



Welcome Back to School

A guide for parents and carers
of children returning to school



Cambridgeshire
County Council



Contents

• Foreword - from Jonathan Lewis , Director for Education for Cambridgeshire County Council and Peterborough City Council	page 3
• Keeping your children safe in school	page 4
• We will do our bit, but we ask for your help too	page 5
• Test & Trace	page 6
• Getting back to good routines	page 8
• Wellbeing	page 12
• Attendance and additional information -	page 13
• Free School Meals	page 14
• School Transport from September 2020	page 15



Foreword

Jonathan Lewis

Director for Education,
Cambridgeshire County Council
and Peterborough City Council

It goes without saying that this has been a year like no other. Even as little as five months ago, none of us would have been able to predict just how big an impact the coronavirus pandemic would have, particularly on how we deliver education for our young people. The year 2020 will go down in history but I hope, when it comes to discussions on education, we remember the great effort and resilience shown by our parents, our school staff and indeed our children, to protect one another and keep each other safe, and to do all we could to ensure learning carried on regardless.

The safety of your children, our staff, and you, will always be our no 1 priority.

To you parents and carers, I want to say thank you. You have taken on the responsibility for home-schooling and fitted this in around your busy lives. I know many of you have helped support your schools and communities in other ways as well.

Your efforts have not gone unnoticed. Throughout the lockdown period, school leaders and settings managers have shared with me the difference that your help with home learning has made. It will make it easier for teachers and staff teams to help pupils catch up, or keep up, with their work when they return to school.

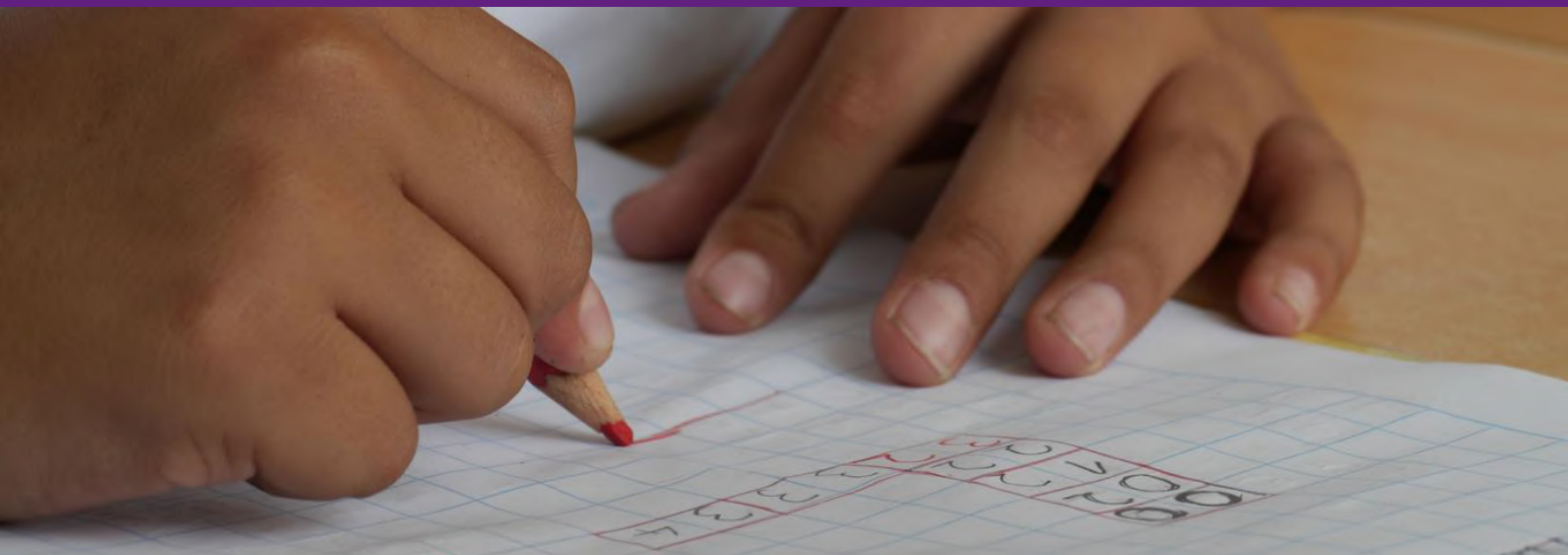


Staff in our schools have not stopped. They've put a great deal of time and effort into their plans for re-opening, and each and every one has completed a carefully considered risk assessment, ensuring measures are in place so their schools are as safe as can be. They truly have missed your children.

The safety of our young people, you parents and our school staff is, and always will be, our number one priority. With this in mind, it is likely that things will look and feel a little different when we return. Your child's school will communicate any of these changes with you, but if you're unsure – just ask – they are there to help.

Finally, I'd like to wish you a strong, safe and happy start to the term ahead. Thank you, again, for everything you have done to help prepare for this. We can't wait to have you and your children back.

Keeping your children safe in school



Every school in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough shares the same number one priority – to uphold and ensure the safety, wellbeing and protection of your child while in our school environment.

This was our priority before COVID and will remain our priority after COVID. Our schools adhere to rigorous safeguarding checks, and have measures in place which they monitor and review continuously.

The coronavirus pandemic has meant our school leaders have had to review everything from the ground up: just how they teach, their classroom set up, how people move around the building and even the playgrounds. Everything has been thought of, and thought of again.

Most of our schools in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough stayed open through the lockdown period, to accommodate

vulnerable children and those of keyworkers. This means we now have a lot of experience and knowledge of how to adapt to make sure your children, and our staff, are safe. This has included working and learning in social bubbles.

Each school has carried out a thorough risk assessment, which is unique to their school and their circumstances. This includes information on how they are meeting the '**System of Controls**' – a set of actions set out by government to reduce risks in school and to help minimise the risk of spreading the infection.

We have asked a lot of our schools and colleges - but they have listened and adapted. We are confident they are safe spaces, and are still able to deliver a broad and balanced curriculum for all our children,

We will do our bit, but we ask for your help too

Our measures are in place and our staff know how to keep your child safe – but we ask that you continue to play your part in protecting yourselves and your family away from school.

By closely following the latest government safety guidelines, and flexing with them if they change, you will be helping protect those other children in your child's bubble – and in turn their families and our teaching staff.

We ask that you:

- **Limit the number of people you see socially, and in line with national guidance:**

- Always try to stay 1 metres away from people you do not live with or who are not in your 'support bubble'. Please also be mindful of this when dropping off or collecting your children from school.
- Current guidelines mean that you can socialise indoors with people from one other household, and you can stay overnight with each other.
- Outdoors, you can meet with up to 6 people from different households. If you want to socialise with more than 6 people, you can meet outside up to a limit of 30 people, but only if they are from your household and one other household.

By protecting yourself and your family you are helping protect us

- **Practice good hygiene.**

Catch coughs and sneezes in a tissue and wash your hands regularly using soap and water.

- **Wear a face covering** on public transport, in shops and supermarkets, and all other public places where you are required to do so by law.

- **Keep your child at home**, and do not send them to their setting, school or college if they are showing coronavirus (COVID-19) symptoms or a member of their household/support bubble are showing symptoms.

- **Provide a face covering for your child** to use on school transport if they are over the age of 11 (they will then be asked to remove this on arrival at the school).

The Government is continually monitoring the situation and advice can change at any time. **You can keep up to date with the latest government guidance [here](#).**

Arriving at school - If you are bringing your child to school please follow any safety measures or advice made available around the school grounds. This may include following a one-way system, or leaving your child at a different entrance to the building than usual.

Some schools may ask you to bring your child to school at a different time than last year. If so, this will be made clear and the school will speak to you directly.

Test & Trace

The NHS Test and Trace programme was launched by the Government to ensure each confirmed case of COVID-19 can be tracked. We have worked closely with school leaders to set out a clear process for our schools to follow in the event of a child or member of staff displaying symptoms. We are supported by Public Health England (PHE) and are working alongside them to keep a close eye on infection rates across our region. We share this information with schools.

What you can do:

Your engagement with the Test and Trace process is really important. The more people that use Test and Trace correctly, the more effective it will be at preventing the spread of the virus.

We are therefore asking you to follow these **four simple steps**:

1 Self Isolate. If your child or someone from their household or support bubble is showing one or more of the symptoms of COVID-19 (a fever, a new continuous cough or a loss of taste or smell), then they must **self-isolate**. The individual with symptoms should isolate for 10 days. Members of their household / support bubble should isolate for 14 days.

At any point, if you are unsure what to do, contact your school. They will be able to advise you.

2 Arrange a test for the person with symptoms at the earliest opportunity. To book a test, phone 119 or visit **nhs.uk/ask-for-a-coronavirus-test**.

3 Notify the school as soon as you can and let them know the situation. They may contact other parents / carers of children within your child's bubble but won't disclose any personally identifiable information. They'll also ensure that additional cleaning is carried out to prevent the risk of any further spread of infection.

4 Wait for your test result. If you test positive, you will then be contacted by the NHS Test and Trace Service who will help to identify who you have been in contact with and might have infected. If you test negative, you no longer need to isolate as long as:

- everyone you live with who has symptoms tests negative
- everyone in your support bubble who has symptoms tests negative
- you were not told to self-isolate for 14 days by NHS Test and Trace – if you were, see what to do if you've been told you've been in contact with someone who has coronavirus
- you feel well – if you feel unwell, stay at home until you've been well for at least 48 hours.

What happens if I have one or more symptoms of COVID-19?

The symptoms of COVID-19 are:



A high temperature



A new continuous cough



A change to or loss of your sense of taste and smell.

If you have ANY symptoms of COVID-19 you should follow these steps

- 1 Start isolating at home**
You for **10 days** and your household for **14 days**



- 2 Book a test**
NHS.uk/coronavirus or call 119



3

NEGATIVE for COVID-19



If you test negative you may still need to isolate – check here for details www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/testing-and-tracing/what-your-test-result-means/

POSITIVE for COVID-19



Within 24hrs you'll be contacted by **NHS Test and Trace** by phone, text or email and asked to share who you have been in close contact with using a weblink or the phone

If you don't have someone to help when you're isolating call 0345 045 5219 for details of support in your local area

Getting back to good routines



It is important that children follow a good routine. It helps to set realistic expectations and boundaries in the family environment.

A routine helps children understand the balance between enjoyable tasks, such as play or helping with meal times, with more functional tasks, such as brushing their teeth or doing their homework.

It also helps to prioritise family time, and much needed periods of rest and sleep – vital for a child's cognitive and physical development, and for lowering any level of anxiety and stress.

Where a child has a predictable daily routine, it reminds them they are in a secure, loving environment.

The lockdown period has seen an unprecedented shift in how we work, learn and spend time as a family – meaning our daily routines may now bear little resemblance to how we usually live our lives.

With the majority of children learning at home rather than in school, most will naturally have fallen into a different daily pattern than usual. Following these simple tips overleaf should help your children get back on track.

A new routine?

The new school year means a new start – and with it the opportunity to consider any behaviour or actions you feel could benefit your child, and encourage their independence.

- Are they old enough to start making their own breakfast or packed lunches?
- Could you encourage them to help prepare dinner?

Over time, little differences can have a big impact.

Sleep

Lots of us have seen our regular routines change through the lockdown period.

How much sleep do we need? The Sleep Council suggest toddlers need around 12 hours of sleep a night; children aged three to six – 10-12 hours; seven-12 years olds – 10-11 hours; and teenagers – around eight to nine hours.



Image owned by Sleep Council

KEEPING ON TRACK: SLEEP

Routine for kids is key.
Try bringing bedtime forward by 15 minutes, and the same for getting up.

Try it for 3 days, then gradually shift the time so it fits in with school hours.

www.sleepfoundation.org

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Families have been telling us they are staying up later and waking up later, but you can take small steps to help get your children back into their regular sleep pattern for school.

Useful Links:

- [Sleep Council](#)
- [Sleep Foundation](#)

Using electronic devices

Light from electronic devices at night delays the release of melatonin – our sleep-inducing hormone, and social media feeds and news stories can stay with us as we drift off.

As a household, could you aim to be 'device-free' for at least one hour before everyone's bedtime?

Useful Links:

- [Online safety](#)
- [Devices and sleep](#)

'KEEPING ON TRACK' - IT & DEVICES

Light from electronic devices slows our natural sleeping process.

Could you be 'device-free' at least one hour before bedtime?

www.sleepfoundation.org

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ONLINE SAFETY – An Ofcom survey found that adults in the UK are now spending more than a quarter of their waking day online, accompanied by an increase in the amount of time children are spending on internet-enabled devices.

It has never been more important to keep your family safe online, so we have produced some guidance which you can [see here](#).

Cycling

Getting out on your bikes can be a great way to spend time together as a family, to see new places and to stay active.

LetsRideLocal is a fantastic website for adults and children, giving lots of straight-forward advice on how to cycle with children, how to teach your children to ride, and a handy 'find a route' tool to find cycling paths and rides near you.

Useful Link:

- [LetsRideLocal](#)

'KEEPING ON TRACK' - ACTIVE TRAVEL

Getting back in the saddle?

LetsRideLocal has lots of resources to help you plan your next fun family cycle!

www.letsridelocal.co.uk/

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Healthy eating

For many, the lockdown period has brought about a change in when we eat, and what we eat.

Lots of us have tried new recipes for the first time or spent a bit more time in the kitchen, but research also found there has been an increase in snacking amongst adults and children, as we have been spending more time at home.

A child's diet plays a vital role in providing them with the energy they need to maintain concentration throughout the school day. But we know it can be difficult at any time to think of new and nutritious meals for the family.



We recommend the NHS Change 4 Life website, which is packed full of ideas for healthy, low cost family breakfasts, lunches and dinners.

Useful Link:

- **[NHS Change4Life](https://www.nhs.uk/change4life/)**

Vaccinations



Vaccinations protect your child from preventable diseases and curb additional pressures on the NHS.

Pre-school jabs include: 2nd MMR dose, 4-in-1 pre-school booster and flu. This year, the flu vaccine will be available for all children aged 2-11 years.

For more info and a checklist of the vaccines available to you and your family, check your child's red book, visit

www.nhs.uk/vaccinations

and/or contact the immunisation team via email on: **ccs-tr.cambsimmsteam@nhs.net**.

Wellbeing

Regardless of their age, starting or returning to school can be a difficult time for children and young people. There are lots of reasons why a child might be worried about going back to school. They might be nervous about meeting a new teacher or learning new routines, leaving their parents or having less freedom. This year we may find that these worries are even more prevalent.

Useful Links:

- [MindEd for families](#)
- [Supporting Videos](#)

As schools have had to adapt to meet strict safety and hygiene measures, children may find things look a little different, and that their classrooms and lessons aren't quite as they remembered. They may also be anxious about how they are expected to behave in school now, or may not fully understand why they can't interact closely with their friends. School staff will do their best to address these issues, but we must remember these changes are new for them too.

It is important that whatever their concerns, children have someone who they can speak to and who will listen. [MindEd for families](#) is a free online educational resource on children and young people's mental health for all adults, which can support parents and carers through these exceptional circumstances.



Where possible, try to speak to your child and find out if they have any worries, before they go back, and again as they begin to settle in. There are resources available to help you do this, including the Children's Commissioner's [Children's Guide to Coronavirus](#), or the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) have produced a [storybook developed by and for children around the world affected by COVID-19](#).

Cambridgeshire County Council, in partnership with Pinpoint (Cambridgeshire's local parent/carers forum for parents of children with special educational needs) have put together some [useful videos on supporting parents/carers with the return to school](#).

There are 7 videos, and each is between 5 - 7 minutes long. They are suitable for all children and families, and include really practical suggestions to try at home.

If your child continues to show anxieties or nervousness after they return, please speak with your school directly, as they might be best placed to help.

Attendance



Attendance

The government expects all children and young people, in all year groups, to return to school and college full time from the beginning of the autumn term, unless they have been advised otherwise by their GP or other health professional.

The Local Authority attendance team will continue to offer advice, and support schools to ensure that they adopt a supportive and nurturing approach in the first instance before any type of legal interventions are considered. However, on the occasion that it is clear that all possible interventions have been offered, and there are no other reasonable grounds to explain the absence, the attendance team may become involved to ensure the child's attendance improves to a more suitable level.

Holidays

As usual, you should avoid planning your holidays during term-time. Also keep in mind you and your children may need to self-isolate when you return from a trip overseas.

Concerns

If you have concerns about your child returning to school or college because you consider they may have other risk factors, you should discuss these with their school or college at the earliest opportunity.

School staff have a wealth of experience in supporting transition and attendance, and will ensure that all pupils and families receive the most appropriate tailored support.

More information:

- Frequently Asked Questions
- **Learn Together Cambridgeshire**

Free School Meals

Over the last few months, many families have seen their financial situation change. Even if you have not been eligible for Free School Meals before, you might find you now meet the criteria below.

The application process can be completed online, and your claim will be processed within three working days of receiving a valid application form.

Click here for [Cambridgeshire](#) , or speak to your school directly if you are in Peterborough.

Eligibility Criteria

Your child will get free school meals if you receive any of the following:

- Income Support
- Income Based Job Seekers Allowance
- Income-related Employment and Support Allowance
- Child Tax Credit - but no element of Working Tax Credit - and have an annual income (as assessed by HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC)) that does not exceed £16,190
- If you are supported under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- Guarantee element of State Pension Credit
- Working Tax Credit during the four week period immediately after your employment finishes or after you start to work less hours per week
- Universal Credit with an annual net earned income of no more than £7,400 (as from 1 April 2018)



Did you know?

- Families who are currently paying for school meals will save around £450 a year for each primary school child if they are entitled to free school meals.
- Many schools have systems which mean it is impossible for other pupils to know who is receiving free school meals.
- When you apply for free school meals, you will also allow your child's school to receive **Pupil Premium**, which is extra money to support children from families on lower incomes.
- If your child is in receipt of **universal infant free school meals** (where your child is in Reception, Year 1 or Year 2), we recommend you apply if you believe you may be eligible for free school meals, because the protection will continue beyond Year 2.
- Secondary school children who are entitled to free school meals might also qualify for help with **school transport** costs.
- If you also have a 3 or 4 year old child who is in a free childcare place, they may also be eligible for **Early Years Pupil Premium**.

School Transport



Transport Provided by the Local Authority

In certain circumstances, the local authority will provide free home to school transport. To ensure that this is as safe as possible, a number of changes have been implemented.

This includes:

- **Primary schools:**

Transport will be planned and organised so that where there are children from different year groups on the same vehicle, children from the same year group are seated together.

- **Secondary schools:**

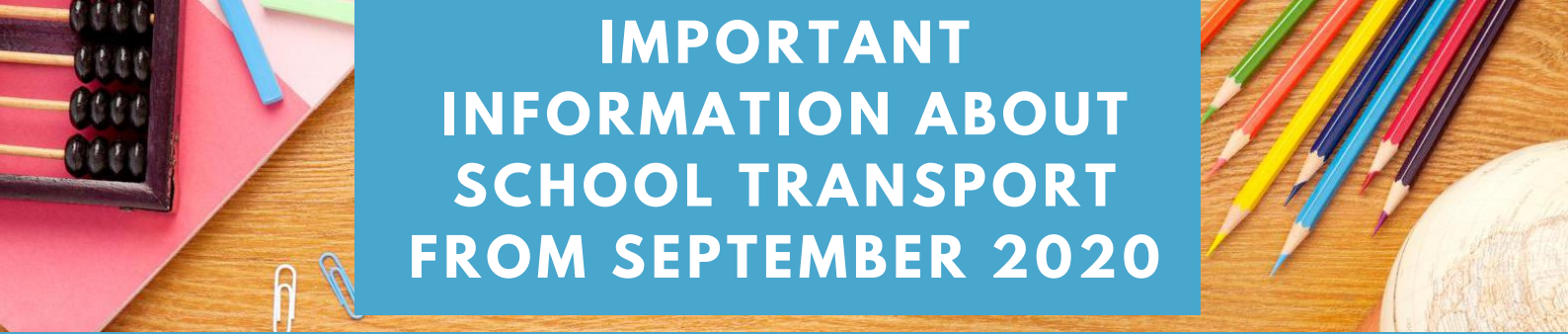
Children will be expected to wear a face covering provided by their parents/carers in line with the requirements for children travelling on public transport. This will enable children to travel with their peers without the need for other social distancing measures to be put in place, or to separate children into their bubbles when travelling to and from school.

- **Special schools:**

Transport will be planned and organised, where possible, to maintain the integrity of schools' bubble arrangements. Parents will have the option of requesting parental mileage as an alternative to using Local Authority provided transport.

- **Children with EHCPs attending mainstream schools:**

Parents can apply for parental mileage as an alternative to using Local Authority provided transport. Applications will be considered on a case-by-case basis..



IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT SCHOOL TRANSPORT FROM SEPTEMBER 2020

This document provides additional guidance for travel on home to school transport whilst COVID 19 restrictions are in place. It should be read in conjunction to the Code of Conduct, which sets out expected standards and behaviour for children travelling on school transport.

The guidance is available on the Cambridgeshire County and Peterborough City Council websites:
www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/asset-library/code-of-conduct-for-home-to-school-or-college-travel.pdf
www.peterborough.gov.uk/residents/schools-and-education/school-transport

FACE COVERINGS FOR CHILDREN OVER 11

- All pupils aged 11 and older will be required to wear a face covering provided by their parent / carer (unless there is a medical reason for not wearing one).
- Face covering should be in place, covering the nose and mouth as the pupil enter the transport
- If a pupil does not have a face covering (and does not have a medical reason not wear one) when they enter the transport, the bus driver has the right to refuse travel
- If your child has a medical reason which means they are unable to wear a face covering, please ensure they carry evidence of their exemption with them, which they can show to the driver.
- On arriving at the school, the face covering should be stored safely, and children should wash their hands.

BUS STOP SAFETY

- Where possible, pupils should be encouraged to keep a minimum of one metre apart whilst waiting for transport

ONE SCHOOL AT A TIME

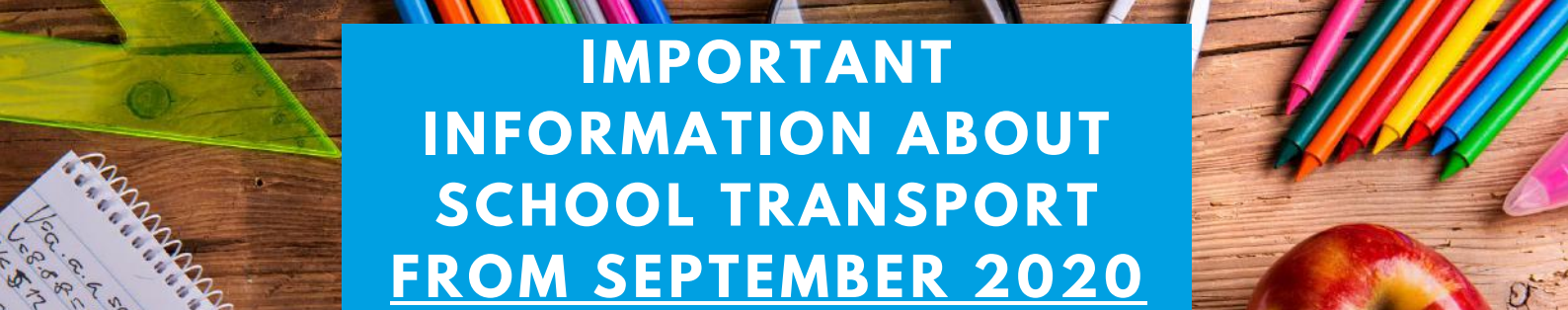
- From September, until Christmas to start with (a review will take place then) **no** vehicle will serve more than 1 school at any one time.

CLEANLINESS

- We encourage pupils to wash their hands before and after using school transport
- It is advisable for pupils to carry their own hand sanitiser
- Vehicles will be cleaned daily, with common touch points being cleaned after every journey

SEATING PLANS

- Some Primary schools will be implementing seating plans, to keep certain groups of pupils together (possibly by year group). These must be adhered to.
- Some Secondary Schools or the Local Authority may implement their own.
- Where a seating plan is not in place, pupils should fill the bus from the back forward
- Pupils must follow their drivers instructions on seating, alighting and departing



IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT SCHOOL TRANSPORT FROM SEPTEMBER 2020

Ph: 0345 045 5208

edtransport@cambridgeshire.gov.uk

www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/education/transport

Passenger Transport Operations Team

childrentransport@peterborough.gov.uk

01733 317 455

BOARDING OR LEAVING THE BUS

- Only one person should board the bus at a time
- Pupils should have their bus pass ready to show the driver as they board the bus, and if aged 11+ have their face covering in place
- Pupils should find their seat and remain there, facing forward, for the whole journey
- When arriving at the school or stop, pupils should remain seated and only disembark when instructed.
- Pupils should allow at least a 1 metre space between other pupils where possible
- On arrival at school, students should disembark the bus starting with those seated at the front, with those at the back being last to leave. When loading, those at the back should enter first.

BUS PASSES, ENSURE CORRECT BUS AND STOP ARE USED

- Ensure your child accesses the correct bus and stop, as shown on their bus pass
- Changes to your child's transport may have been implemented this year in response to COVID guidance
- No changes will be made to bus passes, unless there is a genuine reason. To action this, email your request. If this is agreed you will be informed how to get it changed

BEHAVIOUR

- During the current COVID 19 situation for the safety of all those travelling on school transport we need you and your child's co-operation and compliance with these requirements
- Behaviour that does not meet the requirements above or does not meet the standard stated in the Code of Conduct presents a higher level of risk to service users and transport staff
- In cases where we have evidence of deliberate acts of misbehaviour, this could lead to the withdrawal of school transport for your child.
- Please ensure your child understands what is required of them and supervise/instruct them accordingly

If your child is feeling unwell, visit the relevant website:

www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/residents/coronavirus/coronavirus-covid-19-test-and-trace

www.peterborough.gov.uk/healthcare/public-health/coronavirus/coronavirus-covid-19-test-and-trace