



Home to School/College Transport Code of Good Practice



01495 311556.

Within Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council, all functions related to the Home to School/ College Transport Service are dealt with by the Home to School Transport Division, for and on behalf of the Chief Education Officer. This Code of Practice is intended to clarify the day-to-day responsibilities of pupils, parents, contractors, drivers, escorts, schools and the Chief Education Officer, to ensure smooth operation of school/college transport services.

Pupils



- Always arrive at the bus stop on time and make sure (if you have been allocated) you have your bus pass or season ticket with you and ready to show to the driver when boarding.
- Do not play about near the road while waiting for the bus. Wait on the pavement, well back from the road.
- Do not go near the bus and in particular, the wheels, until it has stopped.
- Do not push or rush for the door when the bus has stopped. Never operate the bus doors (except in an emergency). If you are requested to operate doors by the driver or escort report this to your teacher or parent/guardian.
- Having left your vehicle you should not return to it for safety reasons.
- Find a seat quickly and quietly without pushing, keep gangways clear in case of an emergency.
- You should listen to the driver or escort and do as he or she says with regard to the transport arrangements.
- Do not play games or throw objects on or from the bus, this is dangerous and could cause an accident.
- Do not distract the driver and only use the emergency door **IN CASES OF EMERGENCY**.
- Do not eat/drink or smoke on the bus. Do not leave litter on the bus.
- Once the vehicle has commenced its journey you must remain in your seat at all times.
- You must always wear a seat belt if one is provided, lap belts must be worn across the hips and not the stomach. Static belts should be adjusted to fit and should be worn tightly.
- If you are unable to find a seat on a contracted vehicle let your teacher or parent/guardian know.



- Do not stand up to get off the vehicle until it has come to a complete standstill at your stop.
- Take care that your coat, scarf or bag is not caught in the door when boarding or alighting.
- Make sure you have all your belongings as you leave the vehicle. If you have forgotten something, the parent/guardian should telephone the company.
- Do not cross the road close behind or in front of the bus. You must be able to see clearly both ways. Where possible use a pedestrian crossing.
- Older pupils should remember – your actions may influence younger children for example when getting off the bus stay well clear of the vehicle before it departs, when walking to or from the bus stop, follow the green cross code. Copies should be available at your school.
- If you wish to make a complaint against the driver and/or escort, do not approach them. Tell a teacher or your parent/guardian who can refer the matter to the Home to School Transport Section.
- Please remember that in the event of persistent misbehaviour, particularly bullying or fighting, you may be excluded from using school transport. Serious incidents of misbehaviour or vandalism will be reported to the Police.
- If you are subjected to bullying let your teacher/parent or guardian know immediately who can refer the matter to the Home to School Transport Section. All information provided will be dealt with in the strictest confidence. Help and advice is also available from children under Risk from Bullying (Helpline 02920 611300).



Parent/Guardian

- Make sure older children leave home in sufficient time and ensure that all primary aged pupils are taken to the bus stop in good time. It is your responsibility to ensure they are looked after until the bus arrives.
- Make sure children have their season ticket or bus pass with them – drivers will make checks.
- It is your responsibility to ensure that all primary aged children are met when the bus returns from school. Remember that young children can get excited and forget road safety as they get off the bus and therefore ensure they are met on the same side of the road as the bus stops.
- Teach children the safety rules. Make sure they understand the rules for pupils in this booklet. Remember you will be held responsible for any misbehaviour or vandalism caused by your child. Persistent misbehaviour, particularly bullying or fighting, may result in exclusion from the bus and serious incidents will be reported to the Police.
- Make sure your child knows what to do if the bus is late, or does not arrive.
- Help bus drivers and escorts to do their job. Remind young people that playing about at bus stops and on the buses can cause accidents and injuries.
- Advise the driver or escort if there may be a particular difficulty with your child on a specific day.
- If your child is unaccompanied between home and the bus stop, make sure that he or she knows and follows the safest route and uses the safest crossing places and is appropriately dressed. Remember the safest route is not always the shortest one.
- Notify immediately the Home to School Division of any changes to your circumstances such as a change of address. If your ticket is no longer required you must return it to the Home to School Transport Division.
- Season tickets are valuable. Replacements will be charged for. Lost tickets should be reported immediately to the Home to School Transport Division.



- If you have any concerns about school transport, you should contact the Home to School Transport Division.
- Remind your child they must always wear a seatbelt, lap belts must be worn across the hips and not the stomach. Static belts should be adjusted to fit and should be worn tightly. Seatbelts should be worn for the whole of the journey.
- Please ensure your child/ren are aware of the rules for safety on buses.
- Remember to remind your child/ren only to operate the bus doors in an emergency.
- Ensure children are aware that some types of clothing can be dangerous e.g. having belts or bags with loose straps could become caught in the door. Also rucksacks should be carried and not worn.



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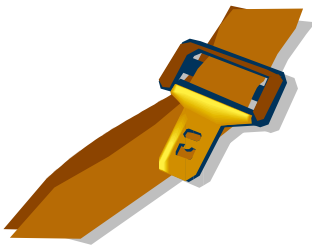
Schools

- To assist the LEA with the distribution of this document.
- Even though many children may not travel by bus to and from school it is likely that they would use such transport at some time during their school life for school trips etc. Schools are therefore encouraged to raise awareness of safety issues contained in this document.
- To raise an awareness of banned activities – smoking, vandalism, moving about on vehicles, eating, drinking, litter, bullying and fighting.
- Report all incidents of pupil misbehaviour to the Home to School Transport Divisions, regardless of whether the issue has been dealt with at the School.
- To assist the LEA with cases of misbehaviour.
- When the bus set down and pick up points are on the school premises or designated pick up drop off points, it would be appreciated if you could ensure adequate supervision.
- Where it is noticed private cars obstruct bus stops or restricted parking areas outside schools notify the Police.
- Always refer to Council Policy during periods of severe weather.
- Should a contracted school bus fail to arrive at school, wherever possible contact the Home to School Transport Divisions and keep the children together.
- Notify the Home to School Transport Divisions of changes to pupil circumstances, such as leavers.



Escorts

- Prior to starting work as an escort for contracts arranged by this directorate you must complete an Enhanced Criminal Records Bureau Check and have been cleared by the directorate for use.
- Escorts will be provided for children with special educational needs where this is recommended, following an appropriate professional assessment.
- Escorts will be provided for all mainstream primary school buses, minibuses and for taxi's where there are infant aged children.
- Ensure that children board and alight safely by:



- keeping doors closed until the vehicle is at a complete standstill
- ensure that all children use seatbelts where fitted
- not allowing children to open or close vehicle doors
- getting off the bus to ensure that all children are well clear of the vehicle and that nobody is going back for property they have left behind
- escorts travelling in taxi's should sit in the rear of the vehicle where possible
- assisting parents to help pupil's board and alight
- discouraging children from crossing in front of, or immediately behind, the vehicles
- closing doors before moving off, and ensuring nothing is caught in the door
- ensuring all children are seated before the vehicle starts
- stowing all luggage safely and ensuring gangways are kept clear.
- Ensuring with the driver, that any restraints and wheelchair clamps are correctly fastened.
- If possible, take a seat where you can reach the doors easily, ensuring that you are able to watch children and control behaviour.

- In the event of severe, or persistent misbehaviour, notify the Headteacher or your employer immediately. Never evict a child from the vehicle. If you threaten to report misbehaviour, then do so.
- Co-operate with authority staff, teachers and parents to resolve any problems.
- Maintain a courteous, professionally detached relationship with the pupils, parents and your driver. Inappropriate conversation topics and language must be avoided at all times.
- Ensure the vehicle completes its routes, and all children are picked up according to the timetable.
- In the event of breakdown or accident, remain with the children. Never leave them unattended. If necessary, enlist the help of a passer-by to summon assistance.
- Make sure you are familiar with the particular problems of the children you escort.
- Make sure you have received adequate instruction with regard to children with special educational needs from the appropriate staff at the school and that you are familiar with any safety equipment, i.e. seatbelts, wheel-chair clamps, first aid kit, fire extinguisher and emergency exits.
- Where training is arranged by the LEA you are required to attend.
- Be prepared to act as messenger between school, parents, and pupils but do not take instructions from parents or children, such as varying the transport arrangements, without first discussing revised arrangements with the Home to School Transport Divisions Officer .
- If a responsible adult is not available at the drop off point, you should wait ten minutes in case the parent has been delayed. If the parent/guardian has not arrived within the ten minutes contact your employer immediately who will then contact the Home to School Transport Division. Please carry on the remainder of the route and await further instruction from your employer.
- Do not eat or drink on school transport vehicles.
- Do not smoke or carry a lighted pipe, cigar or cigarette on school transport vehicles this includes smoking prior to children boarding the vehicle. This applies equally to school premises.
- If the vehicle calls at more than one school, never leave children unattended on the bus.



Drivers

- Never drive a vehicle you are not appropriately licenced to drive.
- Do not drive a vehicle you consider to be unroadworthy or in contravention of any relevant PCV regulations or legislation. Report any faults to your employer immediately.
- Prior to starting work as a driver for contracts arranged by this directorate you must complete an Enhanced Criminal Records Bureau Check and have been cleared by the directorate for use. Should you receive any cautions or convictions after clearance you must inform the Home to School Transport Divisions immediately.
- Always be aware that the welfare of the pupils is of paramount importance.
- Never use a hand held mobile phone whilst driving. In emergency situations where it would be unsafe or impractical to stop driving, drivers may make or receive calls if they have a totally hands free kit. A hands free kit consists of equipment that does not need to be held during operation. Remember you must have full control of the vehicle at all times.
- It is the driver's responsibility to ensure seatbelts are worn if fitted if the child is under 14 years of age and is conveyed in the front seats of all vehicles or rear seats of cars and small minibuses (with an unladen weight of 2540 kilos or less).
- If driving a large vehicle you should actively encourage all passengers to wear seatbelts if fitted. Remember you should not pull off until all children are seated. Report any problems with this to the Headteacher and your employer.
- Work with escorts where provided and be aware of any problems a pupil may have.
- Follow the scheduled route and use only designated pick up and set down points. If it proves impossible to maintain the scheduled timetable, notify your employer.

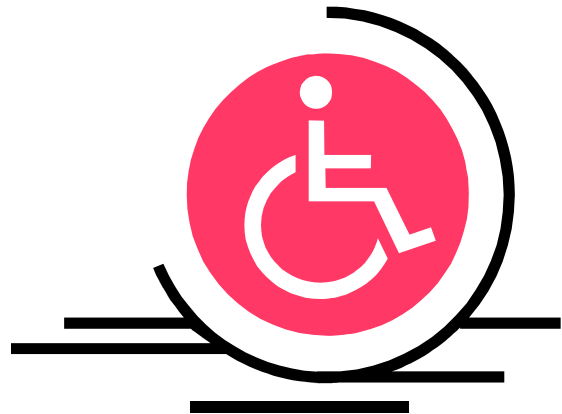


- Check pupils' passes to ensure they are entitled to travel. Never allow any other unauthorised passengers to travel on your vehicle.
- Avoid physical contact with pupils wherever possible. Maintain a courteous and professionally detached relationship with your passengers, parents and any escort. Do not give gifts and avoid inappropriate conversation topics and language at all times.



- Report any incident of misbehaviour to the Headteacher and to your employer. If you threaten to report bad behaviour, then do so.
 - Any injury to a child must be reported immediately to your employer for a permanent record to be made.
 - If a child refuses to behave and you consider he or she is placing other children in danger – stop the bus at the nearest telephone box or police station but on no account evict the child, seek the help of a passer-by to phone the parent, or the police. If you cannot obtain the help of a passer-by make the call yourself.
- Never allow children to leave the vehicle on route. Children should not be set down until they have arrived at their final destination.
 - Check for lost property at the end of each journey and hand any items found to your employer or school.
 - Approach each stop safely and with care. Do not brake sharply. Wherever possible, pick up and set down on the pavement, and not on the carriageway.
 - Hazard warning lights may be used when pupils are boarding and alighting, as circumstances dictate.
 - Keep the doors closed until you have brought the vehicle to a complete standstill. Do not allow children to open or close the doors of your vehicle.
 - Always wait for several seconds before closing the door. Check that doors are properly closed, and that nothing is trapped in them, inside or out. Use nearside mirrors to check for latecomers trying to board before pulling away.
 - Do not drive away until all pupils are seated and/or secured.
 - After unloading, make sure that all pupils are well clear of the vehicle before moving off.
 - Do not drop pupils off to wait unattended for connecting buses or taxis. Wait until the other vehicle has arrived.

- Ensure you are familiar with any equipment on the vehicle to assist with boarding and alighting, such as wheelchair lifts or ramps.
- If pupils have to exit by the rear of a minibus, make sure they are supervised.
- If you have to reverse the vehicle, activate the buzzer, if fitted. Only reverse before setting down or picking up pupils.
- Co-operate with school and authority staff over arrangements for circulation, parking, picking up and setting down within school grounds.
- Pupils have been advised not to return to the vehicle. Always, however, ensure that you watch out for children rushing back for property they have left behind.
- If a child has a special harness or wheelchair, make sure you know how to deal with these, that they are secured before moving off and that there is an independent passenger restraint for each wheelchair user.
- Make sure all luggage is safely stowed, and the gangway and emergency exits are not obstructed.
- Do not allow your vehicle to be loaded beyond its capacity.
- Follow the Highway Code at all times. Adhere to speed limits and take special care in country lanes.
- Do not eat or drink on school transport vehicles.
- Do not smoke or carry a lighted pipe, cigar or cigarette on school transport vehicles. This includes smoking prior to children boarding the vehicle. This applies equally to school premises.
- 'School Transport' signs must be used as appropriate and in accordance with legislation. Ensure they are in the appropriate positions, and only displayed when the vehicle is being used for pupils.
- Ensure you have been supplied with a telephone and the telephone numbers of the people who you should contact in an emergency, i.e. your employer, the Home to School Transport Section and the schools served. Those should be kept on the vehicle at all times. In an emergency, enlist the help of a passer-by to summon assistance.
- Only in extreme circumstances and as a last resort should you leave your vehicle to seek assistance.



- If, because of unforeseen weather conditions or road works, it is impossible to follow the scheduled route, ensure that safe alternative stops are being used which do not entail children walking long distances unsupervised. If it is not possible, take them very close to the authorised stops by following a sensible diversion. Take them to a point from which telephone calls can be made to parents/guardians and make sure they are not left unattended.
- If a responsible adult is not available at the drop off point, be prepared in certain circumstances to have to wait for ten minutes just in case the parent has been delayed. If the parent/guardian has not arrived within the ten minutes contact your employer immediately who will then contact the Home to School Transport Division. Please carry on the remainder of the route and await further instruction from your employer.
- In the event of a fire or hazard, evacuate the vehicle in a calm and orderly manner and take pupils to a safe distance from the vehicle.
- Ensure you know how to use the fire extinguisher and first aid kit, and any other safety equipment.
- Drivers must carry out the necessary safety checks to their vehicles prior to operating any school contract journey. Any drivers must ensure that vehicles are not used until defects are rectified.



Contractors

- The welfare of the pupils is of paramount importance.
- Ensure that you, and your staff, are familiar with all aspects of this Code of Good Practice.
- Make sure that you adhere strictly to the conditions of contract.
- Make sure that telephone numbers of the people who should be notified in an emergency, i.e. yourself, the Home to School Transport Section and the schools served, are on the vehicle.
- It is recommended that operators should provide drivers with mobile telephones particularly those on routes in rural areas. Drivers must be issued with guidance in relation to the use of mobile phones. The use of hand held mobile phones whilst driving is strictly prohibited. In emergency situations where it would be unsafe or impractical to stop driving, drivers may make or receive calls if they have a totally hands free kit. A hands free kit consists of equipment that does not need to be held during operation.
- You must establish contingency plans for dealing with vehicle failures, staff unavailability and other emergencies and make the plan available upon request by the Home to School Transport Division.
- Ensure staff and vehicles meet both statutory obligations and any additional requirements set by the Home to School Transport Divisions as per conditions of contract.
- Make sure that any necessary equipment, such as specialist harnesses, wheelchair restraints and any other equipment is obtained from the Home to School Transport Divisions and that they are returned when no longer needed.
- Report recurrent problems, such as pupil discipline, to the Home to School Transport Divisions if the matter remains unresolved.



- Make sure that a copy of all letters received concerning the operation of the service are sent to the Home to School Transport Division, together with a copy of your reply.
- Report any late running, breakdown or accident to the school and the Home to School Transport Division. Ensure that all services are operated according to the agreed route and schedule.
- Do not sub-contract any school transport service to another operator without the prior permission of the Home to School Transport Divisions. Requests to sub-contract must be made in writing except in cases of emergency. In the event of an emergency you should only sub-contract where you have evidence and are satisfied that the contractor is able to provide a Driver and Vehicle that meets fully with the authority's conditions of contract.
- Ensure all drivers are familiar with the route, drop off and pick up points.
- You should notify the Home to School Transport Section immediately should you employ a new driver or escort in order for the appropriate checks to be carried out. Employees should not be used on contracts arranged by this directorate until they have successfully completed a disclosure check with the directorate.
- Ensure that vehicles arrive at the school/college premises by the start of the morning session and the end of the afternoon session no more than 10 minutes before either time.
- Should a driver or escort leave your employment, you should immediately notify the Home to School Transport Divisions.
- Make sure that the conditions of contract and all appropriate legislation are strictly adhered to at all times.
- Routes are not allowed to be altered without prior approval of the Home to School



Transport Division.  **01495 311556.**

- If a contractor excludes a child from a bus due to persistent behaviour or violence, such actions must be confirmed by the Home to School Transport Division.
- The contractor must report the following incidents immediately to the Police and the Home to School Transport Division.

- Serious incidents of violence used by or on pupils using the bus:
 - serious outbreaks of disorder
 - wanton damages caused to property, belongings of passengers of the bus
- A written record should be kept of injury to a child that occurs on the vehicle. All injuries must be reported to the Home to School Transport Section immediately.
- All vehicles must have a first aid kit and fire extinguisher and drivers must know how to use them. Regular checks should be made to ensure first aid kits are complete and fire extinguishers are in perfect working order.
- Where training is provided by the LEA for escorts/drivers you are required to ensure attendance.

Home to School Transport Division

- Parents, schools and contractors will have access to advice and assistance during normal office hours



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- Where passes for travel on contract hire vehicles are required they will normally be issued within 10 working days of receipt of an approved request, except at the start of a new academic year, when notification may take a little longer and therefore parents are asked to submit applications as soon as possible.
- Season tickets for travel on public transport services should normally be issued by the start of a new academic year or within 10 days of receipt of an approved application, at other times of the year.
- Payment of properly completed and submitted claims from contractors will be arranged within 28 days of receipt.
- The Home to School Transport Section will ensure that any special equipment, such as specialist harnesses or seats, will be provided, as he/she considers necessary.
- School journeys will be planned to minimise journey times subject to the provision of an efficient and cost effective service.
- The Home to School Transport Section will ensure that an escort is provided for children with special needs where this is agreed following an appropriate professional assessment.
- Checks will be made to ensure the operators, drivers and escorts have no record of criminal convictions or cautions, which make them unsuitable for a post, which involves access to children.
- The safety and quality of school transport services and routes will be monitored on a regular basis.

- The Home to School Transport Section will ensure that all the operators comply with specifications and conditions of their contract, which sets out the standards that operators must meet over and above the statutory requirements. Failure to comply may result in an operator being penalised or the contract being terminated.
- The Home to School Transport Section will endeavour to apply high standards of customer care and safety, and to undertake regular monitoring of complaints.

Complaints **MUST** be referred to the Home to School Transport Division



0 1495 31 1556.