



**OXFORDSHIRE
COUNTY COUNCIL**

**County Hall
New Road
Oxford
OX1 1ND**

**Jane Portman
Interim Director for Children's Services**

Date: 15 July 2020

Dear Parent/Carers

Re: Travelling to School

We do not know what the situation might be concerning travel considerations or options when your child returns to school in September, but we suspect many of the messages currently being provided by the Government will remain similar.

We want all children to return to school safely to continue with their education and are working with Headteachers, school leaders, governors and trustees to try and make sure this can happen. The Department for Education (DfE) and Government Ministers are reassuring parents and emphasising the need for parents to send children back to school. They have emphasised the importance of councils working with all schools and parents as we all seek to secure full attendance in September.

The Departments for Education and Transport wish to work with local authorities, schools, parents and local bus companies to maintain enough transport options to ensure children can access education in September.

If your child is entitled to free home to school transport or currently travels on a spare seat concessionary travel pass, you will be contacted direct by the council about arrangements for September.

If your child is not entitled to free home to school transport but currently travelling to school on public transport, we want to let you know that there is a high likelihood of capacity on existing routes being restricted. Whilst the local authority is working with bus companies to secure capacity where possible, it is unlikely to be at pre-COVID19 levels in September. The situation with the commercial bus network is fragile due to the reduced carrying capacity and demand levels, but hopefully this will soon start to improve.

In these challenging and unprecedented times, we would urge you do consider your options for how your child/children will get to school in September.

If the school is in walking or cycling distance, then this should be your first consideration. Improvements to make some routes more acceptable are being considered by Oxfordshire County Council and we will be working with the schools to deliver high priority schemes. If your child/children are cycling, then please also make sure they have and wear a cycle helmet, and that any equipment can be suitably carried without making the bike unbalanced.

Where it is not possible to walk or cycle, then a bus may be used whether a public bus or dedicated school transport in a safe manner (using a face covering over the age of 11, cleaning of hands before and after travelling). The Government guidance on this is contained within 'Guidance for full opening: schools' and Section 2: School operations below:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/actions-for-schools-during-the-coronavirus-outbreak/guidance-for-full-opening-schools>

If use of the bus is not possible or appropriate, and you are planning to drive your child to school, then please keep travel in the car to family or Government guidance says the 'same people' or 'small groups of people' each time and then the car will need to be cleaned between journeys. The Government guidance on this is contained within 'Coronavirus (COVID-19): safer travel guidance for passengers' and can be found below:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-safer-travel-guidance-for-passengers#private-cars-and-other-vehicles>

We suspect there is likely to be an increased number of children being driven to school so please park in a safe and appropriate place that is a suitable distance away from the school entrance, the last part of your journey can be walked to help avoid congestion at the school gates.

We do understand that this has been a hugely challenging time for you as parents and carers, for children and young people, for families. We are most grateful for your help and to Headteachers across the county.

We will contact you again prior to September with any updated advice.

Yours sincerely,



Jane Portman
Interim Director for Children's Services



Jason Russell
Interim Director Community Operations