

14 August 2020

To Whom It May Concern,

Travelling back to Schools and Colleges in September 2020

To support the return of pupils and students to education for the autumn term, I would like to provide some guidance on how you can help encourage parents and carers, pupils and students to travel safely and confidently to school and college and to highlight capacity issues that may affect journeys. There are several measures that we know may help alleviate pressures on the transport network including route planning, the use of park and walk schemes and staggered start and finish times.

In line with [Government guidance](#) released 12 August 2020, Transport for Greater Manchester (TfGM) is continuing to work with schools, colleges, local authorities and bus / coach operators to effectively plan our schools' services network. This includes considering increasing capacity to cope with demand. Together, we need to ensure key messages reach parents, carers, pupils and students before September so that journeys can be planned to minimise disruption and congestion across the transport network. It is expected that the return to education will coincide with parents' and carers' returning to work. This will have a further impact on transport capacity.

Key messages to be disseminated as widely as possible are summarised below, and the attached guidance note should be consulted for more detailed information:

School bus services

- TfGM are expecting Yellow School Bus and other school bus services to run at capacity;
- Yellow School Buses will run without a pass system in place meaning they will operate as regular school buses, so any school child can use them;
- The government has relaxed social distancing rules on dedicated school transport services although pupils/students aged 11 and above should wear a face covering unless they are exempt.

Public transport

- Due to the social distancing measures in place, capacity on public transport at the start of term time will be limited. Please encourage parents/carers and pupils/students to plan ahead and check timetables in advance;
- Social distancing measures will result in significantly reduced capacity on commercial services that may impact young people who use commercial buses, tram or train services;
- Please ensure young people and their parents/carers are encouraged to apply **as soon as possible** for an iGo card which is a requirement for the purchase of concessionary child bus fares and enables the purchase of pre-paid tickets that avoid having to use cash when travelling on public transport.

Active travel

- Please encourage parents/carers, pupils/students and staff to cycle and walk to school where possible (the guidance note includes more information and resources to support this);
- Utilising the recent Emergency Active Travel Funding received from Government, there will be safer routes in place by mid-September to support walking and cycling. TfGM are looking into how best to support districts to promote awareness and use of these routes and we will be in touch with further guidance in due course.

Safety considerations

- When travelling, students should allow extra time for their journeys in case services are full and be patient with other passengers and transport staff;
- All pupils/students should follow safety guidance by:
 - wearing a face covering unless they are under the age of 11 or exempt for another reason;
 - keeping a safe distance from other passengers and transport staff;
 - washing their hands regularly; and
 - using contactless payment or exact change only in line with bus operator requirements.

The communications toolkit accompanying this letter contains suggested social media and website/newsletter content. **Please use this information along with that in the accompanying guidance note to communicate the key transport messages for September through your own channels.**

Please do not hesitate to contact me or a member of the Sustainable Journeys team at sustainable.journeys@tfgm.com if you require any further support or information.

Yours sincerely,

Gareth Turner
Head of Travel Change