

Shropshire Council

Passenger Transport Group

Covid-19 - Public Buses for Pupils and Students

from 8th March 2021

Introduction

Many Shropshire school pupils and students use public (LBS) buses to get to school/college, but because of Covid-19 seating regulations bus loading capacities are below 50%. When schools/colleges returned from the winter Lockdown in March 2021 many public buses still didn't have enough capacity.

Extra buses

So, Government continue to ask local authorities to liaise with their schools and operators and arrange for additional peak time buses (or coaches) to be provided for school children and students in cases where there isn't enough capacity.

Where this was most likely, the Council has arranged via tender for extra temporary school/college only 'Shadow' buses to directly follow the main public bus with a 'Schools Service' sign and a service number displayed at the front of the bus, in order to provide extra capacity (*please see list in Table 1. below*). All school children and students should travel on these extra peak time buses, which were originally provided wef 2/9/20 in term time, but which were suspended in the Covid Lockdown between 6/1/21 and 7/3/21, and then reactivated on 8/3/21.

Adult fare paying passengers should continue to use the main existing public buses.

Principles Governing Extra Bus Deployment

The provision of extra capacity by the Council on the public bus network for Shropshire residents is based on providing extra 'shadow' buses for inter urban and rural services only, where pupil/student numbers are over 10 on peak journeys. For pupils living in urban areas, parents have been encouraged to use active travel or travel by car as alternatives to public buses where they can (please see below).

Travel Passes and Fares

Where the Council provide extra 'Shadow' buses, entitled pupils and students issued with Council travel passes can travel without payment of fares, but other non-entitled pupils and students will need to purchase a ticket from the registered bus operator of the service (i.e. not the 'Shadow' bus

operator) and present this to the driver of the 'Shadow' bus to travel. On-bus cash fare payments are being avoided. There was a limited two-week period of grace at the start of the term to allow time for pupils/students/parents to purchase tickets and for operators to issue them.

The operator web sites are at:

<https://www.arrivabus.co.uk/buy-tickets/region/midlands/zone/amd009>

<https://lakesidecoaches.co.uk/>

<https://tanat.co.uk/>

<https://www.diamondbuses.com/west-midlands/>

'School Services' and 'Shadow' Buses

On some public bus services, bus operators have 'closed' their buses to adult passengers and made the services 'School Service' only – there is no Government requirement for social distancing on these buses which can therefore potentially operate at full seating capacity (*please see Tables 2a and 2b below*). The same rules apply to the extra 'closed' 'Shadow' buses deployed by the Council.

On-bus Social Distancing

Whatever the capacity of the bus or the number of passengers travelling, pupils and students should always maintain the maximum social distancing possible, including using window seats only, until only aisle seats remain vacant.

Secondary pupils and college students should wear face coverings on buses, and everyone should use hand gel regularly. Where known, Year Groups should try to sit in the same area of the bus.

Avoiding Public Buses

Where non-entitled pupils have previously travelled on public transport (LBS), because loading capacities on public buses are less than 50%, parents are encouraged to find alternative ways of getting their children to school – if they live in the same town/community as the school, active travel (walking/cycling) should be the first choice. The second choice should be travel by car. Only if none of these options are available to parents should they attempt to use public transport.

'Park & Stride'

Where parental cars are used instead of active travel, a 'Park & Stride' strategy can be used – this is a simple solution that allows pupils to walk for part of their journey and where parents safely park a little further away from school, typically within a 5 to 10 minutes walking distance. Parents will decide whether or not to escort their children to and from school on the 'Stride' element of the journey. 'Park & Stride' helps reduce entry risks at the school and eases access overall.

Contact Your Bus Operator

If you require further information regarding public bus services, please contact your local bus operator or call Shropshire Council's Customer Service Centre on 0345 678 9008 or email passtrans@shropshire.gov.uk

**Table 1. Additional Temporary School ‘Shadow’ Buses:
Adding capacity to public buses - Reactivated 8th March
2021**

Local (Public) Bus Service No.	‘Shadow’ Buses Depart (Hours)	Local (Public) Bus Service route	Schools/Colleges served	Registered Bus Operator *Adults Only*	‘Shadow’ Bus Operator (wef 2/09/20 unless otherwise stated) *Pupils/Students only*
53	07:55 16:01	Oswestry - Ellesmere	Lakelands Academy, Ellesmere	Arriva	Lakeside Coaches
53	07:40 15:10	Ellesmere - Oswestry	The Marches School, Oswestry	Arriva	Lakeside Coaches (changed from Arriva by arrangement with Arriva wef 22/3/21)
576	07:20 15:35	Shrewsbury – Oswestry	The Marches School, Oswestry	Arriva	Owens of Oswestry
576	07:05 16:25	Oswestry – Shrewsbury	Shrewsbury College	Arriva	Owens of Oswestry
436	07:33 16:45	Bridgnorth – Shrewsbury	Shrewsbury College	Arriva	Whittles Coach & Bus
546	08:05 15:09	Pulverbatch - Shrewsbury	Meole Brace School, Shrewsbury	Arriva	Longmynd Travel
501	07:15 16:20	Ellesmere - Shrewsbury	Meole Brace School Shrewsbury College	Lakeside	Lakeside Coaches
558	07:30 16:30	Montgomery – Worthen - Shrewsbury	Shrewsbury College	Tanat Valley	Tanat Valley
64	07:25 17:15	Market Drayton - Shrewsbury	Shrewsbury College	Arriva	Lakeside Coaches Wef 14/09/20
70	07:27 16:47	Oswestry - Shrewsbury	Shrewsbury College	Arriva	Owens of Oswestry Wef 15/09/20
125	07:32	Bridgnorth Low Town via Highley to Kidderminster (Mornings Only)	Kidderminster College	Diamond Bus	Diamond Bus Wef 19/10/20
511	08:20 15:35	Higher Heath - Whitchurch	Sir John Talbot’s School	Arriva	Lakeside Coaches
9	15:48	Bridgnorth – Rudge Heath (Afternoon Only)	Oldbury Wells School	Arriva	Caradoc
9	15:53	Bridgnorth – Upper Ludstone (Afternoon Only)	Bridgnorth Endowed School	Arriva	Whittles Coach & Bus

NB Greyed Out Lines (above)

These additional buses carry entitled pupils only

NB Operator Phone Numbers

Arriva 0344 800 4411

Lakeside 01691 622761

Owens of Oswestry 01691 652126

Longmynd Travel 01743 861999

Tanat Valley 01691 780212

Caradoc 01694 724522

Whittles Coach & Bus 01562 82000

Diamond Bus 01562 561220

Table 2a. Arriva's 'School Service' Only Public Bus Services (LBS) – From September 2020, continuing wef 8th March 2021

Route Number/Times/Journey

S9 0725 Bridgnorth - Wolverhampton Grammar School 0817

S9 1605 Wolverhampton Grammar School - Bridgnorth 1644

S54 0816 Cefn Y Blodwel - North Shropshire College 0850

S54 1500 Oswestry - Cefn y Blodwel 1525

S71 0804 Four Crosses - Oswestry 0829

S71 1505 Oswestry - Four Crosses 1533

S405 0800 Windsor Road - Woodside School 0835

S405 1508 Marches School - Unicorn Road 1521

S53 1542 St Martin's School - Oswestry 1600

S53 0740 Ellesmere – Marches School 0830

S53 1510 Marches School – Ellesmere 1601

S519 0725 Newport - Shrewsbury 0830

S519 1445 Shrewsbury - Newport 1546

S519 1715 Shrewsbury - Newport 1816

*S521 0735 Shrewsbury - Newport Girls School 0830

*S521 1557 Newport Girls School - Shrewsbury 1657

**NB Operated for Arriva by Bouden Coach Travel (0800 112 3770) wef 9th November 2020*

S20 0805 Shrewsbury - Priory School 0818

S20 1518 Priory School - Shrewsbury 1535

SX4 1610 Shrewsbury College - Telford

SX5 0810 Telford - Shrewsbury College

SX5 0830 Telford – Shrewsbury Bus Station

SX5 1455 Shrewsbury College - Telford 1515

SX5 1610 Shrewsbury College - Telford 1630

S894 0730 Dawley - William Brookes School 0835

S894 1515 William Brookes School - Dawley 1620

S895 0750 Overdale - William Brookes School 0830

S895 1515 William Brookes School - Overdale 1555

NB these journeys in Table 2a are all provided by Arriva and from September 2002 will all be 'School Services', not available to the general public, in order to maximise the vehicle capacity. These journeys will all be identified on the bus, on Arriva's travel's 'App' and on their website with an "S" prefix. The list does not include local public bus services where Shropshire Council has tendered for extra buses (i.e. 'Shadow' buses) to run along with existing public bus services, which are shown in Table 1. above.

The journeys highlighted in yellow will operate as 'duplicates' to the registered journeys, of which the latter will continue to run for the general public, albeit at around 50% seating capacity. The remaining journeys (not highlighted in yellow) are registered journeys that will be converted from a "local bus service" to a bespoke "School Service".

Table 2b. Other Bus Operator’s ‘School Services’ Only Public Bus Services (LBS) - September 2020, continuing wef 8th March 2021

Route Number	Journey	School	Operator
553	Shrewsbury – Bishops Castle	Bishops Castle Community College	Minsterley Motors 01743 791208

NB Minsterley Motors web site:

<https://www.minsterleymotors.co.uk/>

NB The journey in Table 2b is a ‘School Services’ only:

This is not available to the general public, in order to maximise the vehicle capacity. The list does not include local public bus services where Shropshire Council has tendered for extra buses (i.e. ‘Shadow’ buses) to follow existing public bus services, which are shown in Table 1. above.

Passenger Transport Group
Shropshire Council
Shirehall
Abbey Foregate
Shrewsbury SY2 6ND
Tel 0345 678 9008 Email: passtrans@shropshire.gov.uk

Original Version 28th August 2020

Last Updated 23rd March 2021

@ TL/Covid-19/Public Buses for School Pupils & Students

