



March 2021

Dear Stakeholder,

Nexus and bus operators are working hard to make sure that parents and guardians can have confidence when pupils need to travel by public transport to and from schools, which are set to go back from week commencing Monday March 8.

We are providing extra vehicles and drivers across Tyne and Wear, following familiar routes with the highest demand, to improve social distancing and ensure children can get to and from school safely.

It would be really helpful if you could help to share these messages with your staff and pupils:

- Families should plan how their children will reach schools and colleges comfortably – walking and cycling where journeys are shorter, using a car for part of the journey but dropping off away from school gates, and identifying which public transport they can use if they need to.
- There will be extra buses on many services going to or near schools, following established routes. These will include buses on busy routes so pupils can travel separately to other passengers.
- Pupils using public transport should use a contactless card or have exact change to make their journey - some operators also have mobile phone ticket apps that allow gifting from parents to a child's account; check operator websites for details.
- Anyone using public transport should follow standard public health advice – washing hands thoroughly throughout the day, wearing a face covering if aged over 11 and not exempt, and not travelling if they have symptoms of Covid-19. Ensure you maintaining social distancing, where possible, including at busy entrances, exits, under canopies, bus stops, platforms or outside of stations.

Pupils should wear face coverings when using any public transport, including all buses dedicated to transport to and from schools, except where there is an exemption on health grounds. Please reinforce this with your pupils. Bus drivers may refuse boarding to passengers without face coverings but we and our industry partners want to avoid that situation. Where you require pupils to wear face covering as part of the school day this could be incorporated into your wider messaging – but

even if not, can you stress that pupils using public transport have and use face coverings.

In many cases bus companies are providing duplicate vehicles immediately behind a normal bus to provide segregation for pupils. In these cases pupils will be directed to board the following vehicles which will have the letter 'S' displayed alongside the route number. Pupils may need to pay on the normal bus then walk round to the duplicate vehicle. This system has worked effectively in those parts of the region where it started last week – but once again your help in communicating this is appreciated,

You can find general advice to families at [www.nexus.org.uk/covid-secure](http://www.nexus.org.uk/covid-secure).

Please pass this web link on to assist parents, the website will be updated regularly. It is really important we hear about any issues that arise in the first weeks of term – feedback from schools and local authority colleagues which will help us move resources and communicate effectively to best meet the needs of local people.

Please use the dedicated email address [schools.liaison@nexus.org.uk](mailto:schools.liaison@nexus.org.uk) to feed back any issues, including reports of busy services, concerns of parents and guardians, and highways problems around school gates – particularly if these affect bus services.

It often takes time for public transport provision to settle at the resumption of the school year, but we know that this year will be more challenging, and that the communities we serve will have understandable concerns about how busy and reliable bus and Metro services are. By working with you we can seek to address and allay those concerns.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Huw Lewis', with a horizontal line underneath.

**Huw Lewis**  
**Customer Services Director**