

ERYC Updated advice and guidance for parents/carers in relation to home to school transport

A small proportion of East Riding children and young people rely on home to school and college transport, provided by the council, to get to their school or college. Some pupils may also need or chose to use public transport to get to their place of education.

East Riding schools, academies and Post-16 providers are working hard on their preparations for a full school return from 7th September, to ensure that all pupils and staff are safe once on-site.

The council is committed to ensuring that children and young people stay as safe as possible on the journey to and from their place of learning to minimise the risk of coronavirus transferring across schools, settings and households.

Providers of home to school and college transport, as well as public transport are working to a system of controls that focuses on a series of hygiene measures aimed at minimising risk and creating a safer environment for all pupils. These measures are mirrored across all schools and colleges in the East Riding.

This advice and guidance is modelled around the safe systems of control:

- 1) minimise contact with individuals who are unwell by ensuring that those who have coronavirus (COVID-19) symptoms, or who have someone in their household who does, do not use ER school and college or public transport
- 2) clean hands thoroughly more often than usual
- 3) ensure good respiratory hygiene by promoting the 'catch it, bin it, kill it' approach
- 4) introduce enhanced cleaning regimes, including cleaning frequently touched surfaces more often, using standard products such as detergents and bleach
- 5) minimise contact between individuals and maintain social distancing wherever possible
- 6) where necessary, wear appropriate face coverings.

It will not always be possible to adhere to social distancing on transport and the Government advises that to help keep pupils, other passengers and transport staff safe the following precautions should be taken:

- limit the number of people or households that you come into contact with, for example where you can, avoid the busiest routes, as well as busy times like the rush hour
- wash or sanitise hands regularly
- use a face covering on public transport and in substantially enclosed areas of transport hubs
- avoid touching your face
- cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or the inside of your elbow when coughing or sneezing
- travel side by side or behind other people, rather than facing them, where seating arrangements allow
- touch as few surfaces as possible
- stay outdoors, rather than indoors, where possible
- where possible minimise the time spent close to other people
- avoid loud talking, shouting or singing
- dispose of waste safely, including items such as used disposable face coverings

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It is now law that children aged 11 and over must wear face coverings whilst travelling on public transport. The most up-to-date guidance, *Coronavirus (COVID-19): safer travel guidance for passengers*, can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-safer-travel-guidance-for-passengers>

If your child uses East Riding of Yorkshire Council's dedicated school transport and is 11 years or older, **there is a requirement for them to wear a face covering.** The Government guidance in relation to transport to schools and colleges can be found by following the link below:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/transport-to-school-and-other-places-of-education-autumn-term-2020/transport-to-school-and-other-places-of-education-autumn-term-2020>

Guidance in relation to when to wear a face covering, exemptions and how to make your own, can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/face-coverings-when-to-wear-one-and-how-to-make-your-own/face-coverings-when-to-wear-one-and-how-to-make-your-own>

As a general rule, children and young people who use either dedicated home to school and college transport or public transport and are 11 years old or over should wear a face covering while travelling.

A face covering is something which safely covers the nose and mouth. You can buy reusable or single-use face coverings. You may also use a scarf, bandana, religious garment or hand-made cloth covering but these must securely fit round the side of the face.

Face coverings are largely intended to protect others, not the wearer, against the spread of infection because they cover the nose and mouth, which are the main confirmed sources of transmission of virus that causes coronavirus infection (COVID-19).

There are some circumstances where children and young people on transport may not be able to wear a face covering. Please ask your child to be mindful and respectful of such circumstances, noting that some people are less able to wear face coverings, and that the reasons for this may not always be visible to others.

This includes, but is not limited to:

- children under the age of 11 (Public Health England do not recommended face coverings for children under the age of 3 for health and safety reasons)
- people who cannot put on, wear or remove a face covering because of a physical or mental illness, impairment, or disability
- transport workers, i.e. drivers - although employers may consider their use where appropriate and where other mitigations are not in place, in line with COVID-19 guidelines
- where putting on, wearing or removing a face covering will cause severe distress
- if you are speaking to or providing assistance to someone who relies on lip reading, clear sound or facial expressions to communicate

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Exemptions

Those children and young people who have an age, health or disability reason for not wearing a face covering should not be routinely asked to give any written evidence of this, this includes exemption cards. No person needs to seek advice or request a letter from a medical professional about their reason for not wearing a face covering.

However some children and young people may feel more comfortable showing something that says they do not have to wear a face covering. This could be in the form of an exemption card, badge or even a home-made sign.

This is a personal choice and is not necessary in law. The link below provides information on the kinds of exemption cards and badges available as well as how to obtain these:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/903452/Exemption_from_face_covering_badge_for_mobile_phone.pdf

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/903453/Exemption_from_face_covering_badge_to_print.pdf

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/903454/Exemption_from_face_covering_card_to_print.pdf

Since the outbreak of coronavirus, East Riding of Yorkshire Council has been continually assessing the risk of using dedicated home to school and college transport, and public transport, in order to keep children and young people as safe as possible. The council cannot guarantee social distancing on public transport or on dedicated home to school and college transport, but are working with contractors to provide this where possible.

It is important that everyone plays their part and makes every effort to reduce the risk to themselves and others around them.

Where parents or carers feel that for whatever reason the transport provided by the council is not suitable for their child or young person the council appreciates that parents and carers have the choice to fulfil this duty themselves. Unfortunately, the council is not in a position to consider alternatives.

Parents and carers should be aware of the following principles:

- Pupils should not travel if they are presenting with symptoms, a test should be arranged and the pupil must isolate for ten days from the onset of symptoms
- Pupils should not travel if a member of their household is presenting with symptoms, they must isolate for 14 days and follow Public Health England guidance in relation to getting a test
- Parents and carers should, where possible, bring their children to school themselves. They could consider walking, cycling (where safe to do so) or driving
- Parents and carers should talk to their children about personal space and try to ensure their child understands there should be no physical contact with others in the transport
- Where a child or young person becomes symptomatic during the school day, the child's parent or carers should make arrangements for the child to be collected from school as soon as possible

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- **Children and young people 11 years of age and over** travelling to school on public transport must wear a face covering, unless they have breathing difficulties or a disability that makes it difficult for them to do - this is no longer a personal preference. Children below 11 years of age, who can manage the safe use of a face covering should also be encouraged to wear one
- **Children and young people 11 years of age and over** travelling to school on dedicated home to school or college transport should wear a face covering, unless they have breathing difficulties or a disability that makes it difficult for them to do so. Children below 11 years of age, who can manage the safe use of a face covering should also be encouraged to wear one
- There is an expectation that the parents or carers of any child or young person accessing dedicated home to school transport will comply with the NHS Test and Trace procedures
- No child or young person will be left at the roadside, however where a child or young person 11 years and over does not wear a face covering and is not exempt, this will be followed up and support and advice offered
- Council staff and drivers on transport and school staff will not be responsible for the safe use of face coverings
- Parents and carers should make sure their child knows how to put on and take off their face covering safely
- Parents and carers should ensure their children or young people know to listen to the driver, school staff and any passenger assistants in relation to boarding, seating and alighting vehicles
- Children should not ordinarily eat or drink on transport, this is particularly important at this time (to reduce hand-to-face contact)
- Parents and carers should talk to their children about safe queuing at bus stops etc. (where this is applicable)
- Parents and carers should ensure children wash their hands and face before leaving the house to use the transport
- Parents and carers are advised that contractors who provide transport may be using signage on their vehicles to illustrate where children and young people should and should not sit (this is to ensure risks are minimised whilst on transport)
- Children and young people should adhere to any instructions provided by their school or displayed on vehicles
- Where possible hand sanitiser will be provided on vehicles
- Schools will encourage children and young people to wash their hands, remove their face covering and place it into a closed bin (disposable coverings) or in their bag (reusable face coverings) on arrival at school, they will also remind children to wash their hands and put their masks on before accessing transport at the end of the school day
- Parents and carers should ensure their children are adequately dressed for the journey as vehicles may be more ventilated than usual (windows and roof ventilation open to ensure air circulation)
- Parents and carers must ensure their children or young people understand that they must avoid loud talking, shouting or singing on transport (being quiet reduces the risk of droplets being carried to anyone else on the vehicle)
- Parents, carers, children and young people are encouraged to use the Buswise system to report any issues on transport:

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East Riding of Yorkshire Council (external council website)

- **There will be consequences for children and young people whose behaviour causes concern on transport and or deliberately break the rules associated with safe travel**
- Schools will be understanding if pupils arrive late to school due to parents or carers bringing them to school. This could be due to dropping off other children at other educational establishments. Where this is the case the pupil will be marked as 'late' in the attendance register and not 'late after the register has closed'. This **will not** prejudice the pupil or school in relation to attendance recording.

If you have any questions in relation to home to school or college transport you should contact Transportation Services:

Email: transport.requests@eastriding.gov.uk

Tel: (01482) 395444.