

The Grove School

part of the Marches Academy Trust
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Headteacher: Sonia Taylor BA (Hons), NPQH



14 July 2020

Dear Parents and Carers,

Transport to School from September 2020 – Public Buses

The Department for Transport have written to local authorities about loading pressures on public transport buses due to Covid-19 social distancing.

They say that whilst only a proportion of children use public transport to get to school, continuing to provide sufficient capacity – while maintaining social distancing – will be enormously challenging. At a national level they estimate that only around a third of children in England, outside London, using public buses to travel to school before the crisis, can be safely accommodated when schools resume, as a result of likely demand from other passengers on services that are open to the wider public, and maintaining social distancing of 1 metre. In Shropshire, public buses are operating at no more than 50% capacity and unfortunately, they will drive by waiting passengers without stopping when they are full.

So, the DfT advise that in particular, for journeys to school of two miles or less, which are currently undertaken by public bus, pupils switch to cycling or walking. For children living further away travel by car may be an option. They add that pupils arriving at school by other modes should be encouraged to complete the last part of their journey on foot in order to manage congestion and safe access to schools by active travel.

One exception to this is where public buses are carrying only school pupils on the bus (i.e. with no adult fare payers) – in these circumstances, the Council are working with operators to see if these buses can operate with 100% loading capacities, thereby removing the need for alternative parental transport solutions. Often these buses are those that travel from out of the school's catchment area and bus operators will know which buses these are.

For pupils entitled to free school transport and issued with season tickets, Shropshire Council will be liaising with bus operators and making alternative arrangements if needs be. Pupils will still be provided with a place on a bus to school.

Clearly, once the Covid-19 emergency eases, we will want to encourage non-entitled pupils travelling by car back onto public buses as soon as we can; for those walking or cycling, that may be a preferred option in the longer term, as it is a healthier and more environmentally friendly travel solution.

If your child normally travels to and from school by public bus, please could you let me know the bus service number they use and as best as you can, what you will now be planning from September 2020. Will your child:

- a. Walk or cycle instead
- b. Travel by car instead
- c. Remain on the public bus



Please could you let me know by emailing reception@groveschool.net by 9:00am 17 July 2020 so that any remedial planning required can be put in place.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs. Sonia Taylor
Headteacher