

Face Masks and Social Distancing when using Public Transport

01/09/2020

Dear Head Teacher

I am the Community Safety Manager for Northern Trains Ltd., the primary train operator in the North of England. My role is to work with the communities we serve to raise awareness around railway safety whilst also addressing any unacceptable behaviour on our stations and train services. You will be aware that I have previously corresponded in July immediately prior to the school break and the purpose of my further correspondence is to refresh the message and reflect upon the updates throughout the summer which now confirm the welcome return to schools for the majority of school pupils.

As you are aware from previous correspondence we have been running an amended and slightly reduced timetable since the government lockdown under COVID 19 and have recently uplifted the number of services provided, however with the lockdown measures easing and the number of people returning to access their workplaces, we have seen a rise in the numbers travelling on our services. A further timetable uplift will be in place from September 14th 2020 and I would invite you to visit our website on <https://www.northernrailway.co.uk/timetables> for more details.

Whilst we have put social distancing measures in place and have focused our messaging to Travel Safe, you'll appreciate on peak time services social distancing may present a challenge for young people. We have advised the local authority of this, but have also sent this communication directly to schools to assist with cascading the message to parents/carers assisting in their decision-making process for their September travel arrangements.

As we approach the new school term, I would like to take the opportunity to politely remind parents/carers of our expectations for the benefit of all when travelling on trains during the Covid 19 pandemic.

Should parents/carers wish to send their children to school via rail, they must ensure the following:

- Their child is in possession of a face covering, the Health Protection (Coronavirus, wearing of face coverings on public transport) (England) Regulations 2020 came into effect from 15 June 2020. Any member of rail staff is within their rights under the legislation to make a challenge where they believe a breach of legislation is taking place and refuse travel to anyone over the age of 11. British Transport Police are enforcing this legislation and may fine individuals who are non-compliant
- Their child is in possession of a valid ticket to travel, and we are asking that all tickets are purchased in advance to reduce issues around revenue collection. As the routes are penalty fare routes, non-compliance will result in a refusal of travel and details taken and passed to our Debt Recovery and Prosecutions Unit to be dealt with accordingly. To minimise coronavirus transmission, we are minimising the amount of cash transactions, hence the request to purchase tickets via the Northern App or in advance of their journey at our station Ticket Vending Machines or our station booking offices before they plan to travel. We also have scholar season tickets available to purchase for pupils at participating schools and colleges, details can be found on the Northern website www.northernrailway.co.uk
- Their child complies with the Railway Byelaws, and follows direction from Northern staff, who are authorised representatives of the railway. On some occasions it may not be possible for large groups to board our services and some may be required to stay behind and wait for a later service, this may be an inconvenience and may result in them arriving at school/home late, however we are trying to minimise this disruption and support social distancing. We will not accept any antisocial behaviour and as a consequence of any students' non-compliance with Northern staff instructions we will support the British Transport Police prosecuting those who subject our staff to abuse, we may also

issue a banning order, preventing travel from any Northern stations or travelling on Northern services.

Whilst we appreciate it is an exciting time for those returning in September to support safety and reduce transmission of this terrible virus, we ask that this message is conveyed to all parents of students currently using, or parents who may choose to use our services to raise awareness prior to their return to school. Further advice in relation to children and young people travelling on public transport can be found on the following link <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-safer-travel-guidance-for-passengers#public-transport>

Specifically pupils when travelling on public transport are asked to:

Keep their distance from people who are not in their household or [support bubble](#), while on public transport and in enclosed or substantially enclosed public areas of transport hubs. If this isn't possible children should:

- avoid physical contact
- face away from others
- keep the time spent near others as short as possible

Northern appreciate your continued support in conveying our message and we look forward to welcoming returning school pupils back to our services in September.

Yours faithfully

Lyndsey Sherwood

Community Safety Manager