

Greater Manchester secures £2m for thousands of extra bus seats to support safe return to school

Greater Manchester has secured more than £2m in government funding to boost capacity on the bus network at peak times and help children get back to school safely.

As pupils head back following the summer break this week, and with capacity on the commercial bus network significantly reduced due to coronavirus social distancing measures, Transport for Greater Manchester (TfGM) has worked with operators to run around 300 additional bus journeys each weekday across the region.

Duplicate buses exclusively for school and college students will run behind the original scheduled service at set times, with the usual route number starting in 'S' to show they are school services.

Approximately 90% of schoolchildren who use the bus to get to and from school travel on the commercial network, which is why the Department for Education funding has been used to expand these services.

They are being introduced on routes where pre-lockdown passenger data has shown the highest number of schoolchildren travelling and where bus seats are expected to be in high demand as a result.

Around 150 duplicate journeys will run in the morning, and a further 150 in the afternoon, to support journeys to and from school and free up capacity on the commercial bus network for other passengers.

TfGM has set up a dedicated web page at tfgm.com/duplicate-school-buses, where parents, carers and students can find all the latest information on the extra services.

Duplicate journeys, which run from the beginning of the new school year, will be in place until the autumn half-term holiday, subject to demand. TfGM will continually monitor usage to make sure capacity is running in the right place, and will reallocate buses if needed.

Mayor of Greater Manchester, Andy Burnham, said: “We’re committed to making sure children can return to school as safely as possible. While we’d still encourage pupils to travel on foot or by bike to school where they can, especially for shorter journeys, we know that isn’t an option for everyone.

“For those that must use public transport, these extra services will hopefully provide further peace of mind to parents and pupils that it is safe to travel on public transport.

“However, I must stress again that we need everyone to play their part by following safety rules and thinking about how and when they travel. These simple measures can have a big impact.”

Pupils using public transport, including the new duplicate journeys, will need to follow safe travel guidance and take responsibility for keeping themselves and others safe. They should:

- Wear a face covering on-board and in stations and interchanges, unless they’re under 11 or are [exempt](#) for another reason;
- Keep their distance from other passengers where possible;
- Clean their hands regularly and carry hand sanitiser with them; and
- Use contactless payment or exact change only where possible.

Yellow School Buses will also be running without a pass system in place – meaning they will operate as regular school buses, so any schoolchild can use them.

To help those returning to school in September do so safely, TfGM has created a Back to School hub at tfgm.com/schools where parents and pupils can find the latest information on timetables, tickets, school bus services and further information on cycling and walking.

ENDS



Transport for
Greater Manchester

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