

Code of Conduct



For Safe Behaviour on
School Buses

Index

	Page
1. Introduction	2
2. The council's commitment	3
3. Advice for pupils and students	4
4. Advice for parents and guardians	6
5. Advice for schools	8
6. Advice for contractors	10
7. Advice for drivers	12
8. CCTV	15
9. Damage	15
10. Incident reporting	15
11. Replacement passes	16
12. Change of circumstances	16
13. Contacts	17

1. Introduction

North Lincolnshire Council is committed to providing safe travel to and from school for everyone who uses school transport.

We've produced this code of conduct as a positive step towards this aim. We want everyone to know their responsibilities and to know how important it is to follow the code of conduct.

The council transports approximately 5,000 pupils and students to school and college each day. We summarise our policies for home-to-school and college transport in the *Admission to Schools Guide* each year. It's also on our website.

We publish the full policy in these booklets:

- ◆ *Home to School Transport Policy for Pupils of Statutory School Age*
- ◆ *Home to School Transport Policy for Pupils with Special Educational Needs*

You can get copies from the Education Transport Officer (call 01724 297218).

Transport may be by:

- ◆ Contracted buses, minibuses, taxis, private hire cars;
- ◆ Fare-paying registered public service buses;
- ◆ Rail.

This code of conduct relates primarily to travel on buses and minibuses, but parts of the policy may also be relevant to other vehicles. It sets out the standard of service that the council expects from school transport contractors. It also sets out the ways in which schools, parents, pupils and students can work with us to provide a safe and reliable service.

2. The Council's Commitment

We will:

- ◆ Ensure that every pupil who is entitled to free travel gets a pass to travel on their designated transport;
- ◆ Deal with your queries and requests promptly. We will normally issue passes within five working days of the council's school transport team receiving the request;
- ◆ Provide contractors with up-to-date information on pupils and students authorised to travel on their buses;
- ◆ Pay properly-completed claims from contractors within the period stipulated in the contract;
- ◆ Plan journeys to minimise journey times whilst providing a cost-effective and efficient service;
- ◆ Investigate thoroughly and impartially all incidents reported and complaints made. We will respond to the complainant as soon as the investigation is complete;
- ◆ Regularly monitor the safety and quality of school transport: safety of school transport is our primary concern;
- ◆ Treat everyone equally and fairly, according to the conditions of our policies and contracts.

3. Advice for Pupils and Students

At the bus stop

- ◆ Always arrive in good time and make sure you have your pass with you. You must show the pass to the driver each time you get on the vehicle. If you can't produce a pass, you may not be allowed to travel. Your parents or guardians will have to make other transport arrangements at their own expense until a pass can be produced.

Remember: NO PASS may mean NO TRAVEL!

- ◆ Do not play about near the road while waiting for the bus or other transport. You should wait on the pavement, in a safe position well back from the road. You must behave sensibly without upsetting local residents or endangering other pedestrians and traffic
- ◆ Don't go near the vehicle until it has stopped;
- ◆ Do not push to get on the bus;

- ◆ Make sure that you are getting on the bus to which your pass relates.

On the bus

- ◆ Find a seat quickly without pushing. If the bus has seat belts fitted, wear them for your own safety.
- ◆ You must listen to the driver and do as he or she says. The driver's job is to drive the bus safely, not to supervise young people on the vehicle. You must not distract the driver by shouting or causing a disturbance.
- ◆ Do not move about the bus except when it has stopped.
- ◆ You must not fool around when you are on the transport. This is dangerous and could distract the driver. If you need to say something important, wait until it is safe to do so.
- ◆ Report any incident or accident to the driver only when the vehicle is stopped.
- ◆ You must not eat, or drink on the transport. Take any litter off the bus with you.
- ◆ Do not damage or leave

graffiti on the vehicle, spit, or interfere with emergency doors, safety belt fastenings or window fittings. Your parents will be charged for any damage which you cause.

- ◆ Keep the gangway and emergency doors clear so that other people can leave the vehicle safely.
- ◆ If there is an accident or breakdown, stay calm and quiet and follow the driver's instructions.
- ◆ You must give the driver your name if you are asked for it.

At your destination

- ◆ You must not try to get off the bus until it has stopped.
- ◆ You must make sure that you have all your belongings, such as bags, coats and litter, as you leave the vehicle. If you have forgotten something you or the school should contact the company that operates the service.
- ◆ You must not try to get back on the vehicle after you have got off it, in case it moves off suddenly.
- ◆ Older pupils should help to

see that younger pupils are well clear of the vehicle after they have got off the bus.

- ◆ You must not cross the road close behind or in front of a bus or any other vehicle. You must be able to see clearly both ways. Where possible, use a pedestrian crossing.

Remember – Be polite and courteous at all times. You are representing yourself, your family and your school. Don't let them down! Bad language, particularly aimed at the driver, will not be tolerated

- ◆ Unacceptable behaviour will not be tolerated and action will be taken if you do not follow these guidelines. In serious cases, or following the issuing of warnings, the school, in consultation with the council, reserves the right to suspend free or concessionary transport. Your parent or guardian will then be responsible for transporting you to school.

This guide is for your safety and that of other passengers. Please allow everyone to enjoy the journey.

4. Advice to Parents and Guardians

- ◆ Where necessary, and for all younger pupils, please ensure that children are accompanied to the bus stop or agreed pick-up point. Make sure they arrive in good time, and are supervised until the bus arrives.
- ◆ If your child is unaccompanied please ensure they follow a safe route to the bus stop and that they know the safest crossing places.
- ◆ You are responsible for ensuring that your child has a pass each time they board the vehicle. Drivers are required to check passes. If your child fails to produce one, they may be refused transport. You will then have to make alternative arrangements, at your expense, to get your child to school until a pass can be produced.
- ◆ Your child has been allocated to a particular vehicle. It is important that they travel on this and not any other vehicle. This is to avoid overcrowding and ensure each child has a seat. It is important that the council knows who is on the vehicle in case of accident or emergency.
- ◆ If your child loses or damages their pass, contact the council's school transport team to ask for a new one.
- ◆ If, unusually, your child wishes to bring a friend home with them, a special arrangement should be made through the School Transport Section. This is to ensure that there is a space for them, and that they are covered for insurance purposes.
- ◆ Please make your child aware of the dangers of behaving in a disorderly way. Please ask them to act sensibly at the bus stop, for their own and others' safety. Explain that they should show consideration for people who live near the bus stop.
- ◆ Where necessary, ensure that your child is met when the transport returns from school.

Remember – children often forget road safety as they get off the vehicle.

- ◆ Where transport is provided to or from your home, please be ready in good time to meet the vehicle and assist your child into, or out of, the vehicle.
- ◆ Make sure your child knows what to do if the bus or other transport is late or does not arrive.
- ◆ Help drivers to do their job of getting children to their destinations safely. Please ask your child to show the driver respect and follow any instructions he or she may give. Drivers' primary function is to transport children from home to school. They may not be able to do this if children misbehave on the vehicle.
- ◆ Please encourage your child to behave safely on the bus, remain seated at all times and to wear a seat belt when fitted.

Remember - you will be held responsible for any vandalism by your child. It will be treated as criminal damage.

- ◆ Please notify the staff of the School Transport Team immediately of any changes to your circumstances. If your child no longer needs the bus pass, please return it to the council.
- ◆ Season tickets are valuable. Replacements may be charged for. Lost, stolen, or damaged tickets should be reported immediately to the School Transport Unit. They will advise you how to get a replacement.
- ◆ If you have any concerns about school transport contact either the head teacher or education transport officer if it relates to pupil discipline, or the School Transport Team if it relates to operation of school transport.

In serious cases of misbehaviour, or if a series of warnings has been issued, the council reserves the right to suspend free or concessionary travel. You will then be responsible for transporting your child to school.

5. Advice for Schools

Schools play an important role in promoting good behaviour when pupils are waiting for and travelling on the school bus. They should:

- ◆ Make sure that children understand the council's rules for safety on buses and other transport.
- ◆ Maintain an orderly, safe procedure for pupils waiting for and boarding buses at the school.
- ◆ Ensure that children understand the consequences of misbehaviour on transport and at bus stops.
- ◆ Work with parents, drivers, transport operators, and council staff in cases of problem behaviour.
- ◆ Follow the procedures agreed between the council and operators for reporting and acting on bad behaviour.
- ◆ Work with the operator and the council to introduce ways of reducing behaviour problems and drawing up seating plans if needed.
- ◆ Provide adequate supervision at set down and pick-up points, and advise operators of any special parking arrangements at your school.
- ◆ Provide safe access to and from the bus park where available.
- ◆ Complete a risk assessment of the boarding and dismounting arrangements on school premises so that they are as safe as possible, avoiding unnecessary hazards.
- ◆ Wherever possible, make sure that private cars do not obstruct bus stops outside schools. Tell council staff of safety concerns about boarding and dismounting arrangements outside school premises
- ◆ Agree contingency plans with operators in case of bad weather or emergencies. Tell operators about inset, or early finish, days.
- ◆ Should any school transport fail to arrive, contact the operator or the School Transport Unit. Keep children together whenever possible.

- ◆ Ensure that pupils understand that season tickets or passes, where issued, must be produced when requested by the operators, drivers, or council representatives.
- ◆ Ensure that bus passes are distributed promptly.
- ◆ Ask the children to respect the rights and property of others while they are waiting for, and using, school transport.
- ◆ Do not give non-eligible pupils permission to use school transport until this has been authorised by the council. Unauthorised passengers could invalidate insurance cover and cause safety and organisational problems
- ◆ Do not change the buses which pupils travel on without prior approval of the council. This could result in buses being overloaded and invalidate the pupil's bus pass. It would also mean that council and contractors' records were incorrect.
- ◆ Please tell the School Transport Team about improvements or changes you think should be made to your school's transport arrangements. Your detailed knowledge will be a great help and will enable them to provide a better service.
- ◆ Ensure that pupils are released promptly from class and encourage them to make their way to the transport departure point as quickly as possible. Delays can result in transport being missed.
- ◆ If transport operators fail to provide the contracted service punctually and efficiently, please report this to the School Transport Team as soon as possible.
- ◆ Tell the Education Transport Officer of changes to pupil circumstances, eg change of address, pupil moving from the area, or leaving school.

Before suspending a child from school transport, the school should consult the Education Transport Officer. Unless this is done using the agreed procedure, the school might be responsible for making alternative transport arrangements.

6. Advice for Contractors

- ◆ Please ensure that you are familiar with North Lincolnshire Council's Conditions of Contract and specification for the services you provide. Pass the relevant information on to your drivers.
- ◆ Make sure that you and your drivers have readily available, in the vehicle and your office, the procedures to be followed in an emergency. This includes the relevant contact telephone numbers. You should remind drivers periodically of their duty to follow this guidance.
- ◆ Establish contingency plans for dealing with vehicle failures, staff unavailability and other emergencies.
- ◆ Ensure staff and vehicles meet both statutory obligations and any additional requirements set by North Lincolnshire Council.
- ◆ Report recurrent problems of pupil discipline, to the school and Education Transport Officer.
- ◆ Ensure that drivers check bus passes daily and complete checklists as requested by the council to show pupils travelling without a pass.
- ◆ Make sure that you send a copy of any letter received concerning the operation of the service to the School Transport Team, together with a copy of your reply.
- ◆ Report any late running, breakdown or accident to the school and the School Transport Team where possible.
- ◆ 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 express permission of the School Transport Section. No two routes shall be combined without prior agreement from the School Transport Section.

- ◆ Ensure that all drivers are fit and well enough to drive and that the council has cleared their CRB disclosure. Report to the council any incidents that may affect a driver's criminal record as soon as they occur.
- ◆ Ensure that any drivers who have been injured in road traffic accidents are certified by a medical professional as being fit to resume driving duties before they return to work.
- ◆ In the event of an incident or accident involving any form of school transport, make sure that the school, and the council are informed immediately.
- ◆ Ensure that drivers receive the appropriate training.
- ◆ Work with the council and schools to promote the safety of pupils, including completion of risk assessments of boarding and dismounting arrangements, and participation in schemes to promote good behaviour.

7. Advice for Drivers

General

- ◆ The welfare of the pupils and other road users is of paramount importance.
- ◆ Do not drive a vehicle you consider unroadworthy or in contravention of PSV regulations, other legislation or licensing regulations. Report faults to your employer immediately.
- ◆ Follow the scheduled route and use only designated pick-up and set down points. If it proves impossible to maintain the scheduled timetable, tell your employer.
- ◆ Check pupils' passes each time they board the vehicle to ensure they are entitled to travel, using the council's checklist if provided. Unless authorised to do so by the council, do not refuse to carry a pupil who does not produce a pass – note the pupil on your pass monitoring sheet and if you have particular concerns, report them to the school or your employer. Never allow any other unauthorised passengers to travel on your vehicle.
- ◆ If you suspect a pass is used fraudulently, withdraw the pass and give it to your employer.
- ◆ Avoid unnecessary physical contact with pupils and never use force. Keep a courteous and professionally objective relationship with passengers. Always avoid inappropriate conversation topics and bad language. Do not become over-familiar with pupils.
- ◆ Please maintain a smart appearance. Remember, you represent your company.
- ◆ Report misbehaviour to the appropriate member of staff at the school and to your employer. If you threaten to report misbehaviour, then do so. Do not evict a child from the vehicle unless keeping them on board would risk unacceptably the health and safety of other passengers.
- ◆ Check for lost property and internal damage before and after the journey. Hand items found to your employer.

- ◆ Help council officers monitor your transport route and co-operate with the duty member of staff at the school.
- ◆ Smoking is not permitted when you are carrying out duties relating to the school transport contract, whether or not you are on the vehicle.

Boarding and Alighting

- ◆ Approach each stop slowly and with care. Do not brake sharply. Wherever possible pick up and set down onto the pavement, not onto the carriageway. Always choose a safe place to stop.
- ◆ Hazard warning lights may be used when pupils are getting on and off, as circumstances and legislation dictate.
- ◆ Keep doors closed until you have brought the vehicle to a complete standstill. Do not let children open or close the doors of your vehicle.
- ◆ Check all passes. 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 off 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 it has moved off.
- ◆ 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 council staff over arrangements for parking, and the picking up and setting down of pupils within school grounds.
- ◆ Make sure no pupils are left on the vehicle at the end of the journey.

Safety in the vehicle

- ◆ Where seat belts are fitted, advise pupils to use them.
- ◆ Make sure all luggage is safely stowed, and the gangway and emergency exits are not obstructed.
- ◆ Do not load your vehicle beyond its capacity. On closed contract vehicles every child must have their own seat.
- ◆ Follow the Highway Code at all times. Obey speed limits.
- ◆ Always use "School Transport" signs. Ensure they are in the right positions, and only displayed while the vehicle is used to transport pupils. Ensure the route number is visible at the front of the bus.
- ◆ Make sure you have your mobile phone with you on the vehicle, but don't use it when you are driving.
- ◆ If CCTV is installed in your vehicle follow any instructions given to you by your employer about its operation.

In emergencies

- ◆ Tell your employer immediately about a

breakdown or accident. You must not leave the vehicle unattended.

- ◆ In the event of fire or other hazard, evacuate the vehicle in a calm, orderly manner and take pupils to a safe distance from the vehicle.
- ◆ Ensure you have been given the phone numbers of people whom you should contact in an emergency, ie your employer, the School Transport Team, and the schools served. Always keep these in the vehicle.
- ◆ Ensure you know how to use the fire extinguisher and first aid kit, and any other safety equipment.
- ◆ Keep pupils informed of what is happening and the arrangements that have been made to continue the journey
- ◆ Where injury or shock is caused to any of the pupils or to a third party, give priority to obtaining medical aid
- ◆ If the vehicle is merely broken down, passengers should not be asked to leave the vehicle, unless they are at greater risk by remaining on it.

8. CCTV

An increasing number of school buses have CCTV systems installed. The council works with contractors and schools to ensure that these are operated lawfully and in a way that enables us to obtain evidence about incidents reported and deal with them appropriately.

The council has a code of practice for the operation of CCTV on school buses and expects contractors to comply with it. Pupils travelling on buses with CCTV installed will be made aware of this.

9. Damage

The council has a procedure for dealing with claims for the repair of damage to school transport where this is considered to be more than normal wear and tear. Reports received in writing and supported by available evidence will be investigated and claims reimbursed if appropriate. All or part of the cost of repairing the damage may be reclaimed from the pupil(s) responsible.

10. Incident Reporting

In order for us to deal with incidents of poor behaviour, they need to be reported to us so that we can investigate them and take whatever action is needed. Report incidents as soon as they occur.

If the incident is caused by a **pupil's** behaviour please contact: The Education Transport Officer (01724 297218)

If the incident concerns a **driver or vehicle** please contact: The School Transport Team (01724 297216)

We may ask for your comments in writing and where the incident concerns a pupil will ask the school to help with the investigation.

As soon as we have completed our investigation, if we find one or a group of pupils is at fault, we will contact their parents or guardians to confirm what has happened and the action we are taking. Depending on the seriousness of the incident, and the number of previous incidents the pupil has been involved in,

the action may be:

- ◆ Warning letter
- ◆ Final warning letter
- ◆ Suspension from school transport
- ◆ Behaviour contracts setting out the standards the pupil must keep to when allowed back on the bus after a period of suspension
- ◆ Permanent ban from school transport

In the event of a suspension or ban it will be the parent or guardian's responsibility to take their child to and from school.

The contractor and school will be informed of the action taken so that they can ensure that any suspension or ban is upheld.

In cases of criminal behaviour the police will be informed.

Why not let us know when things go well?

Don't just confine your contact with us to bad news! Tell us about drivers who provide a good service, pupils whose behaviour is exemplary, or council staff who have been really helpful with a request or problem!

11. Replacement Passes

We expect pupils and students to take good care of their bus passes. They are valuable items. Without one you are not authorised to travel on the school bus and will have to pay if you use a registered public service bus.

We will issue replacement passes to anyone who has lost or damaged their bus pass but will make a small charge for this. Replacement passes can either be issued via the school or college or ordered by phoning 01724 297216 or 01724 297218.

12. Change in Circumstances

If you move house or want to use a different bus please tell us. If appropriate we will issue a new pass. Please do not try to use the wrong pass for the bus you are boarding – the driver is entitled to refuse travel to unauthorised passengers.

13. Contacts

For information about the code of practice, home to school transport policy, eligibility for a bus pass and to report incidents of pupils' poor behaviour:

01724 297218

For advice about transport provision, school transport contracts, and to report problems with buses, or incidents involving the driver:

01724 297216

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