

School Transport – Messaging: (14 Aug 2020)

Translink, working in partnership with the Education Authority (EA) has put plans in place to enable children to return to school safely using public transport this autumn. These plans take into consideration any changes to school opening patterns and are in line with the latest Government guidance on public health.

Safety is always our top priority and in line with public health advice, we have introduced a range of measures across the Translink network to keep everyone safe. This means things look a bit different at stations and on-board and pupils may need to leave some extra time for their journey.

These changes are for everyone's protection, guided by the latest advice from the NI Executive and health experts because we want everyone to feel safe and confident when they need to use our services. For more information on safe travel on other dedicated school transport services you can also visit the EA's website <https://www.eani.org.uk/education-restart>

Safeguarding pupils travelling with us:

We expect that both scheduled timetabled services and dedicated school services will be busy at peak times. We've a range of safety measures in place to protect everyone, including young people travelling to school this September.

These include:

- Operating extra school services buses, to provide increased capacity as required;
- Where appropriate, working with schools to arrange pick-ups at schools to reduce volume of pupils at bus stations;
- Providing our staff with appropriate PPE that helps to keep them and pupils, as safe as possible;
- Extra staff in stations where required, to assist with travel connections and social distancing;
- **Enhanced vehicle deep cleaning and sanitation** - using long-lasting anti-viral cleaning products that keep surfaces virus-free;
- Mobile cleaning teams travelling on board sanitising common touch areas;
- Key seats cordoned off on dedicated school buses;
- Hand sanitiser units available at all stations;
- Protective screens in stations and on the bus drivers cab.

These actions will ensure we maintain high safety standards on board and in stations when social distancing becomes more challenging as more people return to public transport.

Help us help you:

We are actively calling on everyone *to practice the wider safety and travel advice including:*

- Good hand hygiene – consider carrying your own hand sanitiser;
- Using contactless payments where pupils are not entitled to a free travel pass;
- Travel off peak where schools can facilitate this and leave extra time for your journey;
- Avoid consuming food and drink on public transport, where possible;
- Consider walking and cycling options if appropriate;
- Please do not travel if you are experiencing any symptoms of Covid-19 [symptoms](#) or your household has been advised to isolate.
- Please behave responsibly when travelling, misbehaviour can endanger others as well as yourself and will be reported to your school and Education Authority.

Use of Face Coverings:

- Pupils over 13 will be required to wear a face covering if travelling on scheduled public transport services and in bus and train stations unless you are exempt;
- We also strongly encourage wearing a face covering if travelling on dedicated school bus services;
- Wearing a face covering is for everyone's protection as it helps everyone to travel safely together. With over 80% compliance - we encourage you to wear and show you care.

Ticketing:

We understand a number of pupils will return to school early therefore Sessional Passes will be valid on Translink services from Monday 24th August. Full School services will resume on Tuesday 1st September.

Pupils who do not have access to a free Sessional Pass should use one of our pre-paid ticket options such as mLink, Smartlink, dayLink, iLink or contactless payments - don't forget there will be no change given on board the bus or train.

Working with Schools:

In line with the DE guidance on the re-opening of schools, Translink and EA are working with schools to maximise services in an area and to help manage the number of pupils travelling at peak times.

Let's go safely together

Translink has been at the frontline throughout this crisis helping get people to where they need to be and now we are ready to get schools back up and running to get young people back into education in this 'new normal' and helping Northern Ireland recover safely and sustainably.