



Coronavirus Public Information

COVID-19 Related Frequently Asked Questions **[FAQs]**

I would like to know [please click]...

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- **Is your shop open?**
- **Are your buffets/catering outlets open?**

[Click here to see a map of Tunbridge Wells West Station](#)



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Q: What measures are you taking to ensure passengers safety regarding the current Covid-19 pandemic? [\[back to menu\]](#)

We have implemented a range of measures, including:

- Limiting the numbers of passengers.
- Increased cleaning of commonly touched surfaces.
- Pre-booked reserved seating exclusive to your family/social bubble to observe social distancing regulations.
- A one-way system at Tunbridge Wells West.
- Provision of hand sanitiser.
- Payment by card only.

Q: Why can I not use other stations? [\[back to menu\]](#)

With the current social distancing regulations, operating a turn up and travel service would be very complex. To ensure the safety of our passengers and staff, it is currently only possible to start your journey from Tunbridge Wells West. High Rocks and Eridge Stations remain closed, and Groombridge Station is only open to passengers starting their journey at Tunbridge Wells West, or members of the public who wish to visit the catering kiosk when there is no train present. The situation remains under constant review.

Q: I would like to come on my own, do I have to pay the full fare? [\[back to menu\]](#)

Whilst we understand that customers enjoy discovering the railway on their own, the railway has to make it financially viable to run trains to ensure its future. We are regularly reviewing our plans, and restrictions may ease, which may allow us to re-evaluate pricing in the future.

Q: I have a Heritage Railway Association Inter-Rail Pass, Reciprocal Travel Scheme, or other Free / Discount pass, can I use it? [\[back to menu\]](#)

Unfortunately, there will be no concessions available during the period of revised services. With the severe restrictions on capacity due to social distancing, we can only afford to operate services based on passengers paying the standard fares quoted online.

Q: Can I purchase a ticket on the day? [\[back to menu\]](#)

We strongly advise booking in advance to allow us to allocate you a reserved seat and avoid disappointment. If any seats remain unsold, we will sell them on the day. However if all seats are sold, there will be no access to site for non-ticket holders. This is to ensure social distancing can be observed.



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Q: **Can I visit the railway without travelling?**

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Sorry, at this time we can only allow access to Tunbridge Wells West Station to ticket holders. This is to ensure social distancing can be observed.

Groombridge station will be open for non-travelling customers to visit the catering kiosk when trains are not at the station.

Q: **Do I need a face covering/mask to travel?**

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In accordance with government legislation **face coverings are mandatory:**

- **inside our engine shed**
- **inside our shop**
- **when boarding, alighting, or moving around the train**
- **when sitting in open carriages.**

They are optional on our platforms and any open-air areas (providing you can maintain 2m social distancing from other people/family groups).

If you are seated in a compartment carriage with a side corridor, once seated in your private compartment with your own family group, face coverings may be removed if you wish. They may also be removed if you are seated elsewhere and are eating or drinking (they must be replaced when you are finished). They must be worn in the train corridor or when alighting.

There are national exceptions from the mandatory wearing of face coverings; -

- Children under the age of 11
- Anyone with health issues which can cause a problem by wearing a face covering
- Railway staff / emergency service staff in the course of their duties

The full legislation can be found here: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2020/592/contents/made>

Q: **Can I move around the train or change seats?**

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We ask passengers to only occupy their booked seats and to remain in their seating bay / compartment throughout the journey. If travelling in a corridor train, please allow those groups seated nearest the door to exit first.

Q: **What toilets are available?**

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No toilets are currently available on the train. Limited single toilets are available at Tunbridge Wells West and Groombridge Stations for use if necessary.



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Q: Are you able to accommodate customers using a wheelchair? [\[back to menu\]](#)

On our locomotive hauled trains can sometimes cater for one family group with up to two wheelchairs per train. Customers requiring this space are asked to contact us online (ticket.office@spavalleyrailway.co.uk) to ensure the wheelchair space is available. Please do not visit without checking as we might not be able to operate that carriage.

On our Thumper DEMU (diesel multiple unit) we are only able to accommodate a single wheelchair and carer in the guard's van. Please email us for details / to make a reservation.

Q: Can I bring a dog on the train with me? [\[back to menu\]](#)

We welcome well trained, well behaved dogs. However, we ask that you show consideration to fellow guests by keeping your dog on a lead at all times and ensuring that it is sitting at your feet under the table and never on a seat, table or gangway.

If you have a nervous dog or one that barks at strangers or a dog that is deemed to be in a dangerous category, then we ask that you do not bring it along for obvious reasons.

Q: Can I bring a bicycle with me? [\[back to menu\]](#)

We are normally able to carry a limited number of bicycles on the train, however during these special services where you are travelling out and back on the same train we ask that any bikes are locked and left at Tunbridge Wells West station.

Q: Is your shop open? [\[back to menu\]](#)

Yes, our shop at Tunbridge Wells West will be open. Please note due to the one-way system and social distancing requirements it may not be possible to visit the shop after your train journey, so please browse and make any purchases prior to your travel if possible.

We are currently requesting contactless payment where possible please.

Government restrictions require shop customers to wear a face covering.

Q: Are your buffets/catering outlets open? [\[back to menu\]](#)

Currently only our catering kiosk at Groombridge station is open, although the Tunbridge Wells shop does sell cold drinks, ice creams and limited confectionary.

We are currently requesting contactless payment where possible please.

Special arrangements are in place for our pre-booked dining and cream tea packages, with all food/drink being served to your seat – the bar car counter will not be open to the public.



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What to expect on your trip – itinerary:

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How long do I have to arrive prior to booking?

Due to safety measures and the revised layout in place, we recommend that you arrive at Tunbridge Wells West Station at least 15 minutes (but not more than 45 minutes) before your booked departure time. Roads in Tunbridge Wells can get busy so please allow plenty of time to park and walk to the station.

See our website for details of local car parks: www.spavalleyrailway.co.uk

What happens if I miss my train?

To ensure you are comfortable and ready to depart, please arrive at your departure station at least 15 minutes (but not more than 45 minutes) prior to departure. If you do miss your departure, we will look to accommodate you on another service if capacity allows, however this cannot be guaranteed.

On arrival at Tunbridge Wells West:

There is a one-way system in place to help ensure social distancing

1. Enter via the main gate then into the shop – face coverings are required in the shop and only one family group will be permitted at any time to help maintain social distancing. Please feel free to browse the shop and make any purchases.
2. From the shop exit into the indoor concourse. The unisex disabled toilet will be available here, and there is also the coin in the slot model railway.
3. Exit the indoor concourse via the walkway down the center of our engineering shed. Here you may view some of our collection of locomotives and carriages under restoration. Please maintain at least 2m distance from other families – reminder 2m markers are in place on the left side of the walkway.
4. At the end of the shed, providing it is dry, exit and turn left, crossing the tracks on the footpath then turn left on the path outside the shed, and proceed to the gate next to the buffet car to form a queue for the next train. Please ensure you maintain 2m distancing between your family and the next. Our staff will open the gate when it is safe for you to board the train.

Note: In wet weather you may remain in the shelter of the shed until your train is ready to board.

5. When you are allowed onto the platform, please walk along the platform to locate the carriage / compartment number identified on your ticket. Face coverings are required to be worn prior to boarding the train. On some coaches boarding may be regulated to allow those in the middle of the coach to board first. Please listen to instructions from our volunteers and only sit in the compartments/seats shown on your ticket. In open coaches some bays of seats will be out of use to help maintain social distancing – do not attempt to occupy such seats. This is to ensure your safety and that of others.



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Your train journey:

Once on board the train if you are seated with your family in a compartment coach with a side corridor you may remove your face coverings if you wish. Face coverings may also be removed if you are eating or drinking but must be replaced once you have finished.

Please remain in your compartment / seating bay and do not walk through the train until it reaches its destination. There are no toilets in use on the train, and the buffet counter will be closed to the public.

If your trip includes pre booked catering, your food/drink will be brought to your table.

On arrival at Groombridge you may choose whether to alight and remain on the platform or to stay on the train. Groombridge station has a catering kiosk, toilets, model railway and secondhand railway bookstall. You will be able to view the train leaving and returning to the station. If alighting the train, please ensure your face covering is in place prior to leaving your seats.

If your train is a diesel multiple unit or has a locomotive at each end it will travel a further three quarters of a mile to Birchden Junction to reverse. If your train is hauled by a single locomotive it will proceed to the loop just outside the station for the locomotive to run round the train.

Your train will arrive back at Groombridge station about 10-15 minutes after departure, prior to returning to Tunbridge Wells West.

Do I have to bring anything with me?

Please feel free to bring anything that makes you feel comfortable and safe. Limited prepacked food and drink will be available, but you can bring your own if you so wish!

Please remember to bring a face covering. You will not be allowed to enter the shop or board a train without one.

Hand sanitiser dispensers are available near the entrance and catering kiosk, and soap/water is available in the toilets, but feel free to bring your own. On dining trains, a small bottle of hand sanitizer will be provided on each table.

Enjoy your trip!

We are sorry we have had to restrict some activities and the ability to board and alight our trains is restricted but need to do our best to ensure your safety and that of our volunteers.

We hope you enjoy your visit and look forward to welcoming you back in future!



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What to expect on your Dining Train experience:

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Customers will be required to remain in their seats during the journey and will be directed by Spa Valley Railway staff as to how and when they can either board or alight from the train at Tunbridge Wells West & Groombridge to ensure social distancing.

To comply with government regulations, you must wear a face covering when boarding, alighting, moving through the train and when seated in an open coach. Your face covering may be removed to enable consumption of food and drink providing you are seated in your reserved seats but should be replaced when you finish.

All dining tables will be provided with a 50ml bottle of hand sanitiser, but you are welcome to bring your own or any other personal protective equipment you wish to use.

Fish & Chip Lunch Trains

Hot food will be pre-packaged and delivered to your tables once you are seated by Spa Valley Railway staff wearing a face covering. The cake dessert will already be on your table. Condiment (tomato sauce & tartar sauce) sachets and salt & pepper will be on the table along with cutlery in a sealed packet.

A limited drinks menu will be available, with orders taken by Spa Valley Railway staff. We ask for contactless payment wherever possible. The bar counter will not be open to the public.

Cream Teas

Food will be pre-packaged and placed on your tables by Spa Valley Railway staff prior to boarding. Our staff, if required, will deliver items to your table wearing a face covering, face shield and gloves. Cutlery will be on the table in a sealed packet.

Afternoon Tea

Food will be pre-packaged and placed on your tables by our external catering supplier prior to boarding. An attendant will be available if required to provide assistance during your visit. Customers will be required to pour their own drinks and a flask of hot water/tea will be on your table prior to boarding.

Gin & Steam

Your complimentary Spa Valley Railway gin glass and tonic water will be placed on your table prior to boarding along with the first serving of gin in a disposable cup. The remainder of the service will be provided by Spa Valley Railway staff wearing appropriate protective equipment.

Ploughman's Plus

Food will be pre-packaged and placed on your tables by our external catering supplier prior to boarding. An attendant will be available if required to provide assistance during your visit.



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ADDITIONAL TERMS AND CONDITIONS RELATING TO COVID-19

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- Passengers who exhibit symptoms of Covid-19 or who have been in contact with someone who has, **MUST NOT** attend the railway.
- It is a requirement that you must not visit the railway if you have knowingly been in contact with someone with the virus during the previous 14 days.
- In accordance with current government regulations, all passengers on our trains are required to use face coverings that cover their nose and mouth before boarding our trains. Face coverings may only be removed on board whilst seated in a compartment exclusive to your family group or when drinking or eating food. They must be worn if walking through the train or alighting.

The Spa Valley Railway may refuse carriage to those who do not comply with this regulation.

- Face coverings are also required in our Shop/Ticket Office and Engine Shed at Tunbridge Wells West in accordance with current government regulations.
- Please note that the regulation does not apply to children under the age of 11, to railway staff in the course of their duties and in certain other specific situations.
- Bikes/cycles cannot be taken on-board the trains.

ITEMS TO NOTE

- Limited toilets are available on Tunbridge Wells West and Groombridge stations.
- There are no toilets on the trains.
- Our catering facility at Tunbridge Wells West remains closed until further notice.
- Cold drinks and ice creams are available from the shop, and Groombridge station platform kiosk will be open.
- Our shop at Tunbridge Wells West station will be open, subject to volunteer availability. Please visit on arrival as it may not be possible to access when the train returns.
- Passengers are requested to take their own rubbish home.

Tunbridge Wells West Station

Welcome to the Spa Valley Railway

→ → → One Way System in Operation

