

19 October 2020

Mr H McAninch
Baldragon Academy
69 Harestane Road
Dundee
DD3 0LF

Dear Mr McAninch

Face Coverings and Overcrowding on buses

With the mid term break now at an end and with pupils returning to school we are taking this opportunity to write to you to ask for your assistance in conveying this very important message to all children who travel either on dedicated or public transport buses.

The pandemic is in its second phase with numbers in Dundee increasing every day. Pupils have to realise they have a very important part to play in keeping not only themselves safe, but also their families and other bus users.

Prior to the October break we saw a significant number of pupils choosing to 'flout the rules'. Our Inspectors who had been targeting school buses especially at the end of the day witnessed pupils boarding services without any consideration to wearing a face covering. However, when these individuals were approached by our staff they would remove them from their pockets or bags and adorn them only to be seen once the bus moved away from the stop or the Inspector disembarked to simply remove them. This is unacceptable, everyone who travels on our services is entitled to do so safely and we have notices on every bus within our fleet advertising what to do and what not to do as well as regular messaging throughout our various social media channels.

Initially pupils travelling on dedicated school buses were exempt from having to wear a face covering but when travelling on a public service were asked to do so. We are sure this was very confusing at the time, but following a change to the guidelines, pupils now have to wear face coverings, unless exempt for medical reasons, on all buses dedicated or public. With the wearing of face coverings mandatory when walking around the school, in shops, etc it should now be a habit they are used to.

Our bus drivers have no powers to enforce the use of face coverings, they simply can remind passengers as the board, but ultimately the driver's role is to drive the bus safely and provide a reliable and secure public transport service. The Scottish Government itself has said that the responsibility for enforcement lies with Police Scotland and not with bus drivers.

Over recent weeks we have seen large numbers of pupils boarding public services not complying with the physical distancing guidelines, which restricts passengers from standing on bus and keeping a distance from other members of the public. Pupils should where possible seat themselves on both the lower and upper decks of the vehicle. Currently all of our double deck buses are out on the busiest routes and at the busiest times so that social distancing on board can be maintained, and we have duplicate services running at the end of the school day to accommodate the larger number of pupils travelling at that time.



We therefore request that these messages are conveyed to all school children on returning to school;

- that the wearing of face coverings on any bus is mandatory, unless they are exempt
- that they must respect the social distancing requirements on public services and stay away from other members of the public
- that they should not stand anywhere on a public service bus

Any pupils consistently 'flouting' the rules will initially be reported to the school and if they continue to do so consideration will be given to passing the details onto the Police.

We thank you for your assistance with this as it is really important that we work together to do as much as we possibly can to keep our community and passengers as safe as possible.

Yours sincerely



Christine McGlasson
Managing Director



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