

Let's go *safely* back to School

Translink, working in partnership with the Education Authority (EA) has put plans in place to enable children to return to school safely using public transport this autumn. These plans take into consideration any changes to school opening patterns and are in line with the latest Government guidance on public health.

Safety is always our top priority and in line with public health advice, we have introduced a range of measures across the Translink network to keep everyone safe. This means things look a bit different at stations and on-board and pupils may need to leave some extra time for their journey.

These changes are for everyone's protection, guided by the latest advice from the NI Executive and health experts because we want everyone to feel safe and confident when they need to use our services. For more information on safe travel on other dedicated school transport services you can also visit the EA's website <https://www.eani.org.uk/education-restart>

Let's go safely together...

Translink has been at the frontline throughout this crisis helping get people to where they need to be and now we are ready to get schools back up and running to get young people back into education in this 'new normal' and helping Northern Ireland recover safely and sustainably.

FAQ's

Subject	Question	Guideline Answer	Notes
School Services	Are school Services operating?	<p>Translink, working in partnership with the Education Authority (EA) has put plans in place to enable children to return to school safely using public transport this autumn.</p> <p>Dedicated school services will restart on Tuesday 1st September 2020. Pupils returning to school from Monday 24th August 2020 can use normal Translink bus and rail services. Sessional School Passes will be valid on Translink scheduled services from Monday 24th August.</p> <p>Working with Schools:</p> <p>In line with the DE guidance on the re-opening of schools, Translink and EA are working with schools to maximise services in an area and to help manage the number of pupils travelling at peak times.</p>	https://www.eani.org.uk/education-restart
	How do I apply for an EA Bus pass?	<p>The online transport application process for academic year 2020-21 applications is now available. Apply on the EA website by clicking this link:</p> <p>https://www.eani.org.uk/financial-help/home-to-school-transport/how-to-apply-for-transport-assistance-for-my-child</p>	
	My child doesn't qualify for an Education Authority pass, what is the best alternative?	<p>There are lots of pre-paid options to pay for travel, including mLink, multi-journey and travel cards. We are encouraging passengers to use prepaid tickets where possible to reduce personal contact.</p> <p>Link to Ways to Pay:</p>	

		https://www.translink.co.uk/usingtranslink/ticketsandtravelcards	
	Will cash be accepted on school buses?	<p>For everyone's safety, we have a 'No change policy' on board: Passengers need to tender the correct fare if paying by cash to the bus driver or train conductor on board all bus and train services - there will be no change given to passengers onboard to reduce personal contact. We are encouraging passengers to use prepaid tickets such as mLink or multi-journey tickets and contactless if purchasing at stations, on board the train from the conductor or Glider TVMs.</p> <p>Link to Ways to Pay https://www.translink.co.uk/corporate/media/pressnews/waystopay</p>	
	Times of School bus services?	<p>Dedicated school routes will largely operate as normal however, pupil numbers will be monitored, and services may be adjusted to reflect demand and in line with Department of Education and Public Health guidance.</p> <p>We would ask parents / schools for patience and support particularly at the start of the school term while we manage any adjustments.</p>	
	As schools have now confirmed the plan to restart from 24th August 2020 will there be school bus transport in place earlier to cover this August return?	<p>Translink, working in partnership with the Education Authority (EA) has put plans in place to enable children to return to school safely using public transport this autumn.</p> <p>Dedicated school services will restart on Tuesday 1st September 2020. Pupils returning to school from Monday 24th August 2020 can use normal Translink bus and rail services. Sessional School Passes will be valid on Translink scheduled services from Monday 24th August.</p> <p>Working with Schools:</p> <p>In line with the DE guidance on the re-opening of schools, Translink and EA are working with schools to maximise services in an area and to help manage the number of pupils travelling at peak times.</p>	
	What safety measures have Translink put in place on school buses?	<p>Safety is always our top priority and in line with public health advice, we have introduced a range of measures across the Translink network to keep everyone safe. This means things look a bit different at stations and on-board and pupils may need to leave some extra time for their journey.</p> <p>These include:</p>	

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Operating extra school service buses, to provide increased capacity as required; • Where appropriate, working with schools to arrange pick-ups at schools to reduce volume of pupils at bus stations; • Providing our staff with appropriate PPE that helps to keep them and pupils, as safe as possible; • Extra staff in stations where required, to assist with travel connections and social distancing; • Enhanced vehicle deep cleaning and sanitation - using long-lasting anti-viral cleaning products that keep surfaces virus-free; • Mobile cleaning teams travelling on board sanitizing common touch areas; • Key seats cordoned off on dedicated school buses; • Hand sanitiser units available at all stations; • Protective screens in stations and on the bus drivers cab. 	
	<p>Will there be extra buses to ensure there is no risk of overcrowding?</p>	<p>We've a range of safety measures in place to protect everyone, including young people travelling to school this September.</p> <p>We expect that both scheduled timetabled services and dedicated school services will be busy at peak times. These include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Operating extra school services buses, to provide increased capacity as required; • Where appropriate, working with schools to arrange pick-ups at schools to reduce volume of pupils at bus stations; • Providing our staff with appropriate PPE that helps to keep them and pupils, as safe as possible; • Extra staff in stations where required, to assist with travel connections and social distancing; • Enhanced vehicle deep cleaning and sanitation - using long-lasting anti-viral cleaning products that keep surfaces virus-free; • Mobile cleaning teams travelling on board sanitizing common touch areas; • Key seats cordoned off on dedicated school buses; • Hand sanitizer units available at all stations; • Protective screens in stations and on the bus drivers cab. 	

		These actions will ensure we maintain high safety standards on board and in stations when social distancing becomes more challenging as more people return to public transport.	
	Will my child have to wear a face covering on school buses?	<p>We strongly encourage wearing a face covering if travelling on dedicated school bus services;</p> <p>Pupils over 13 will be required to wear a face covering if travelling on scheduled public transport services and in bus and train stations unless you are exempt;</p> <p>Wearing a face covering is for everyone's protection as it helps everyone to travel safely together.</p> <p>With over 80% compliance across the Translink network - we strongly encourage you to wear yours and respect everyone's journey.</p>	
	Bus pass conditions of travel	Bus passes are valid for one journey in each direction until 6.30pm between the validity dates shown on the front, excluding Saturdays, Sundays and School Holidays. The forward journey must be made before noon.	
	What measures have been put in place to sanitize public transport and how often will this cleaning be carried out?	<p>We've a range of safety measures in place to protect everyone, including young people travelling to school this September.</p> <p>These include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Operating extra school service buses, to provide increased capacity as required; • Where appropriate, working with schools to arrange pick-ups at schools to reduce volume of pupils at bus stations; • Providing our staff with appropriate PPE that helps to keep them and pupils, as safe as possible; • Extra staff in stations where required, to assist with travel connections and social distancing; • Enhanced vehicle deep cleaning and sanitation - using long-lasting anti-viral cleaning products that keep surfaces virus-free; • Mobile cleaning teams travelling on board sanitizing common touch areas; • Key seats cordoned off on dedicated school buses; • Hand sanitizer units available at all stations; • Protective screens in stations and on the bus drivers cab. <p>These actions will ensure we maintain high safety standards on board and in stations when social distancing becomes more challenging as more people return to public transport.</p>	

	<p>Costs for paying passengers using smart cards etc</p>	<p>Details of Translink travel cards can be found here: https://www.translink.co.uk/usingtranslink/ticketsandtravelcards.</p> <p>For best value ticket information customers can contact us by phone, email or social media, details available here: https://www.translink.co.uk/feedback</p>	
	<p>Local depot contact number for more information??</p>	<p>Our 'Contact Us' page (https://www.translink.co.uk/feedback) outlines the various ways you can use to get in touch with us, our team can follow up and respond to any timetable or fare enquiries you may have.</p>	
	<p>What can parents/carers or your child do to keep themselves and others safe on their journey?</p>	<p>Help us help you</p> <p>We are actively calling on everyone to practice the wider safety and travel advice including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good hand hygiene – consider carrying your own hand sanitiser; • Using contactless payments where pupils are not entitled to a free travel pass; • Travel off peak where schools can facilitate this and leave extra time for your journey; • Avoid consuming food and drink on public transport, where possible; • Consider walking and cycling options if appropriate; • Please do not travel if you are experiencing any symptoms of Covid-19 symptoms or your household has been advised to isolate. • Please behave responsibly when travelling, misbehaviour can endanger others as well as yourself and will be reported to your school and Education Authority. <p>Please use a Face Covering:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pupils over 13 will be required to wear a face covering if travelling on scheduled public transport services and in bus and train stations unless you are exempt; • We also strongly encourage wearing a face covering if travelling on dedicated school bus services; • Wearing a face covering is for everyone's protection as it helps everyone to travel safely together. 	
	<p>Will there be no social distancing on Translink dedicated school services?</p>	<p>Dedicated School Bus</p> <p>Social distancing has been relaxed on dedicated home to school services meaning a full seated load as per normal arrangements can be accommodated. Children over 13 are</p>	

		required to wear a face covering and others strongly encouraged to do so.	
	Will there be social distancing on normal timetabled bus services?	<p>Normal Timetabled services</p> <p>Social distancing on regular timetabled services remains in place meaning normal capacity is reduced.</p> <p>We have introduced additional services on routes which are heavily used by school children and will closely monitor passenger capacity. There is also an acceptance that social distancing is not always possible on busier services and at busier times of the day. To safeguard school children, it is permissible to exceed the maximum advisory capacity on timetabled services when no alternative option is available.</p> <p>To help manage capacity pupils are encouraged to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - consider travelling outside peak periods, pupils may need to consider taking earlier or later bus as capacity on timetabled services is reduced. - walk or cycle if living within a short distance of school 	