

Grindles Coaches Limited - Home to School Transport COVID-19 Guidance *Dene Magna School*

Whilst the risk surrounding the current pandemic situation is still apparent, as the Government has highlighted, it is important for life to resemble some normality. A factor of life that we are excited to see return is students attending school for the Autumn term. We want you to feel excited too and would like to share some procedures that have been introduced for operating transport for students, to and from Dene Magna School.

The current, following procedures are based on guidelines currently published by the UK Government and Public Health England. Most notably, specific guidance issued to schools; 'Guidance for full opening: schools'. They are also based on risk and controls as highlighted by our COVID-19 Coronavirus Risk Assessments. Grindles Coaches Ltd have also liaised with Gloucestershire County Council to ensure that we operate as closely as possible to other contracted routes to Dene Magna School.

This guidance applies to the following routes operated by Grindles Coaches Ltd:

- GR4 — Cinderford/Littledean
- GR5 — Cinderford/Drybrook

It has been taken into account that although these routes are public, registered bus services that they are dedicated for students, not travelling with the general public and tend to be consistent. This guidance is written taking fare-paying students and GCC entitled students who travel into account.

This guidance will be regularly reviewed in accordance with information published by the UK Government and Public Health England and will apply to our services for as long as deemed relevant.

Cleaning

Our cleaning procedure has been enhanced to include the disinfecting of the following; handrails, hand grabs, armrests and seat belt buckles between each journey. Floors, glass surfaces, seat back tables, driver controls and dashboard will be cleaned daily.

Driver/Bus

During the time that this guidance applies we aim to use the same bus and driver on each route, every day where reasonably practicable. However, due to operational circumstances this may not always be possible.

Face Coverings

As of 15th June 2020 it became mandatory for passengers of public transport to wear a face covering throughout their journey. This includes children aged 11 and over, therefore, we strongly advise that students apply a face covering before entering the bus. Obviously we are mindful of people that are exempt from wearing a face covering and respect their wish not to wear one. However, we do recommend that students that are exempt carry an exemption card or badge. These can be downloaded from:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/face-coverings-when-to-wear-one-and-how-to-make-your-own>

GCC Pass holders: Students who are GCC pass holders will receive two reusable face coverings, provided by GCC. These will be available on the bus within the first week of September. Students are asked to be mindful and only take 2 masks to ensure that enough are available for every student applicable. If preferred, students are able to wear their own face covering, rather than the ones supplied.

As per guidance published by the Department for Transport, 'Coronavirus (COVID-19): safer transport guidance for operators', it is advised that transport workers are not required to wear a face covering. Our busses are fitted with perspex safety screens, providing a barrier between drivers and students, therefore the driver will not be required by Grindles Coaches Ltd to wear a face covering whilst operating these particular routes.

Hand Sanitiser

Upon boarding the bus hand sanitiser will be available for students use and ask that this is used by every student each time they board. We are happy for students to use their own, if preferred, but please ensure that the driver is aware.

Bus Stop

Whilst waiting for the bus to arrive we advise to maintain social distancing rules and give peers space if they require it. Our busses are fitted with perspex safety screens, providing a barrier between drivers and students, therefore the driver will not disembark the vehicle before students board. However, please ensure that once the bus arrives that enough space is available for the driver to disembark safely if they need to.

Cash Payments

Although effort has been made to try and provide a cashless system during these times and going forward, unfortunately it has been deemed that this would not be financially feasible at this time. Therefore, we will still be taking cash payments on the bus as normal. However, if you'd prefer, we are happy to provide a bus pass which can be paid monthly or termly. Please contact us on 01594 822110 or admin@grindlescoaches.co.uk for more information.

Seating Arrangements

Social Distancing

Due to the recognition of a significant reduction in available transport capacity that social distancing imposes, it has been decided by the Department for Education that this will not apply from the autumn term on dedicated transport.

Rear-facing Seats

The particular busses used on these routes feature rear-facing seats. For the duration that these guidelines are in affect, these seats will not be in use, to ensure that all students are facing away from each other whilst travelling.

Bubbles

It is our intention that students will sit within the bubbles that they will adopt whilst in school. It is also recommended, where possible, that students try and occupy the same seat on each journey. Our driver's will not be aware of the year groups, or bubbles that the student is in, therefore, it is the responsibility of the student to sit in their bubble. It may be the case, where every seat has to be occupied, that some students may be sat next to another student from another bubble.

Boarding

Once students have entered the bus, wearing a face covering and having used hand sanitizer we recommend that students sit in the most-rear available seat in their designated bubble. Preferably, a seat next to a window, until they are all occupied, then filling aisle side seats. It is intended that this reduces contact on the bus with students that are not in each other's bubbles as much as reasonably possible.

Disembarking

When the bus has arrived at school and safely comes to a stop, the driver will open the doors and students may start to disembark the bus. Once the doors have opened, students may start to disembark the vehicle, row by row, bottom deck first, ensuring that nobody is in front of them before proceeding.

Boarding to Return

As per the guidelines for the outward journey to school, these also apply for the return journey home. Students are urged to board the bus sensibly, whilst distancing themselves, using hand sanitiser and wearing a face covering. Students are encouraged to occupy the same seat as they did on the journey to school.

COVID-19 Symptoms

If any student required to travel are displaying symptoms of COVID-19 they are requested not to travel. Symptoms include; a high temperature, a new continuous cough and loss of smell/taste. Similarly if any family member in students' households are self-isolating due to displaying symptoms we also request students not to travel.

Likewise, any driver that reports to work displaying any of the above symptoms will be requested to return home and self-isolate in accordance with current guidance at the time.

Conclusion

It is hoped that the guidelines above are concise and clear, and that they represent how important the health and safety of our customers and staff is. It is expected for students to follow the guidelines as much as reasonably practicable to ensure the safe travel for everybody concerned. Explicit failure to do so may result in contact with school and potential refusal to travel.

We welcome any feedback or suggestions as well as queries and questions regarding the above guidelines. Please contact us on 01594 822110 or admin@grindlescoaches.co.uk if you wish to discuss.