

School Guidance: Travelling safely from June 2020

Purpose of the note

This note outlines the current context across the UK and in Greater Manchester in relation to public transport and how it relates to Government guidance around social distancing.

It aims to help schools to plan and advise children and young people how to travel safely. It will also outline different options for pupils to travel to and from schools and colleges and how to access various tools and resources.

National and GM Transport challenges

As a result of COVID 19 measures to reduce infection risk social distancing has affected transport capacity. Public transport and school services capacity limited to around 10 to 20%, which is especially problematic during the peak.

Given around one third of GM households do not have a car it is important that we keep public transport for those who rely on it. We appreciate that this will be challenging especially for schools with large catchment areas.

Key Messages

Help keep your children safe

- If your schools are returning, please encourage parents and children to cycle and walk to school if possible
- Ask them to protect school buses and public transport for those with no alternative. If they must use the bus, space will be limited on school buses and public transport due to social distancing
- Please ask them to keep themselves and others safe by wearing a face covering; keeping your distance; washing your hands regularly and buy tickets online or use mobile apps
- Please consider how and when your pupils will travel to and enter your school to reduce the possibility of large numbers arriving at the same time through the same entrance.

School travel guidance

- Last week the UK Government announced that primary schools should reopen for all pupils in reception, year 1 and year 6 from the week commencing 1 June. Secondary Schools have been advised to undertake some contact with year 10 and 12 students before the end of the school term.

- With many children and young people set to return to school in a matter of weeks, there is an immediate need to encourage parents to cycle or walk to school where possible, protecting school buses and public transport for those who have no alternative.
- It is recommended that you consider staggering start and end times between year groups by a short period to reduce volume at the entrance, ensure parents are aware of recommendations on transport to and from school and to use signage to guide parents and carers about where and when to drop off and pick up their children.
- [A new guide](#) is available to help people understand how to travel safely when they need to during the coronavirus outbreak in England. This advice also applies to pupils returning to school.
- As a result of Government guidance on social distancing this means that there is only up to 20% capacity on school and commercial buses. It is important we reserve this space for those with no alternative.

School Buses

TfGM will reinstate school bus services if they are required by the school. It is therefore extremely important that schools confirm to operationalserviceplanning@tfgm.com their plans as soon as possible so including as much information as they have available about expected numbers of students returning etc so that the team can have the necessary discussions with operators.

It is our intention to closely monitor demand from this period and adjust services where appropriate to best meet the needs of those users.

Buses will be operating with a significantly reduced capacity to meet social distancing guidelines. This capacity is not flexible and once reached, additional passengers will not be permitted to board. Under these circumstances, seats on Yellow School Buses can no longer be guaranteed. When boarding the bus, we recommend that passengers fill seats from the back of the vehicle first to minimise contact with others, while adhering to social distancing guidance.

We advise that you communicate to any parents of children who normally use school bus services to cycle and walk to school if possible and not to use school buses or public transport unless there is no alternative. If they must use the bus, spaces will be limited and they should also follow Government guidance on safe travel by wearing a face covering; keeping their distance and washing their hands regularly.

If you have a specific query relating to school buses, please contact Martin Shier – martin.shier@tfgm.com

Metrolink

Social distancing guidance means our trams would only carry 10% of their normal capacity – so if you need to make an essential journey then plan ahead, avoid peak periods, allow extra time and be prepared to wait if your service is full.

If you have to use public transport wear a [face covering](#), keep your distance from other passengers, clean your hands frequently and use contactless payment. If possible, carry a hand sanitiser with you.

Metrolink is currently running a 12-minute frequency across all lines Monday to Saturday and 20-minute frequency on Sundays.

It's more important than ever to plan ahead and check the live tram updates before you travel on Metrolink.

Cycling and Walking

The government is actively encouraging more journeys to be made by walking and cycling. Therefore, it is important to consider how to enable children and young people to walk and cycle to school. You may wish to consider the following:

- Social distancing markings
- Park and stride
- Parking measures

If you are interested in exploring infrastructure measures please engage with your local authority.

Resources and opportunities

Route planning and advice on travelling to school:

- Walking & Cycling route planning - <https://my.tfgm.com/#/planner/>
- Walking & Cycling route planning alternative - www.googlemaps.com
- Cycling Route planning (including quiet routes) - www.cylestreets.org
- Cycling & Walking advice - www.tfgm.com/coronavirus/cycling-walking
- Living Streets *Family Walk to School kit* - www.livingstreets.org.uk/get-involved/family-walk-to-school-kit

School Specific Measures and Advice:

- Living Streets *Park and Stride Toolkit* - www.livingstreets.org.uk/media/2035/park-and-stride-print.pdf

- Bespoke mapping with the school at the centre showing the distance to school is available through TfGM's Sustainable Journeys team, email sustainable.journeys@tfgm.com

Further information

We will continue to work with schools and Local Authorities over the coming months to ensure that children and young people can access school safely.

If you require further support not covered in this document, please contact:
sustainable.journeys@tfgm.com