



HOME TO SCHOOL/COLLEGE TRANSPORT

Code of Good Practice

*TORFAEN
COUNTY
BOROUGH*



*BWRDEISTREF
SIROL
TORFAEN*



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HOME TO SCHOOL/COLLEGE TRANSPORT



Introduction

The Directors of Education for the five unitary authorities are responsible for the planning and organisation of home-to-school/college transport for all eligible pupils and students, in accordance with the policies of their respective Authorities.

It is the firm intention of each of the Directors of Education to build upon and, wherever possible, improve the quality of the transport provision inherited from the previous County Council. The present policies adopted by all five unitary authorities are over and above those laid down by the Government.

The five authorities are responsible for the transportation of over 20,000 pupils/students each day and it is, therefore, essential that arrangements are made in such a way as to maximise the efficiency and cost-effectiveness of service provision. In order to achieve these objectives, the unitary authorities are working together in a number of areas with regard to home-to-school/college transport.

An example of this co-operation has been seen with the continuation of contracts that, as a result of local

government reorganisation, cross one or more unitary authority boundaries in order to ensure a seamless transfer and as little as possible disruption for pupils, parents and schools. The unitary authorities pride themselves on providing services their respective populations want and in being responsive to their changing needs and therefore consulted widely on a code of practice last year, in order to:-

facilitate co-ordination of all aspects of the service

provide guidelines for parents, pupils, schools, escorts, drivers, operators and staff of the new unitary authorities

provide a basis on which to consult all interested parties with the aim of improving and ensuring the service meets your needs.

A positive response was received from all parties and all views have been taken into account in producing this code of good practice.



Pupils

- ◆ Always arrive at the bus stop on time and make sure 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/carer.
- ◆ 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, as 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 stay in your seat at all times.
- ◆ You must always wear a seatbelt 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 parents/carers know.
- ◆ Do not try to get on or off the bus until it has stopped.
- ◆ Take care that your coat, scarf or bag is not caught in the door when boarding or alighting.
- ◆ Having left your vehicle you should not return to it for safety reasons.
- ◆ 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 Director of Education.
- ◆ 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 know immediately. Help and advice is also available from Children Under Risk from Bullying.
(Helpline 02920 611300).
- ◆ Make sure you have all your belongings as you leave the vehicle. If you have forgotten something, telephone the company.



Parents/Carers

- ❖ Make sure older children leave home in sufficient time and ensure that young children 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 tickets or bus pass with them - drivers will make checks.
- ❖ It is your responsibility to ensure that young children are met when the bus returns from school. Remember that young children often get excited and forget road safety as they get off the bus and therefore ensure you meet them 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 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 Director of Education of any changes to your circumstances such as a change of address. If your ticket is no longer required, you must return it immediately to the Director of Education .
- ❖ Season tickets are valuable. Replacements will be charged for. Lost tickets should be reported immediately to the appropriate bus company, who will advise you how to obtain a replacement.
- ❖ If you have any concerns about school transport, you should contact the Director of Education.
- ❖ 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 eg having belts or bags with loose straps could become caught in the door. Also rucksacks should be carried and not worn.



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.
- ▼ To assist the LEA with cases of misbehaviour.
- ▼ When the bus set down and pick up points are on the school premises you must ensure adequate supervision.
- ▼ Where it is noticed private cars obstruct bus stops or restricted parking areas outside schools notify the police.
- ▼ Agree contingency plans with operators in case of bad weather or other emergencies.
- ▼ Should a contracted school bus fail to arrive at school, wherever possible contact the operator or the Director of Education and keep the children together.
- ▼ Notify the Director of Education of changes to pupil circumstances, such as leavers.



Escorts

- ❑ Escorts will be provided for children with special educational needs where this is recommended, following an appropriate professional assessment.
- ❑ Ensure that children board and alight safely by:-
 - * keeping doors closed until the vehicle is at a complete standstill;
 - * 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;
 - * assisting parents to help pupils 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 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. seat belts, wheelchairclamps, 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 a 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 appropriate Director of Education.
- ❑ If a responsible adult is not available at the drop off point, be prepared in certain circumstances to take the child for the remainder of the journey before returning to the child's address. If there is still no-one available, contact the Director of Education for further instructions. Report the incident to your employer.
- ❑ Do not smoke, eat or drink on school transport vehicles.
- ❑ If the vehicle calls at more than one school, never leave children unattended on the bus.



Drivers

- ▲ Always be aware that the welfare of the pupils is of paramount importance.
- ▲ 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.
- ▲ 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 your employer. If you threaten to report misbehaviour, 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 passerby to phone the parent, or the police. If you cannot obtain the help of a passerby 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 slowly and with care. Do not brake sharply. Wherever possible, pick up and set down onto the pavement, and not onto 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 late comers trying to board before pulling away.
- ▲ Do not drive away until all pupils are seated and/or secured.
- ▲ When unloading, make sure that all pupils are well clear of the vehicle before moving off.
- ▲ Discourage children from crossing in front of or immediately behind the vehicle. Tell them to wait until the vehicle has moved off.
- ▲ Do not drop pupils off to wait unattended for connecting buses or taxis. Wait until the other vehicle has arrived. When delivering a child to his/her stop, make every effort to ensure that the child is received by a responsible adult.
- ▲ 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 after picking up pupils.
- ▲ Co-operate with school and authority staff over arrangements for circulation, parking, picking up and setting down within school grounds.
- ▲ 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 smoke, eat or drink on school transport vehicles.

- ▲ "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.

- ▲ In the event of breakdown or accident, enlist the help of a passer-by to summon assistance. If no help is available, make sure that the vehicle is in a safe immobile condition before leaving it. Instruct the pupils that they must not leave the vehicle. If necessary, appoint an older pupil to take responsibility.

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 the safe alternative stops are 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 take the child for the remainder of the journey before returning to the child's address. If there is still no-one available, contact the Director of Education for further instructions. Report the incident to your employer
 - ▲ In the event of fire or hazard, evacuate the vehicle in a calm and orderly manner and take pupils to a safe distance from the vehicle.
 - ▲ Ensure you have been supplied with the telephone numbers of the people who you should contact in an emergency, i.e. your employer, the Director of Education and the schools served. Those should be kept on the vehicle at all times.
 - ▲ 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.
- ▲ It is the driver's responsibility to ensure seat belts 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 2,540 kilos or less).



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 telephone numbers of the people who should be notified in an emergency, i.e. yourself, the Director of Education 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.
- You must establish contingency plans for dealing with vehicle failures, staff unavailability and other emergencies and make available upon request by the Local Education Authority.
- Ensure staff and vehicles meet both statutory obligations and any additional requirements set by the Director of Education.
- Make sure that any necessary equipment, such as specialist harnesses, wheelchair restraints and any other equipment is obtained from the Director of Education and that they are returned when no longer needed.
- Report recurrent problems, such as pupil discipline, to the Director of Education if the matter remains unresolved.
- Make sure that a copy of all letters received concerning the operation of the service are sent to the Director of Education, together with a copy of your reply.
- Report any late running, breakdown or accident to the school and the Director of Education.
- 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 Director of Education. Requests to sub-contract must be made in writing except in cases of emergency.



- Ensure drivers are familiar with the route, drop off and pick up points.
- You should notify the Director of Education immediately you employ a new driver or escort in order for the appropriate checks to be carried out.
- 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 Director of Education of the area in which your company is based.
- 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 Director of Education.
- If a contractor excludes a child from a bus due to persistent misbehaviour or violence, such actions must be confirmed by the Director of Education.
- The Contractor must report the following incidents immediately to the police and the Director of Education:-
 - * 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. Serious injuries must be reported to the Director of Education.
- 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.



The Director of Education

- Parents, schools and contractors will have access to advice and assistance during normal office hours.
- Where passes for travel on contract hire vehicles are required they will normally be issued within ten 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 twenty eight days of receipt.
- The Director of Education 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 Director of Education will ensure that an escort is provided for children with special educational 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 Director of Education 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 Director of Education will endeavour to apply high standards of customer care and safety, and to undertake regular monitoring of complaints.
- Complaints should be referred to the Director of Education.

Interested Parties Consulted

- ◆ **Traffic Commissioner**
- ◆ **Department of Transport**
- ◆ **Chief Constable**
- ◆ **ROSPA**
- ◆ **Community Transport Association**
- ◆ **BUSK**
- ◆ **Gwent Joint Passenger Transport Unit**
- ◆ **Major Operators in the Greater Gwent Area**
- ◆ **Headteachers of Greater Gwent Schools**
- ◆ **Parents Teachers Associations in the Greater Gwent Area**
- ◆ **Pupils in Greater Gwent Schools**