

## **School Transport & Covid – Headteacher’s Briefing**

Date: 17 November 2020

To: All Headteachers, School Business Managers, Senior staff

From: Sara Turnbull, Transport Services Director, Buckinghamshire Council

Purpose: This provides an update on school transport arrangements during Covid.

### **Safety in Covid**

All of our transport suppliers must carry out a risk assessment and ensure that they have arrangements in place for regular and thorough cleaning of vehicles after each school run, and that suitable measures such as face coverings and/or screens are in place. We are also asking parents/carers to support safety measures by ensuring that their child:

- washes or sanitises their hands before and after their journey;
- follows the seating instructions so that buses are loaded from the back to the front in the mornings and for the return journey from school, students are asked to return to the same seat that they used in the morning;
- does not leave rubbish on school transport or consume food or drink;
- wears a face covering for the duration of the journey and stores this in a bag.

Further details on the Council and operators safety measures can be viewed here: <https://www.buckscc.gov.uk/services/education/school-transport/coronavirus>

### **SEND Student Transport**

In August 2020 we wrote to all SEND parents of students who are eligible for transport assistance from the Council. We offered to pay parents/carers a 4-way mileage payment if they wished to take their child to school themselves rather than by taxi, to support social distancing measures in Covid.

We are pleased that there has been an increase in parents wanting to take up this offer of assistance and we are paying 4-way mileage for each school day at a mileage rate of 45p per mile.

We are working closely with taxi suppliers to ensure that where school transport is still required it is provided, with each supplier having contingency plans in place to ensure adequate cover arrangements are in place for drivers and passenger assistants in incidents where their transport crew are unable to work as they need to self-isolate. To date all contracts are being covered, however we are now beginning to see some suppliers experiencing workforce challenges as covid cases continue to rise in areas such as Aylesbury and Wycombe.

**I would be grateful if you are able to communicate to any SEND eligible parents at your school that the Council has an open offer to parents of paying a mileage rate to parents/carers who take their own child to school as an alternative to taxi transport.**

To claim this offer parents should complete a [Contact Us form](#) (search in the drop down menu for “Own transport reimbursement”).

### **Emergency Contact Details for School Staff**

**Please note: Emergency contact numbers are provided below in confidence for school and supplier staff below. Please do not give out these details to parents in order to ensure that your calls can be prioritised by the small office team.**

In the event of any positive covid cases or required self-isolation of your students, PHE will advise you on those requirements. Please continue to notify the Education Directorate at the Council at [sis@buckinghamshire.gov.uk](mailto:sis@buckinghamshire.gov.uk)

School transport will continue as normal unless passengers and/or staff are required to self-isolate as confirmed by Public Health England as part of the national test and trace programme.

In the event that students need to immediately self-isolate and this requirement is identified for students already at school, please be aware that school transport will pick up at the normal agreed timetabled changes, and therefore parental pick-up would be necessary, with isolation of those students affected within school premises prior to pick-up. Transport operators and workers carry out other work during the school day and are not available on stand-by.

**If you have any concerns about school transport in covid and wish to speak to the Client Transport Team please contact our emergency contact number phone Monday to Friday – Office Hours 01296 382997 – Evenings and weekends 07929 838865.**

For routine enquiries on school transport from schools please email: [clienttransportreturns@buckinghamshire.gov.uk](mailto:clienttransportreturns@buckinghamshire.gov.uk)

### **Parent Communications**

If parents have enquiries about school transport they should check the latest webpages here: <https://www.buckscc.gov.uk/services/education/school-transport/school-transport-information-for-parents-and-carers/>

If this does not answer the enquiry then parents are asked to submit a [Contact Us form](#)