

Bridgend County Borough Council
Reopening Schools - Home-to-school transport

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) for parents

T1. When will schools open for pupils?

Schools will reopen from Monday 29 June 2020.

T2. Will school transport be available from the 29 June 2020?

Although there has been no change to the eligibility of pupils for home-to-school transport, government advice is that you should seek where possible, to make your own arrangements to transport your child to school. Unfortunately due to strict social distancing requirements, school transport may not be available for all eligible learners for each session they attend at school. Parents/carers will be informed if this is the case.

T3. My child does not normally catch the school bus as they are not eligible. Will there be school transport available for them?

No, only pupils normally eligible for free home-to-school transport will be able to access it.

T4. I'm worried about social distancing on school buses, what arrangements are you making?

All buses and mini-buses will operate at a reduced capacity to maintain, where possible the current nationally required social distancing requirement. Taxis will not be used, as they are unable to meet the nationally required social distancing requirement.

T5. Will my children be able to sit together on the same bus?

Yes, as long as they are from the same household (they live together in the same property). However, this will also depend on the impact that this has on maintaining the nationally required social distancing requirements for other children on the same bus.

T6. Will hand sanitiser be available for my child on school transport vehicles?

Transport operators may make sanitiser available for children, although there is no requirement for them to use it. Good hand hygiene should be encouraged, especially when leaving home and on arrival at school.

T7. Is there anything you expect parents to do at this time?

Please talk to your child about maintaining social distancing, hygiene and good behaviour when using school transport. It is very important that children board and alight any school transport calmly and safely and remain seated at all times. Any instruction from the bus driver or an escort (where provided) should be followed. Any poor behaviour will not be tolerated and any child who puts another occupant at risk may lose their entitlement to free transport.

T8. My child normally has a taxi to school, what happens now?

The local authority is using minibuses with a reduced capacity. Taxis will not be used at this time, as the nationally required social distancing requirement is not able to be met.

T9. Should my child wear a face mask on school transport?

The use of a face mask for school pupils is optional. There is currently no requirement for pupils to wear face masks on school transport, although it is recommended that if a child feels comfortable wearing one, they are able to do so.

<https://gov.wales/face-coverings-frequently-asked-questions>

T10. Do I need to accompany my child to a bus stop?

Pupils in primary school who are eligible for home-to-school transport need to be accompanied to their nearest bus stop by a responsible adult (from the same household) unless they have a prior arrangement with the local authority for exemption.

Please remember to follow the nationally required social distancing requirements on your journey to the bus stop/pick-up point.

Secondary school pupils do not need to be accompanied to the bus stop/pick-up point, but please remind them to adhere to the nationally required social distancing requirements at all times.

T11. Do I need to be available to collect my child at the bus stop/pick up point at the end of the school day?

All pupils in primary school must be received at their bus stop/pick-up point by a responsible adult at the end of the school day, unless they have a prior arrangement with the local authority for exemption.

T12. The bus stop is very small and there is very little space around it to maintain nationally required social distancing. What should I do?

The local authority understands that some bus stops are restricted. Parents/carers are advised to look for alternative ways to take their child to school. However, if this is not possible, parents/carers are advised to maintain the nationally required social distancing requirement where possible.

T13. What must a child be able to do, to make use of school bus?

Unfortunately, due to social distancing requirements, parents/carers are unable to help their child to board or alight the bus, or fasten their seat belt.

They must be able to do these three things independently, if they are unable to do so, they will not be allowed to travel.

T14. My child's bus isn't able to park in the school grounds, so pupils normally have to walk from the bus to the school. Will this continue?

All schools should have existing traffic management plans in place. Times of attendance for pupils will be staggered for different groups and schools will be operating at reduced capacity

The local authority is making arrangements with transport operators and school staff to ensure pupils are adequately supported to access the school site while maintaining any nationally required social distancing requirement.

T15. My child has additional learning needs and normally has an escort with them on the transport. Will this continue?

Government advice is that you should seek, where possible, to make your own arrangements to transport your child to school.

Where this is not possible, and where safe to do so, no escort will be provided. However, this will be based on an assessment of the needs of the child.

For some children, where an escort has been provided previously this may not be possible at this time. There is no statutory requirement to provide escorts, although the local authority will assess the needs of learners and determine the appropriateness of an escort in all cases.

T16. My child is eligible for free home-to-school transport, are they guaranteed access to school transport?

Government advice is that you should seek where possible to make your own arrangements to transport your child to school. School transport will be prioritised for vulnerable learners. As the number and capacity of suitable vehicles is limited and depending on demand, the local authority may not be able to transport all eligible learners at this time.

T17. If I choose to take my child to school in my own vehicle, will I be able to access and park on the school site?

The government is advising parents to consider using active travel arrangements eg walking, cycling etc rather than the use of private motor vehicles. However, it is acknowledged that this will not be practical for many families. Nevertheless, there will be no relaxation of on-street parking restrictions at this time and highways enforcement vehicles will be present around many schools. Furthermore, in order to ensure pedestrian safety, schools will not be relaxing their own on-site access restrictions and control measures.