

## **GUIDELINES FOR MANAGING PUPIL BEHAVIOUR ON HOME TO SCHOOL/COLLEGE TRANSPORT**

### **1. Introduction**

The behaviour of the majority of pupils on home to school transport is generally very good and does not cause any concern. However, the behaviour of a minority of pupils can be unacceptable and unsafe.

If the behaviour of pupils is to be positively influenced then the Family Services Home to School Transport Team will work in partnership with the following in order to achieve this:-

- Pupils
- Parents
- School staff and governors
- Operators/drivers
- Escorts
- Metro (WYPTE)
- Advisory Services (e.g. SENSS, EPS, Primary Behaviour Support Service)

The consequences of poor behaviour on home to school transport can be wide ranging. Other passengers may be deterred from using transport shared with poorly behaved schools pupils; in extreme cases, such behaviour can cause considerable danger to other service users.

The Education and Inspections Act 2006 requires Headteachers to determine what measures should be taken to promote self-discipline amongst pupils and encourage positive behaviour and respect for others, including the prevention of bullying. Schools have their own behaviour policies and can now take action and decide on penalties for unacceptable behaviour, **even when this takes place outside the school premises and when pupils are not under the legal control of the school, when it is reasonable to do so**. The view of the Department for Children, Families and Schools is that this includes behaviour on school buses, or otherwise on the route to and from school, whether or not the pupils are in school uniform. Persistent poor behaviour on the journey to and from school may be grounds for exclusion not only from the bus but also from the school.

Family Services Home to School Transport Team has therefore produced these guidelines to promote positive behaviour on the school journey. The guidelines are aimed at all pupils who travel on transport including those who have an entitlement to free travel provided by the Local Authority. The intention is that proposed sanctions will be used as a deterrent and only used in appropriate circumstances. However, it is important that pupils and parents/carers fully understand that behaviour which endangers other pupils - or indeed the driver and other passengers - will not be tolerated and will result in serious consequences if deemed appropriate.

It is also intended that these guidelines cover pupils travelling on mainstream services as well as special educational needs pupils on assisted transport.

## **2. Aims**

The aim of the Council is to ensure that home to school transport for all children in Wakefield meets appropriate levels of health and safety. However, we also have a duty to ensure the health, safety and welfare at work of all employees.

It is therefore important that there is a range of consequences and/or sanctions that can be applied for pupils who misbehave.

The Government has also made tackling bullying a key priority and the aim of the Council is to work with the whole community to change the culture so that bullying is unacceptable.

## **3. Conduct of Pupils on Mainstream Services**

There are a number of ways in which parents/carers can help in ensuring that their children travel to/from school in a safe manner. The following should be used as a guide:

- Pupils should arrive at the appropriate bus stop and queue in an orderly manner. They should take every care not to spill out on to the road and **MUST NOT** obstruct other passengers who are waiting for the bus or need to pass-by on the pavement;
- Ideally young children should be supervised until the bus arrives in the morning and they should be met by parents/carers when getting off the bus in the afternoon;
- Children often forget safety rules when getting off a bus and dashing across roads to meet their parents/carers so it is important wherever possible parents/carers meet their children on the same side of the road where the vehicle stops;
- Pupils should board the bus in an orderly manner and have their fare and/or travel pass available to show to the driver;
- It is important pupils use the correct pass as there may be some instances where a boarding card is issued for a particular service only;
- Parents/carers should ensure their children know what to do should the bus not arrive on time (or at all), if parents are delayed when meeting them from the vehicle in the afternoon or if for any reason the child is refused travel.
- Many children never ride on buses until they attend school so it might be appropriate for parents/carers to take them on buses beforehand so they can learn consideration for other passengers and also how to use the service safely;
- There are places on a bus where passengers cannot stand, especially alongside the driver, on the stairs and on the top deck of the bus - it is important children know the importance of not standing in these restricted areas. It is still accepted and courteous for children to stand only when there are no seats available to allow the elderly and/or disabled to sit down;

- Incidents have occurred when clothing has got caught in bus doors. Children should therefore be discouraged from wearing hanging belts or ensure bags with loose straps are safely secured;
- When alighting a bus, children should be encouraged, when safe to do so, to step as far away from the bus as possible without moving into the road in order to prevent injury or confusion.
- If vehicles are fitted with seatbelts children MUST use them. However, there are many vehicles that do not fall within the scope of this legislation and will continue to operate without seatbelts being fitted. Where this occurs children should be encouraged to sit in their seat and not move around the bus whilst it is moving;
- If parents/carers experience problems with the MyBus (Yellow Bus) Service they should contact Metro's Call Centre on 0113 3481122. Pupils or parents/carers who experience problems on the mainstream services should contact the individual operators (i.e. Arriva, First) concerned.
- Due to adverse weather conditions (i.e. flooding, heavy snowfalls) there may be some services that cannot operate, especially in rural, more isolated areas or where there are access problems on narrow roads. Parents/carers are encouraged to listen to local radio stations who will provide updates on school and road closures and have their own planned alternative arrangement in place.

#### **4. Safe from Bullying on Journeys**

Bullying can make the lives of children a misery; it undermines their confidence and self esteem and destroys their sense of security. Bullying can have a life-long negative impact limiting the places where children and young people feel safe to go and reducing their ability to become successful, independent adults. Bullying does not only happen in schools; it can happen anywhere including journeys to and from school on the bus, train, cycling or walking.

The Council will work closely with transport providers, police, schools, colleges, parents and pupils as bullying/harassment/intimidation will not be tolerated

#### **5. Summary of Unacceptable Behaviours**

Multiple or serious incidents may lead to an immediate exclusion, irrespective of the child's statutory entitlement. Some behaviour may also require the involvement of the police.

Examples of the type of behaviour, which will invoke a sanction, are listed below:-

- Bullying/harassment/intimidation (physical and/or verbal);
- Fighting/distracting the driver;
- Failure to follow instruction from the driver;
- Standing forward of the driver;
- Using the emergency exit;
- Drug misuse;
- Moving around the vehicle;

- Sitting in the stairwell;
- Throwing objects inside the vehicle or out of the windows;
- Health and safety breaches (including tampering with safety equipment such as emergency exits, CCTV cameras, smoke alarms, fire extinguishers, first aid box);
- Smoking;
- Spitting;
- Verbal abuse - swearing;
- Bringing unsafe objects onto the vehicles (i.e. pen-knives, cigarette lighters);
- Playing personal stereos without headphones;
- Assaulting the pupil escort;
- Vandalism/damage to the vehicle (criminal damage will be reported to the Police and parents will be held responsible for any damage caused to the vehicle by their child's actions and will have to reimburse the operator accordingly).

**This is not an exhaustive list and each incident will be investigated on its own merit.**

## **6. Principles Guiding the Use of Sanctions**

Sanctions should be fair, consistent and appropriate to the seriousness of the incident/behaviour. The procedure by which a sanction is applied should ensure that the pupil is informed about the reason for its imposition and the parent/carer should also be informed.

Generally a sanction will only be applied after investigation of an incident (however where there is a serious health and safety risk an immediate sanction may be applied).

The most serious sanctions will be not applied until all other sanctions have been tried and have demonstrably failed, unless the incident is so serious that it would warrant an immediate sanction, including withdrawal of a bus pass.

Parents/carers will have the right to submit an appeal where sanctions are applied which result in the withdrawal of home to school transport or the travel pass (temporary or fixed term/permanent).

## **7. Factors to be considered when applying Sanctions**

Consideration may need to be given to:-

- The seriousness of the incident/behaviour;
- The impact of the behaviour on others and/or property;
- Frequency and past history of behaviour;
- Age and understanding of the pupil;
- Pupils special educational needs;
- Peer pressure;
- Was incident/behaviour perpetrated alone, or as part of a group;

- Response to interventions/sanctions used by school and/or other to modify pupils' behaviour

## **8. Incident Reporting Procedures on Mainstream Services**

The following procedures should be followed when an incident occurs on home to school transport:-

- 8.1 When an incident occurs, the bus driver should take all reasonable steps to identify the pupil(s) involved and any witnesses. The driver should report the matter to West Yorkshire Passenger Transport Executive (Metro) without delay, using the standard report form provided. If the driver feels the incident should be reported to the Police the driver should still report the matter to Metro;
- 8.2 On receiving a report from the driver/operator, Metro should forward a copy to the school(s) concerned and the Council's Home to School Transport Team within 5 working days.
- 8.3 The school should investigate the incident taking into account any previous history of poor conduct by the pupil(s) concerned. Bus operators should give all reasonable assistance to the school in the investigation:
- 8.4 The school should invoke the appropriate sanction as contained in the school's behaviour policy.
- 8.5 Where a pupil's behaviour on transport is causing concern, he/she will be advised of the consequences of a failure to improve such behaviour. The parent/carer should also be kept informed.
- 8.6 If it is felt appropriate to withdraw home to school transport or the travel pass for a temporary or fixed term basis the Family Services Home to School Transport must be informed in order that parents can be notified accordingly and given the right of appeal. Where appropriate the Family Services Home to School Transport Team will write to the parents/carers setting out the reasons for the decision and the duration of the sanction together with details of the appeals procedures.

## **9. Incident Reporting on Special Needs Transport Journeys**

For some pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) there may be other contributing factors that need to be taken into account when considering their behaviour. However, where disruptive, challenging or unsafe behaviour occurs which may place the pupil and/or others at risk or the behaviour occurs beyond that which can reasonably be expected and tolerated then the following action may be taken;

- 9.1 If a pupil's conduct/behaviour places the pupil or others at risk and the driver feels it is unsafe to continue en-route he/she may return the pupil to their home address or to the school (whichever is appropriate) and the parent/carer will be notified accordingly. In exceptional cases where the pupil displays severe behavioural problems on the transport the driver will need to make an informed decision about the safest way of continuing with the journey and this could

- potentially result in the pupil being taken to the local Police Station; again if this happens, parents/carers will be notified;
- 9.2 Where a pupil's behaviour on transport is causing concern, the Home to School Transport Team will notify parents/cares in writing. The parents/carers will be informed of the consequences of a failure to improve such behaviour;
  - 9.3 A copy of the letter will be forwarded to the school, Special Educational Needs Group (SENG) and any other professionals involved with the pupil. There may be good reasons why a pupil's behaviour has suddenly changed or deteriorated i.e. change of medication and the professionals involved may be able to offer guidance and support in order to resolve the problem;
  - 9.4 If the unacceptable behaviour persists the Home to School Transport Team will notify parents in writing that transport may be withdrawn on a temporary basis and a meeting will be convened in which all interested parties will be invited to discuss all possible options and solutions.
  - 9.5 If transport is withdrawn the responsibility for transporting the pupil to/from school will rest with the parents/cares;
  - 9.6 If the pupil's behaviour/conduct places the pupil and others at risk then there may be no option but to immediately withdraw transport on health and safety grounds. If this happens parents/carers will be notified in writing and an urgent meeting will be convened. If transport is withdrawn the responsibility for transporting the pupil to/from school will rest with the parents/carers.

## 10. Appeal Procedures

If a sanction has been applied or transport/travel pass has been withdrawn and parents/carers wish to appeal against the decision they should contact the Home to School Transport Team for an appeal form and further details as follows:-

Wakefield Council  
Learner Support Services  
Home to School Transport Team  
Room 42  
County Hall  
Wakefield  
WF1 2QL

Tel. No. 01924 305675/305643  
E-mail: [hst@wakefield.gov.uk](mailto:hst@wakefield.gov.uk)