removing PPE, it is important that the wearer's hands are washed/cleansed before and after each use, the donning and doffing of PPE in the correct order is essential to avoid cross contamination, full guidance on the correct method and sequence of donning and doffing PPE can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-personal-protective-equipment-use-for-non-aerosol-generating-procedures> also hints and tips on how to avoid glasses steaming up when wearing a face covering can be found here: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/av/newsbeat-53406105>
- 5.9 If drivers or PAs have to manoeuvre wheelchairs, they should 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 – for these tasks PPE should be worn, and this should include disposable gloves and fluid resistant face masks.
- 5.10 Special Educational Needs Transport (whether by taxi or accessible bus) should take account of the NHS procedures for transporting someone without Covid-19 symptoms where social distancing is not possible (please see 'Table 4' infection control) shown at: [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/879111/T4\\_poster\\_Recommended\\_PPE\\_additional\\_considerations\\_of\\_COVID-19.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/879111/T4_poster_Recommended_PPE_additional_considerations_of_COVID-19.pdf)

- 5.11 Proper planning and the use of appropriate PPE will be needed for wheelchair users and those with disabilities where handling and sustained contact may be required for getting on and off vehicles, as in the NHS procedures.
- 5.12 Transport will only be provided if it is the only option for the learner's/passenger's needs and is the right mode of transport for the person being transported.
- 5.13 Any unnecessary moving and handling or close sustained contact with the learner/passenger will be avoided.
- 5.14 If learners or passengers present an unacceptable safety risk to staff or other learners/passengers, the Council reserves the right to withdraw transport without notice.
- 5.15 The UK Government have issued advice in respect of 'COVID-19: infection prevention and control (IPC)' and operators and staff should be aware of this. It can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/wuhan-novel-coronavirus-infection-prevention-and-control>
- 5.16 Operators should also be aware of 'Guidance for Ambulance Trusts' which can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-for-ambulance-trusts/covid-19-guidance-for-ambulance-trusts>

## **6. Local Bus Services (public bus) Covid-19 Guidance**

6.1. The latest guidance for public transport can be found here <https://gov.wales/restarting-public-transport-guidance-operators>

## **7. Community Transport Groups**

7.1 The general principles above apply to community transport but if Groups have any queries, they should contact the ITU.

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*Telephone: 01437 775221 / 01437 7756313 or 01437 775220 or 01437 775222*

*Email: [school.transport@pembrokeshire.gov.uk](mailto:school.transport@pembrokeshire.gov.uk)*

*Web: [www.pembrokeshire.gov.uk](http://www.pembrokeshire.gov.uk)*

*Date: 5<sup>th</sup> February 2021*

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