

Covid19: Guidance to Aberdeenshire Council Additional Support Needs (ASN) School Transport Operators – August 2020

This guidance is intended to inform operators who undertake ASN school transport services using a taxi or PHC and should be **read in conjunction with the Council's general guidance on school transport**, "Covid19: Guidance to School Transport Operators – August 2020". Drivers and other staff involved in the provision of ASN school transport services should be fully aware of both sets of guidance and their responsibilities.

When undertaking a **risk assessment** and determining mitigating factors, issues for consideration should include the vehicle layout and what type of assistance the pupil may require if not travelling with a passenger assistant. General guidance on working safely during coronavirus can be found on the Health and Safety Executive website at <https://www.hse.gov.uk/coronavirus/working-safely/index.htm> or Public Health Scotland at <https://covid19.healthyworkinglives.scot/returning-to-work/risk-assessment>.

Face Coverings

Usually any passengers in a taxi or PHC would be required to wear a face covering unless unable to do so for medical reasons. **There is a presumption that pupils with additional support needs will be unable to wear a face covering.** If a passenger assistant is travelling in the vehicle, they should ordinarily wear a face covering or PPE. **Drivers should wear a face covering or PPE** unless the operator's risk assessment indicates that this is not necessary, for example if there is a physical barrier or screen between the driver and passengers.

Distancing

Drivers should distance as much as possible from pupils and passenger assistants when on and off the vehicle. Parents/carers will be advised to take the pupil out to the vehicle when it arrives and to keep back to allow the driver to open the rear door - drivers should park up where the vehicle can be easily seen. If the driver requires to clamp down a wheelchair they should avoid face-to-face contact with the pupil as much as possible and use appropriate PPE.

Hygiene/Cleaning

Drivers may wish to carry sanitiser particularly if required to handle wheelchairs. The appropriate cleaning regime will depend upon the particular circumstances and you may contact the PTU to discuss this if you have concerns or queries. If the vehicle has been deployed on other duties prior to undertaking the ASN school transport service it is imperative that the vehicle is cleaned in an appropriate manner prior to picking up any pupil or passenger assistant.

Pupils

Each pupil's needs and circumstances will vary and operators may be provided with additional information for individual pupils based on the outcome of Council risk assessments.

If you have any concerns related to any contracts you operate, for example following your risk assessment, or you wish to discuss any particular issues **please contact the Passenger Transport Unit on 01467 533 335 (Option 1) or email asn.transport@aberdeenshire.gov.uk.**

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