

Guidance for Drivers of School Buses and Minibuses transporting children to/from school, including SEN schools

1. Be punctual.
2. Only stop at the designated pick-up or set-down point and ensure children remain seated until the bus stops.
3. Keep the doors closed until the bus is at a complete standstill.
4. Ensure wheelchairs and occupants are secure and properly fixed before moving off. Periodically check for wear and tear.
5. Check that bags or clothing are not caught in the door when closed.
6. Where seat belts are fitted, always insist they are used.
7. Do not drive away until all the passengers are seated.
8. Always park so that pupils alight on the pavement away from the traffic and when possible, on the same side of the road as the school entrance.
9. Be aware that pupils may run back for items left on the bus.
10. If pupils have to alight from the rear of the vehicle, supervise the operation.
11. Only reverse when absolutely necessary and preferably only with the assistance of adult guidance.
12. Remember some pupils have difficulties e.g. in walking, poor sight or a medical condition such as epilepsy.
13. Report cases of indiscipline to the Head Teacher.
14. Drivers must know the procedures for dealing with accidents, breakdowns and poor weather.

15. Drivers must know how to use their fire extinguisher and the items included in their first aid kit.
16. Avoid physical contact with children.
17. Smoking and the drinking of alcohol is not permitted on schools transport.
18. Comply with school instructions regarding the closing of school gates and manoeuvring in playgrounds.

Additional guidance for Drivers transporting SEN school children without the provision of escorts/attendants

19. Drivers to be in possession of the names and addresses of all the passengers to be carried, their destination, their pick-up and return home times and the times they should arrive and depart from the educational establishment served. No additional passengers to be carried.
20. Pick-up and return home times should be consistent as this allows parents to ensure children are ready for collection and so they are at home to receive their children on return. Drivers are not to collect from or return them to other addresses unless authorised to do so by an authorised person at the Client Education authority
21. Children are to be escorted into school on arrival and if the school is not yet open, drivers should wait with the children until it is. On no account are children to be left unattended at a school before it has opened. Adherence to 3.1 and 3.2 above should ensure this will not happen.
22. For the return journey, children should be escorted from the school to the transport. On arrival at the home address, the child should be left with an adult or a person specified by the parents as sufficiently responsible to supervise the child in the absence of an adult. The Client Education Authority can provide a list of those persons specified by parents as “responsible” to both schools and drivers.
23. Safety is paramount. Seat belts, must be used and the driver should insist upon it. Likewise, child locks, if fitted, are to be used. Care must be taken to ensure children leave the vehicle on the pavement side away from traffic and must not be left to cross roads without supervision.
24. Those children provided with home to school transport have some special needs. It may be a form of disability or perhaps a behaviour problem. Some situations are bound to occur that demand special handling. Whilst verbal admonishment is permitted as long as no foul language is used, no physical action must be taken. In exceptional circumstances, restraint may be necessary. Incidents must be reported to the Head Teacher and parents.

25. Advice will be available from Head Teachers in the handling of particular children.
26. Should children frequently not be ready for collection or parents not at home to receive them on return, notify the authorised person at the Client Education Authority
27. Children are not permitted to smoke on school transport.
28. If parents are not at home to receive children, firstly wait no more than five minutes. If no one arrives, carry on and take other children home and on completion, return with the child. If still no one at home, contact the authorised person at the Client Education Authority for instructions regarding where the child is to be taken and can be safely received. Put a note through the letterbox to inform the parents of the child of the action being taken and for them to contact the child's reception address. Proceed to the reception address advised with the child.
29. Do not leave the child with neighbours unless you have previously been informed by parents that you may do this.
30. Children with learning disabilities attending some SEN Schools will be escorted by a parent to the vehicle collecting them. If they have not appeared three minutes after the agreed pick-up time, carry on to the next pick-up. On arrival at the school, staff will come for the children. The procedure will be reversed in the afternoon. Should a problem occur on a vehicle and the driver feels unable to handle the situation, they should telephone the school for a member of staff will come out and assist.
31. In the unlikely event of damage to vehicles or personal effects, drivers should report the full circumstances to their employer.
32. In the rare event of a medical problem requiring special attention, the child should be immediately taken to the nearest point where assistance can be obtained. This may be the school, their home or a nearby hospital. If a child is taken to hospital, telephone the authorised person at the Client Education Authority and request that they take appropriate action to inform the school, parents etc.

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