

Face coverings in school transport vehicles – update 1/2/22

Updated local guidance

Following the removal of Plan B measures nationally incorporating the mandated use of face coverings on transport to reduce COVID transmission, this is local guidance for dedicated school transport in Solihull.

In view of the current high community transmission rates and the vulnerability of pupils with additional needs who comprise the majority of pupils transported, it is recommended that face coverings continue to be worn by drivers and guides and pupils (from year 7 onwards, although this is not appropriate/expected for many pupils with additional needs) in school transport vehicles.

It should be noted that face covering use by drivers and guides is strongly recommended but not mandated.

This measure is part of the wider actions that should still be in place to reduce COVID transmission in vehicles, such as sanitising hands, cleaning frequent touch points and ensuring good ventilation in the vehicle.

Rationale

The latest guidance for school transport states that:

“There is no longer a legal requirement to wear a face covering but the government suggests people continue to wear one in crowded and enclosed spaces where they may come into contact with people they do not normally meet.”

The community infection rate in Solihull is over 1000 cases per 100,000 and, whilst this community rate is high, vulnerable pupils, particularly those with additional needs, remain at a higher risk from COVID. This, coupled with the enclosed nature of school transport vehicles (primarily taxis and minibuses) where virus transmission is more likely, necessitates this local position recommending face coverings.

As the measure is no longer mandated, drivers and guides will not be prevented from working if they are not wearing a face covering, however, in order to protect themselves and the pupils on transport, it is strongly recommended they do so.

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