

School
Transport



Code of
**GOOD
PRACTICE**

This code of good practice has been written to help those involved with school transport arrangements to ensure that the journey between home and school is safe. Parents, children, drivers, escorts and school staff all have a role to play in safe school transport.

The code is a positive step towards increasing mutual awareness and understanding and we urge all those involved in school transport to heed the advice given.

If you have any questions regarding this code of good practice or you require further copies of this booklet please contact:

Public Transport Section

Directorate of Environment and Neighbourhoods
Isle of Wight Council
Enterprise House
St Cross Business Park
Newport
Isle of Wight
PO30 5WB

Telephone (01983) 823780

Email stewart.chandler@iow.gov.uk

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Some useful telephone numbers:

Isle of Wight Council

Public Transport Section (01983) 823780

Children's Services Authority (01983) 823455

Wightbus (01983) 823782

Southern Vectis (01983) 827000

Pupils

Home to school transport is provided for your benefit. Making sure school transport is safe for everyone is partly your responsibility. Think about your safety and the safety of others before you act! Misbehaviour will not be tolerated, and if you do misbehave we will take disciplinary action against you. A summary of our disciplinary procedure is on the inside back cover of this booklet. Television surveillance (CCTV) is now being used on school bus journeys.

Before you leave home

- Check you have your term ticket.

Walking to and from the bus stop

- Make sure you use pedestrian crossings. If you have been told to use a specific route, do so.

At the bus stop

- Remember to take care – do not fool around while waiting for the bus.
- Do not try and get on a bus that is about to leave.

On the bus

- Respect the driver/escort. Follow her/his instructions. Always remember that the **law** requires you not to misbehave. By law you must not “impede or cause discomfort” to any other passenger or to the driver or other member of staff. Misbehaviour on buses is against the law and **police** action may result.

- Find a seat quickly. If there is a seat belt, make sure you wear it. Stay seated for the duration of the journey.
- Do not distract the driver or tamper with emergency exits/alarms/bells.
- Make sure your bags/belongings do not block exits/gangways.
- Remember, smoking is strictly prohibited on all Island modes of public and school transport.

At the end of your journey

- Remember to take your belongings with you. Do not try to go back for something you have forgotten – tell your parents/school.
- Wait until the bus has come to a complete stop before you leave your seat to alight the vehicle.

If you have any problems...

- Please tell your parents, and school teacher who will inform the transport staff.



Schools

- 1** Make sure children receive a copy of the code of good practice and that they understand these safety rules for school transport.
- 2** Work with drivers, escorts, local authority and operating company staff and parents in cases of misbehaviour.
- 3** Please notify the children's services authority of special needs of any pupil that may affect transport arrangements.
- 4** Please provide adequate supervision at bus set down and pick up points at school. Inform operators of any special parking arrangements at your school.
- 5** Wherever possible, make sure that cars do not obstruct bus stops outside school.
- 6** Agree contingency plans with operators in the event of emergencies and bad weather.
- 7** If a school bus fails to arrive, is persistently late running or overloaded contact the operator or the council's public transport section.
- 8** Make sure term tickets are distributed to pupils.
- 9** Notify the local authority of any changes to pupils' circumstances as soon as possible.

Parents

General

- Make sure your child(ren) understand(s) the rules for pupils in this booklet and in particular understands that misbehaviour will not be tolerated and what the consequences of misbehaviour will be.

A summary of our policy in respect of misbehaviour appears on the inside back cover of this booklet.

Before your children leave home

- Make sure they do not wear clothing that could be dangerous, e.g. hanging belts or bags with loose straps.
- Make sure they have their term ticket with them – operators will make checks.

Walking to and from the bus stop

- Young children should be taken to the bus stop in good time, and looked after until the bus arrives.
- Young children should be met from the bus from school. Remember that young children often forget road safety as they get off the bus.
- If your child is unaccompanied between home and the bus stop, make sure that he or she knows and follow the safest route and uses the safest crossing place.
- Make sure your child knows what to do if the bus is late or doesn't arrive.
- Where transport is provided to or from home, please be ready to meet the vehicle.

At the bus stop

- Remind young people that playing about at bus stops and on buses can cause accidents and injuries.

On the bus

- If your children travel on a bus fitted with seatbelts please advise them of the importance of wearing the seatbelts for the duration of their journey.
- Remind your child not to leave their seat until the bus has completely stopped.
- Make sure your children understand the rules of behaviour for travelling on school transport.

Remember – you will be held responsible for any damage caused by your child and transport may be withdrawn.

Please...

- Notify the council of any changes to your child's circumstances immediately. If a ticket is no longer required, please return it to the council so that a refund may be obtained and the seat can be made available to another pupil.
- Term tickets are valuable. Replacements will be charged for at £5. Lost tickets should be reported immediately to the council, who will advise you how to obtain a replacement.
- If you have any concerns about school transport please tell the Isle of Wight Council public transport section
Tel: (01983) 823780.

Bus and taxi operators

Contract conditions

- 1** You must be aware of, and comply with, contract conditions covering levels of service and performance.
- 2** Make sure vehicles are clean, inside and out, that they are roadworthy and generally in good condition, and meet the contract specification.
- 3** Ensure any equipment required, e.g. child restraints, safety harnesses, is on the vehicle and used for each journey.
- 4** Make sure vehicles are displaying appropriate school transport signs when carrying children.

Employees

- 1** Make sure employees have a copy of the 'code of good practice' and that they have read and understood it, and comply with it at all times.
- 2** Make sure all drivers have a thorough working knowledge of, and adhere to, the seatbelt and child restraint legislation appropriate to the type of vehicle they are driving.
- 3** All drivers must have a driving licence for the type of vehicle they are operating and should comply with the relevant drivers' hours regulations.
- 4** Make sure all of your staff employed on schools services have been checked through the Criminal Records Bureau.

- 5** All drivers and escorts must be familiar with the routes they are required to follow.
- 6** Do not use a driver or escort, even in an emergency, on a school transport route if the council notify you that they should not be used.

Vehicles

- 1** Vehicles must be appropriately licensed by the relevant authority – either PSV, Hackney Carriage or private hire. Do not operate more vehicles than you have licences for.
- 2** All Hackney Carriage and private hire cars must be fitted with seat belts and child locks which are used throughout the journey. You must not carry more passengers (including the escort) than there are seat belts for.
- 3** In all taxis and private hire cars the front seat can only be used by a child under 135cms (approx 4ft 5 inches) if an appropriate child restraint is used in addition to the adult seat belt. If a child restraint is not available the child must use a rear seat with an adult seat belt.
- 4** You should not overload vehicles. On local bus services it is intended that each child will have a seat.

Special needs

- 1** On services used by pupils with special needs it helps both parents and pupils if staff remain the same.

Accident reporting

- 1 Accidents or incidents involving your vehicles on school services, or pupils travelling in them, must be notified to the council immediately, and also in writing. You must provide a report of any action you have taken, or propose to take, to prevent a similar incident occurring in future.
- 2 Ensure that your drivers report accidents involving personal injury as soon as possible (but within 24 hours) to the police.



Drivers

General

- 1** The welfare of pupils is paramount. If you are concerned about the safety or welfare of pupils, or of yourself, please contact your supervisor.
- 2** Follow the Highway Code at all times and comply with all relevant legislation.
- 3** If your journey involves working with escorts, work as a team and be aware of any special needs a pupil may have.
- 4** Follow the scheduled route. Use only designated pick up and set down points. If it is impossible to maintain the scheduled timetable notify your employer as soon as possible.
- 5** Do not smoke in or near the vehicle immediately before, during, or after the contract.
- 6** You should wear any identification provided by your employer whilst engaged on school services.

Before/After your journey

- 1** Do not drive a vehicle you consider to be unroadworthy or in contravention of any relevant regulations or legislation. Make a written report of any faults to your employer immediately, using the established system for defect reporting where one exists.

- 2 Make sure a 'school transport' sign is displayed at the front and rear of the vehicle (not applicable to local bus services). Make sure this does not obscure visibility and is only displayed when the vehicle is being used to transport pupils.
- 3 Check for lost property at the end of each journey. Hand any items found to your employer.

Dealing with pupils

- 1 Avoid physical contact with pupils whenever possible. Maintain a courteous and professional relationship with pupils and escort.
- 2 Inappropriate conversation, topics and language must be avoided at all times.
- 3 Report any misbehaviour, including full details of the pupil(s) concerned and the nature of the problem to your supervisor immediately. Never say you are going to report any misbehaviour and then fail to do so.
- 4 If behaviour is distracting you or children do not remain seated, stop the vehicle and only continue the journey once order is restored.
- 5 Notwithstanding drivers powers under PSV law, the removal of a child from a vehicle should be an action of last resort.

- 6** If unauthorised passengers try to board the vehicle, you should not refuse to carry them except on written instructions from the council - take their name and address report the incident to your employer.

Boarding/Alighting

- 1** Most school bus accidents occur when children are boarding or alighting from the vehicle, or waiting at the stop. Care should be taken on approaching each pick up point.
- 2** Keep doors shut until the vehicle is at a standstill. Pupils should be told not to stand up before you stop at the boarding/alighting point.
- 3** Pupils should not be allowed to operate the doors.
- 4** Ensure childproof locks are used when fitted. However, if an escort is provided who travels in the rear of the vehicle, it is their responsibility to ensure that the locks are engaged.
- 5** Before moving off check all children are well clear of the vehicle. Make sure doors are properly closed and that no bags or clothing are caught in the door as it closes.
- 6** Check the mirrors every time.
- 7** Park on the same side of the road as the school entrance wherever possible. Liaise with school staff when dropping off and picking up children at school.

- 8** Pupils must be supervised if they have to exit by the rear of a minibus. If pupils need to cross the road, tell them to wait until the vehicle has moved away and the road is clear of traffic.
- 9** You are not expected to help pupils across the road. It is the responsibility of parents. It is your responsibility to stay with the vehicle.
- 10** Ensure you know how to safely use and operate the equipment on the vehicle to assist boarding and alighting, such as lifts and ramps.
- 11** Hazard warning lights may be used when pupils are boarding and alighting.

Seat belts and harnesses (where fitted)

- 1** Remind pupils that if a seatbelt is fitted it should be worn.
- 2** Check seat belts regularly for any wear or tear. Report damaged seat belts to your employer.
- 3** If a child has a special harness or is travelling in a wheelchair, make sure you know how to secure them safely and correctly. Ensure there is an independent passenger restraint for each wheelchair user. Wheelchairs not in use should also be securely restrained.
- 4** Luggage should be safely secured and stored in such a way that it does not block the gangway/exits.

Emergency procedures

- 1** Know your employer's procedures for dealing with accidents, breakdowns and bad weather. In the event

of an accident, or if the vehicle breaks down, give clear instructions to your passengers and implement the contact procedures as advised by your employer.

- 2** Don't forget your legal obligation to report accidents involving personal injury as soon as possible (but within 24 hours) to the police.
- 3** In the event of a breakdown or emergency, it is the driver's responsibility to judge whether it is better to make the passengers alight or keep them on board, taking into consideration the safety aspects and passengers' needs.
- 4** If you do have to leave the vehicle in an emergency, you must switch off the engine, apply the brake, put the engine in gear and remove the keys.
- 5** Pupils should never be allowed to push vehicles.
- 6** Serious incidents or accidents involving the safety of pupils, the vehicle or other road users must be reported immediately to your supervisor, who must notify the council and the head teacher.
- 7** Try to let the school/parents/ employer know if there is a serious delay on the route.



Special education transport escorts

General

- 1** Make sure you have read and understood this Code of good practice, and keep it with you whilst working.
- 2** Dress appropriately for your job, bearing in mind that you may have to lift and carry some pupils.
- 3** You must not smoke in or near the vehicle immediately before, during, or after a schools service.
- 4** You should wear the identification provided by your employer whilst engaged on schools services.
- 5** Assist passengers on and off the vehicle as required.
- 6** Work as a team with your driver.
- 7** Avoid physical contact with pupils and do not use language and behaviour which is offensive or threatening. Treat pupils in a manner appropriate to their age. Maintain a courteous, professional relationship with pupils and drivers. Inappropriate conversation, topics and language must be avoided at all times.
- 8** Ensure you are familiar with, and comply with, the procedures for handing over pupils on arrival at the school. If you are not sure what you should do, discuss the procedure with school staff.

- 9** It is parents responsibility to ensure that their children are accompanied to and from your vehicle. You should never leave your vehicle to collect or return a pupil.
- 10** Do not risk damage to your back – always follow the guidance on lifting. If in doubt, seek help.
- 11** Make sure you are familiar with the needs of the children you escort, and respect the confidentiality of any information relating to them.
- 12** Cooperate with authority staff, teachers and parents to resolve any problems. Escorts are key to ensuring that information is relayed and problems resolved.
- 13** You may be asked to carry pupil's medication between home and school. This should be labelled with the child's name and carried in a sealed envelope or container. Do not dispense medication to children. Ensure medicines are handed directly to school staff/parents/guardian.
- 14** Be prepared to act as messenger between school, parents and pupils, but do not take instructions from parents or children without first discussing revised arrangements with school staff. Always treat any such messages as confidential.
- 15** Check the vehicle for any lost/left property at the end of each journey and hand any items found to your employer.

Journey

- 1** Ensure that you are familiar with the route, know the route/contract number and that all children are picked up/dropped off according to the schedule provided, i.e. at the right address, on the correct side of the road etc.
- 2** Ensure children board and alight safely:
 - keep doors closed until the vehicle is at a complete standstill
 - do not allow children to open or close vehicle doors
 - get off the bus to ensure that all children are clear of the vehicle
 - assist parents to help pupils board and alight
 - do not allow children to cross in front of, or immediately behind, the vehicle
 - ensure nothing is trapped in doors before moving
 - ensure all children are securely seated before the vehicle starts – never sit a child on your lap
 - stow all luggage and equipment safely
 - make sure with the driver, that any restraints and wheelchair tie down systems are correctly fastened
- 3** Take a seat where you can reach the doors easily and watch passengers, and attend to their needs during the journey.
- 4** Make sure that you are familiar with, and always correctly use the equipment specified, e.g. seatbelts, car seats, wheelchair restraints, harnesses, occupant restraints. If in doubt – ask.

- 5 Check that you are familiar with the use and location of the first aid kit, fire extinguisher, and emergency exits.

Emergencies/Problems

- 1 Notify the Head Teacher and your employer of any severe or persistent misbehaviour or problems. Never use physical or verbal threats.
- 2 If you are ill or unable to work, notify your employer immediately so that a replacement escort can be found.
- 3 If a passenger is ill, he/she should be taken directly to school or returned home (unless it is known that there will be no responsible adult to receive the child) – whichever is closer. If in any doubt seek medical assistance from a GP, hospital or by dialling 999. Notify your supervisor immediately so that the school/other parents can be informed. Report this to the school.
- 4 In case of breakdown or accident remain with the children. Never leave them unattended. Make sure they remain on the vehicle if it is safe for them to do so. If they should leave the vehicle, make sure they are kept away from traffic. If necessary get the help of a passer by to summon assistance. Report the incident to your employer.
- 5 If a responsible adult is not available at the drop off point, be prepared to take the child for the remainder of the journey before returning to the child's address. If there is still no one to receive the child, contact your employer.

Isle of Wight Council school transport section

Our commitment

- 1 The Isle of Wight Council is committed to ensuring that key Island services for which the council has responsibility are consistently provided to explicit standards of excellence, reflecting and developing best practice.
- 2 The council is committed to providing school transport in accordance with policy criteria, as effectively and efficiently as possible.



- 3** Parents, schools and contractors will normally be able to contact the council's public transport section between 8.30am and 4.30pm on Mondays to Fridays.
- 4** Term tickets will usually be available for pupils to receive at school within five working days of receipt of their application during term time.
- 5** Parents of children with special needs requiring taxi/ minibus transport will usually be informed of the transport arrangements within five days of the request being received, or a week before the start of term.
- 6** Invoices received from contractors will normally be passed for payment to the creditor payments department within one week of receipt. Payment is usually made on a monthly basis.
- 7** The council is committed to developing training for in-house school transport staff.
- 8** We place great emphasis on customer care. Complaints regarding school transport will be investigated.

Isle of Wight Council pupil misbehaviour policy

Summary

- 1** A first report of misbehaviour will result in a warning letter being sent by the public transport section to the parents about the misbehaviour (this letter will be copied to the school and the children's services authority).
- 2** A second report of misbehaviour or a first report of an incidence of serious misbehaviour:
 - a) Public transport section will liaise with the school and children's services authority and decide whether exclusion from transport is appropriate and for how long.
 - b) Parents will be advised by letter of the decision made.
 - c) Additionally if the term ticket held by the student is in any way subject to discretionary issue it may be permanently withdrawn and transport will become the financial responsibility of the parent.
 - d) Additionally if the issue of the term ticket has no discretionary element the student may be required to utilise buses at earlier or later timings and possibly via an alternative route and operator.
- 3** The council may in certain circumstances refer behavioural matters to the police for further action and investigation, which could lead to criminal charges being brought against the offender(s)

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Directorate of Environment and Neighbourhoods,
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**The information in this booklet is also available
in Braille, on audiotape, in large print and in
other languages. If you would like this service,
please call (01983) 823780**