Dear Parent / Guardian,

SEND Home to School Assisted Transport on Dedicated Services from September 2020

As Schools prepare to welcome all children back in September, we write regarding the provision of Assisted School Transport for SEND pupils and to clarify Halton Borough Council’s position on providing safe home to school travel, in line with recent Department for Education (DfE) guidance published on 2nd July 2020.


The guidance sets out a new framework for supporting transport to and from education settings in the Autumn term and details how Councils and special schools should work together to implement a safer environment for children and staff, where the risk of transmission is substantially reduced.

As outlined in the guidance, risk must be assessed and proportionate control measures put in place to minimise contact between individuals and maintain social distancing where possible in schools. However, the guidance also acknowledges that when planning routes, social distancing significantly reduces available transport capacity therefore maintaining distances or transporting within social bubbles may not be a practical option for children travelling on dedicated school transport.

With this in mind, a robust system of controls has been put in place for dedicated school transport. This requires partnership working between the Council, schools, transport providers, parents/carers and passengers to ensure that:

- Where possible, social bubbles will be grouped together on board the vehicle.
- Children over the age of 11 should wear face coverings on board the transport, which should be provided by parents. Some children may be exempt from doing so if they have a physical/mental illness or impairment, or a disability that means they are unable to put on, wear or remove a face covering. Children under the age of 11 are not required to wear a face covering but should be actively encouraged to do so if possible.
- Children’s hands should be sanitised by parents/carers before boarding the transport, and by school staff on arrival at school. Likewise, in the afternoons, hands should be sanitised by school staff before boarding the vehicle. Transport providers will be expected to carry hand sanitising equipment for when necessary.
- Transport providers should ensure that there are enhanced cleaning regimes in place, concentrating particularly on frequently touched surfaces. Vehicles should be well ventilated during the journey and sanitised prior to and on completion of each route.
- Where possible, transport staff should wear personal protective equipment (PPE) and the use of protective screens on board vehicles is encouraged.
- Some schools have put in place staggered start and finish times, and/or new procedures for drop off and pick up on school premises.
- Medically vulnerable pupils will require an additional individual risk assessment to determine the appropriate transport solution (parents may be required to provide additional supporting information).

As is standard practice, latest Government guidance will be constantly reviewed as it becomes available and protocols adjusted to ensure that there is full compliance with Health & Safety legislation.

We would remind all parents/carers that in the first instance, children should not board the transport if they are unwell.

Please do not hesitate to contact the Transport Co-ordination department if you need any further clarification on the points above.

Yours sincerely,

Transport Co-ordination