

Shropshire Council

Passenger Transport Group

Persons with Positive Covid-19 Tests/Symptoms School Transport Response Protocols

A. Introduction

The Council provide free home to school transport for around 20% of Shropshire pupils and the protocols below outline how we intend to deal with incidents relating to Covid-19 symptoms and positive tests.

These protocols have been drawn up under guidance from Shropshire's Public Health team and Government Covid-19 advice.

Our aim is to maintain operational delivery of provided school transport in a Covid-19 safe way, with safety taking precedence where needs be.

B. Department for Education and Public Health England (Health Protection Hubs)

Schools have been advised to contact the DfE Helpline on 0800 046 8687 and select option 1 for advice on the action to take in response to a positive case in school. Public Health England (PHE)/Health Protection Hubs (HPH) will then lead on all actions to be taken in response to positive Covid-19 tests or persons displaying Covid-19 symptoms in an education setting.

Each case will be dealt with based on its own circumstances and outcomes will be bespoke to each case.

C. General Rules

Whilst each case is individual, the following general rules will apply:

- No pupil should travel on school or public transport or attend school/college if they have any symptoms compatible with Covid-19 or have tested positive for Covid-19, and they should self-isolate at home for 10 days
- No pupil should travel on school or public transport or attend school/college if a member of their household displays symptoms or has tested positive for Covid-19 and they should self-isolate at home for 14 days
- Anyone who has been identified as a direct or proximity contact with someone who has tested positive for Covid-19 should self-isolate at home for 14 days and should not travel on school or public transport or attend school/college

- Covid-19 tests should only be requested if someone has Covid-19 symptoms or is requested to do so by a medical practitioner or the NHS or 'NHS Test and Trace' or have been advised to by the local authority.

D. Definition of a 'Contact'

The definition of a 'contact' (i.e. someone coming into 'contact' with someone who has Covid-19 symptoms or who has tested positive for Covid-19) means someone who has had:

- direct close contacts - face to face contact with an infected individual for any length of time, within 1 metre, including being coughed on, a face to face conversation, or unprotected physical contact (skin-to-skin)
- proximity contacts - extended close contact (within 1 to 2 metres for more than 15 minutes) with an infected individual
- a person who has travelled in a small vehicle with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19 or in a large vehicle or plane near someone who has tested positive for COVID-19

E. Contacts of 'Contacts'

In line with PHE advice, only Covid-19 'contacts' will be asked to self-isolate, not contacts of 'contacts'.

So, if someone (e.g. a pupil, a driver, a teacher) is identified as a contact with someone who has tested positive for Covid-19 they will need to self-isolate for 14 days. But anyone who has been in contact with a 'contact' does not need to self-isolate, unless the 'contract' then displays symptoms or tests positive.

As an example, if Child A tests positive and they have been in contact with Child B, Child B will need to self-isolate for 14 days. But the contacts of Child B will not need to self-isolate but should do so if Child B subsequently tests positive or has symptoms.

F. NHS - Symptoms of Covid-19/ Coronavirus

The main symptoms of Covid-19/Coronavirus are:

- a high temperature – this means you feel hot to touch on your chest or back (you do not need to measure your temperature)
- a new, continuous cough – this means coughing a lot for more than an hour, or 3 or more coughing episodes in 24 hours (if you usually have a cough, it may be worse than usual)
- a loss or change to your sense of smell or taste – this means you've noticed you cannot smell or taste anything, or things smell or taste different to normal

Most people with Covid-19/Coronavirus have at least 1 of these symptoms.

G. Schools

Decisions on Covid-19 issues involving schools where school transport is involved, will be led by PHE (HPH), in conjunction with the relevant school and the Council's Public Health and Learning & Skills teams. Schools should promptly inform the Council's Passenger Transport Group of any Covid-19 issues that impact on school transport, via the agreed communication channels.

Decisions on school transport operations will be led by PHE and will be in the context of the school's response to any Covid-19 events.

Where schools need to send pupils home in the middle of the school day, transport home will normally be a parental responsibility.

H. Operators

Operators should immediately contact the Council's Passenger Transport Group if any of their drivers/passenger assistants test positive or have symptoms compatible with Covid-19, so that we can assist in identifying any pupil 'contacts' if they are then required to isolate as identified by PHE.

In any case, operators should stay in close touch with the Passenger Transport Group and report any Covid-19 concerns they may have. PTG will keep Operators informed of any relevant Covid-19 developments in real time.

Current Council plans are that a contracted Operator will normally still be paid during any period that a bus is withdrawn for a Covid-19 related issue.

I. Shropshire Council's Passenger Transport Group

If the Passenger Transport Group become aware of any Covid-19 incidents, we will inform colleagues in PHE, the Council's Public Health and Learning & Skills teams, along with the relevant school immediately, and seek guidance. Likewise, we expect schools and operators to inform the Passenger Transport Group immediately via the agreed channels, if they became aware of any Covid-19 incidents that may affect school transport provision.

J. Dedicated Home to School Buses – 'A Pupil Tests Positive/Displays Covid-19 Symptoms'

If a pupil using school transport tests positive for Covid-19 or displays Covid-19 symptoms the following response hierarchy will be implemented, as guided by PHE, the school and Council's Public Health and L&S teams:

1. The pupil(s) who has Covid-19 symptoms or has tested positive should stop travelling on the school bus immediately - they should self-isolate at home for 10 days

and....
2. Depending on PHE advice, the positive pupil's 'direct' and 'proximity' contacts should not travel on school transport and they should self-isolate for 14 days

or,

3. Depending on PHE advice, the positive pupil's identified 'Bubble' may be advised not travel on school transport and they should self-isolate for 14 days,

or,

4. Depending on PHE advice, the positive pupil's fellow school bus travellers (pupils) and driver(s) should not travel on school transport and they should self-isolate for 14 days

or,

5. Depending on PHE advice, in a Covid 19 event a school may be advised to close for a period of time and school transport to that school will be suspended for that period. Drivers and passenger assistants where identified as contacts by PHE, may be told to self-isolate for 14 days

NB reference to 'school buses' means all school transport, including buses, coaches, minibuses, accessible buses and taxis; the principles here also apply to the Council's Adult Social Care transport services

K. Public Buses – 'A Pupil or Student Tests Positive/Displays Covid-19 Symptoms'

If a pupil or student using public transport tests positive for Covid-19 or displays symptoms compatible with Covid-19 they should self-isolate at home for 10 days. The public bus operator should be informed immediately.

PHE will undertake a risk assessment and determine what action is required and the 'Test and Trace' system will seek to identify the positive pupil's/student's 'contacts'; those identified will be asked to self-isolate for 14 days.

Where the Council has details of other pupils/students travelling on the public bus journeys affected, these may be shared with 'Test and Trace'. Those involved may also be asked to self-isolate for 14 days, depending on the circumstances involved.

L. Member of a Pupil's Household Tests Positive

Only the pupil living in the household where someone has tested positive (or has symptoms) needs to self-isolate for 14 days. Other pupils in contact with the pupil from the household do not need to self-isolate, unless the pupil subsequently tests positive or has symptoms.

M. Teacher Tests Positive or is Symptomatic

PHE will determine what action is required. Any identified 'contacts' of a positive tested teacher will need to self-isolate for 14 days, and that may include pupils travelling on school buses, but not their 'contacts'. (NB see D, E and J above)

N. Driver/Passenger Assistant Tests Positive or is Symptomatic

The driver/passenger assistant should self-isolate at home for 10 days. PHE will determine what other action is required.

Any identified 'contacts' of a positive tested driver/passenger assistant will need to self-isolate for 14 days, and that may include pupils travelling on school buses, but not their 'contacts'. (NB see D, E and J above)

O. NHS and PHE

For urgent medical problems support is available by ringing NHS Direct on 111.

If you develop symptoms compatible with Covid-19, you must book a test at www.nhs.uk or by ringing 119 if you have no internet access.

The NHS website dealing with Covid-19 is at:

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/>

A range of guidance from PHE (Public Health England) can be found at this website:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/coronavirus-covid-19-list-of-guidance>

P. Summary

By following this guidance, we will all help reduce the risk of Covid-19 and at the same time best manage Shropshire's home to school transport network in the continuing national emergency.

Advice about school transport and any related Covid-19 issues is available from the Council's Passenger Transport Group at the contact points below.

By working together, we can make Shropshire safe.

Passenger Transport Group
Shropshire Council
Shirehall
Abbey Foregate
Shrewsbury SY2 6ND

<https://shropshire.gov.uk/school-transport>

Contact Passenger Transport Group at:

passtrans@shropshire.gov.uk [01743 253031](tel:01743253031) or [01743 253044](tel:01743253044)

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