

# Guidelines for parents whose children use Rutland County Council school transport

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## Important notice

All of our school transport is being operated in-line with the very latest guidance from Public Health England (PHE), the Department for Education (DfE) and the Department for Transport (DfT), which may be subject to change. DfT guidance regarding home to school transport [can be read here](#).

## School Transport Guidelines

We've all had to get used to changes in our daily lives and normal routines because of the need for preventative measures that help stop the spread of COVID-19.

Ahead of September and the start of the 2020 autumn term for schools across Rutland, we've prepared this guidance to tell you about the measures we are taking to ensure children using our transport services can travel to and from school safely.

This is important guidance that everyone must know and follow if they use any of our school transport services. It covers the following areas:

1. Waiting for transport
2. Hand hygiene and sanitisation
3. Face coverings
4. Student 'bubbles'
5. Other measures

Wherever possible, it is recommended that children walk or cycle to school, or are driven by parents. If this is not possible and children must make use of school transport services, please read this guidance in full and talk to your child or children about it.

If you have any questions or need to talk to us about any aspect of the guidance, please don't hesitate to get in touch with our School Transport team. We've provided their contact details at the end of this guide.

## 1. Waiting for Transport

### What we are doing...

- We have reviewed the busiest bus stops for school children and are putting additional measures in place, including allocating Council Officers to supervise bus stops in the mornings at the start of term, if needed
- We are disinfecting all bus stop and bus facilities and making sure that safe travel information is displayed clearly

### What we need children to do...

- We need all children to keep an appropriate distance apart from one another when waiting for their school transport to arrive. We also need them to follow any safety signs and listen to our Transport Officers, if they are on duty at your bus stop

## 2. Hand hygiene and sanitisation

### What we are doing...

- We will be making hand sanitiser gel available at the front of all our school buses and minibuses, and in the back of taxis that are being used for school transport

### What we need children to do...

- We need all children to use hand sanitiser when they board and disembark school transport in the morning and again in the afternoon. The only exemption to this would be if your child is wearing protective gloves or has an allergy
- If your child is unable to use hand sanitiser because of an allergy, please tell your school and we will look to find an alternative solution.

## 3. Face coverings

### What we are doing...

- In line with the latest government guidance about safe travel on public transport, all children aged 11 and over are asked to wear a face covering when using school transport
- There are some exemptions to this, [listed online](#). If you feel that your child should be exempt from wearing a face covering on school transport, please contact your school to give a reason for exemption. We will provide children with a special card to carry, if they are exempt
- Any child aged 11 and over with an Early Health and Care Plan (EHCP) will be automatically exempt from wearing a face covering on school transport. We will be writing to parents of children with an EHCP separately, with their exemption cards. This does not prevent children with an EHCP from wearing a face covering, if they choose to do so
- We have prepared additional guidance at the end of this document to help parents talk to children about face coverings and how to use them correctly

### What we need children to do...

- Children aged 11 and over who are NOT exempt from wearing a face covering on school transport should have two face coverings to use each day – one for the morning journey and one for the afternoon. These should be placed in a sealable plastic bag after use. Reusable masks must be washed daily. Disposable masks should be thrown away in your normal waste bin and cannot be recycled
- We need children aged 11 and over to wear their face coverings for the duration of their journeys to and from school, until this guidance changes. Face coverings remain optional for children under the age of 11
- If your child is exempt from wearing a face covering, please make sure they are carrying their exemption card and show it to the driver whenever they use school transport

**Unless they have a valid exemption, children aged 11 and over will not be able to use school transport without a face covering. This is an important requirement due to the serious nature of the pandemic. We want to work as closely as possible with schools, students, families and transport operators to implement this measure as sensitively and considerately as possible.**

## 4. Student ‘bubbles’

### What we are doing...

- Your child’s school may have implemented ‘student bubbles’ or seating plans as part of their own response to COVID-19. We are working with schools to mirror these bubbles on school transport, wherever possible.

### What we need children to do...

- Please make sure your child knows about any specific seating plans that we put in place on their school transport. Details will be communicated to you through your school

## 5. Other measures

We may implement extra school transport services for children who would normally travel to and from school on public transport. Please be aware that that this may be subject to change during the academic year, depending on any changes to the government’s Safer Travel guidance.

Your child must not board home to school transport if they, or a member of your household has COVID-19 symptoms. These include:

- A new continuous cough
- A high temperature
- A loss of, or change in, their normal sense of taste or smell

If your child should develop COVID-19 symptoms while at school they must not travel home using school transport. The school should contact you directly so that you can make alternative travel arrangements for your child's journey home.

## **Contact us**

We know this remains a difficult time for everyone. We are working closely with schools to ensure maximum safety for students, families, teaching staff and transport operators. It is our intention to work within these guidelines to help keep everyone safe.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact our School Transport team:

### **Email**

[transport@rutland.gov.uk](mailto:transport@rutland.gov.uk)

### **Telephone (Monday to Friday, 8.00am to 5.00pm)**

01572 720 939

### **Outside normal office hours (Monday to Friday, 7.00am to 8.00am and 5.00pm to 6.00pm)**

07901 744 527 or 07973 855 492

## Information and advice about face coverings for children and families

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We recognise that asking children aged 11 and over to wear a face covering when travelling to and from school is the most significant requirement in our school transport guidance for the autumn 2020 term.

Face coverings are already mandatory on all forms of public transport, and must also be worn indoors in shops, banks and post offices. From 8 August, facemasks are mandatory in most other public indoor settings.

All of our school transport is being operated in line with the latest guidance from Public Health England, the Department for Education and the Department for Transport. This may be subject to change, depending on future government announcements. DfT guidance regarding home to school transport [can be read here](#).

### How to wear a face covering

According to [official government guidance](#), a face covering should:

- Cover your nose and mouth while allowing you to breathe comfortably
- Fit comfortably but securely against the side of the face
- Be secured to the head with ties or ear loops
- Be made of a material that you find to be comfortable and breathable, such as cotton
- Ideally include at least two layers of fabric (the World Health Organisation recommends three depending on the fabric used)
- Unless disposable, it should be able to be washed with other items of laundry according to fabric washing instructions and dried without causing the face covering to be damaged

When wearing a face covering you should:

- Wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water for 20 seconds or use hand sanitiser before putting a face covering on
- Avoid wearing on your neck or forehead
- Avoid touching the part of the face covering in contact with your mouth and nose
- Change the face covering if it becomes damp or if you've touched it
- Avoid taking it off and putting it back on a lot in quick succession (for example, when leaving and entering shops on a high street)

When removing a face covering:

- Wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water for 20 seconds or use hand sanitiser before removing
- Only handle the straps, ties or clips
- Do not give it to someone else to use
- If single-use, dispose of it carefully in a residual waste bin and do not recycle

- If reusable, wash it in line with manufacturer's instructions at the highest temperature appropriate for the fabric
- Wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water for 20 seconds or use hand sanitiser once removed

There are other sources of information available online to help children learn more about the importance of face masks, including a helpful video guide produced by [the BBC's Newsround programme](#).

### How to wear a face covering: in pictures

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|    | <p>Wash your hands before putting on the mask.</p>   |
|    | <p>Make sure it covers your nose and mouth and fits snugly under your chin, over the bridge of your nose and against the sides of your face.</p>   |
|  | <p><b>Do not touch the front of the mask while wearing it.</b><br/>If you do touch the mask, wash or sanitise your hands immediately.<br/>Do not allow the mask to hang around your neck.</p>  |
|  | <p>To remove the mask wash or sanitise your hands first.<br/>Carefully remove your mask by grasping the ear loops or untying the ties. For masks with a pair of ties, unfasten the bottom one first, then the top one.</p>                 |
|  | <p>If your mask has filters, remove them and throw them away.<br/>Fold the mask and put it directly into the laundry or into a disposable or washable bag for laundering. Single use surgical masks should be disposed of responsibly.</p> |
|  | <p>Wash or sanitise your hands after removing the mask.</p>  |

### Returning to school

We know that the majority of children have been away from school for several months, and that some may be anxious about returning to the classroom.

Young Minds have advice on [supporting a child going back to school after lockdown](#).

NSPCC also have information on [how to talk to a child who is worried about going back to school](#).