

Letter to Parents/Carers

Email: generalenquiries@somerset.gov.uk

Date: 18 September 2020

Dear Parent/Carer

Wearing face coverings on school transport

We are strongly recommending that all pupils aged 11 or over who can wear face coverings, wear them whenever they are on dedicated school transport.

It is not currently mandatory for school pupils to wear coverings on home to school transport – it is left to the discretion of parents. Some pupils are exempt from wearing a face covering. However, wearing face coverings on public transport services – also used by pupils – is mandatory for anyone aged 11 or over. This is part of the Government’s COVID-19 guidelines to help combat the spread of the virus.

The risks from COVID-19 to children and young people are low, but it is very important that we try to minimise the spread of the disease. Disposable face coverings should be disposed of in a covered bin, re-useable face coverings should be placed in a plastic bag that they can take home with them. Children and young people should wash their hands prior to removing and after removing their face covering.

School staff are not present on school transport and therefore are not able to monitor whether pupils are following this advice. We are asking pupils to act responsibly and independently to protect themselves and others. Some parents have raised questions about safety measures being taken by transport providers. We are working closely with all providers to ensure that there is a high level of compliance.

The Council's priority is to make school transport as safe as possible so that students continue to feel safe about returning to school. Wearing a face covering on the journey is an important part of reducing the potential spread of COVID-19 to children, drivers, school staff and family members.

You can find Government guidance on face coverings here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/face-coverings-when-to-wear-one-and-how-to-make-your-own/face-coverings-when-to-wear-one-and-how-to-make-your-own>

And there's a helpful video explaining how to use face coverings properly here:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9Tv2BVN_WTk

Please visit www.somerset.gov.uk/schooltransport for further information and guidance.

Parents or carers who need to raise specific questions or concerns relating to school transport should contact transport@somerset.gov.uk.

Yours sincerely

Amelia Walker
Assistant Director Education, Partnerships and Skills