

PROCEDURE FOR DEALING WITH BEHAVIOURAL PROBLEMS ON PUBLIC AND EDUCATION AUTHORITY TRANSPORT

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 The following procedure has been introduced in response to an escalation of behavioural problems by pupils travelling on home to school transport.

1.2 The Authority recognises that it has a responsibility to ensure that pupils are transported to and from school safely, legally and economically.

1.3 In exercising its responsibility the Authority acknowledges the role of schools, parents and pupils in ensuring that pupils behave in a socially acceptable manner while travelling on Authority and Public Transport.

It is the Authority's view:

- That pupils have a responsibility to behave in an acceptable manner which ensures safety both on the vehicle and while awaiting transport.
- That parents should promote good behaviour and accept responsibility for the conduct of their children en route to and from school.
- That it is the role of schools to support positive parenting practice and actively encourage good behaviour on public and Authority transport.

1.4 The Authority acknowledges the high level of support given by schools to minimise risk to pupils being transported to and from school and seeks their ongoing co-operation for the successful implementation of this procedure.

2 PURPOSE

2.1 The purpose of this procedure is to ensure that pupils are conveyed to and from school safely and that the health and safety of all passengers is protected.

2.2 DEFINITION OF MISCONDUCT

The Authority has defined misconduct as follows:-

2.2.1 Misconduct

- General misbehaviour
- Inappropriate behaviour to other passengers, driver or escort
- Abusive language
- Bad manners
- Not remaining seated during transport

2.2.2 Serious Misconduct

- Continuous misconduct
- Foul language
- Smoking
- Failure to carry out an instruction
- Spitting on the vehicle
- Verbal abuse.

Any of the above depending of the severity of the action, may be construed as Gross Misconduct.

2.2.3 Gross Misconduct

Gross misconduct is defined as behaviour which seriously endangers the health and safety of the driver, passengers, pupils and other road users and cannot be tolerated.

Examples of this are as follows:-

- Graffiti or defacing seats or interior of vehicle
- Interfering with the safety of the vehicle
- Interference with safety of other passengers

- Behaviour which is grossly offensive to other passengers or the public
- Obstruction of driver

- Sectarian remarks directed to other passengers
- Physical abuse against passengers/driver
- Malicious damage to seats or interior/exterior of the vehicle
- Misuse of bus pass
- Setting off fireworks
- Throwing objects in or out of the bus

None of the above lists is exhaustive. They are mainly indicative of the common types of misbehaviour which occur on school transport. Persistent misconduct on any journey may result in the withdrawal of the service until the matter is resolved. Misconduct of a criminal nature may lead to Police involvement.

3 PROCEDURES FOR DEALING WITH BEHAVIOURAL PROBLEMS

3.1 Misconduct - As defined 2.2.1

3.1.1 The driver will take appropriate steps to ensure the health and safety of passengers and will deal with general misbehaviour. However in the event of recurring or more serious incidents the following procedures should be followed:

- When general misbehaviour persists or when a pupil does not respond to an instruction from a driver to behave appropriately Authority drivers will report the incident to the Principal.
- Translink drivers should report to the Translink District Manager who will contact the Principal or nominated teacher.
- The Private Operator should report incidents to the Authority's Transport Unit who will contact the Principal or nominated teacher.
- The Principal should interview the pupil/s concerned and if necessary take disciplinary action.
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3.2 Serious Misconduct - As defined in 2.2.2

The following procedure should be followed in cases of serious misconduct:

- The Authority driver will, as soon as reasonably possible, report serious misconduct to the Principal and the Transport Officer.
- The Translink driver should, as soon as reasonably possible, report serious misconduct to the District Manager who will contact the Principal on behalf of Translink.
- The Private Operator should report incidents to the Authority's Transport Unit who will contact the school Principal.

In each instance full details of the misconduct should be provided and pupils involved should be identified where possible.

- The Principal should interview the pupil(s) concerned and write to their parents advising them of the serious misconduct and request their co-operation in ensuring no further occurrences of the misbehaviour.
- The Principal may determine it necessary to take appropriate action in accordance with the school's discipline policy provided the policy includes behaviour outside the school or en route to the school.
- The Principal should send a letter to parents and a copy of the letter should be sent to the Transport Officer and the Translink District Manager if appropriate.
- The Principal should liaise with the Transport Officer who will also write to parents advising them that any recurrence of serious misconduct will result in the withdrawal of the pupil's bus pass.

3.3 Gross Misconduct - As defined in 2.2.

3.3.1 In cases of Gross Misconduct:

- The Authority driver will, as soon as reasonably possible, report the incident to the Transport Officer.
- The Translink driver should report the incident to the district Manager.
- The private Operator should as soon as possible, report the incident to the Authority Transport Officer.

3.3.2 A written report should be made identifying the pupil(s) concerned and video evidence provided where available.

3.3.2 The Transport Officer will liaise with the Principal and the Translink District Manager to determine appropriate action to be taken.

3.3.4 The Principal should take appropriate disciplinary action in relation to the pupil's misconduct in accordance with the school's Discipline Policy provided the policy included behaviour outside the school or on route to school.

3.3.5 The Transport Officer and the Translink District Manager will discuss arrangements for withdrawing the pupil's bus pass and consider future options for transporting the pupil to school.

4 PROCEDURE FOR THE WITHDRAWAL OF A TRANSLINK BUS PASS

In cases of gross misconduct where it has been decided that the pupil's bus pass has to be withdrawn the Transport Officer will:

- a) Contact the pupil's parents to make arrangements to have him/her transported home.

or

Ensure that the pupil is delivered safely home to the care of his/her parents.

- b) Advise parents in writing that home to school transport will become a parental responsibility until further notice.

On the day the pass is withdrawn the Transport Officer will deliver a letter to the residence of the parents informing them of the nature of misconduct.

The letter will also include an invitation to the parents to attend a meeting to discuss the withdrawal of the pass and future transport arrangements.

A copy of the letter will be sent on the same day, by recorded delivery, to the parents.

The Transport Officer will also immediately inform the Education Officer (Administration) of the withdrawal of the bus pass and subsequently submit a written report.

The Education Officer (Administration) will attend a meeting with the parents, Translink District Manager and the Transport Officer to discuss the pupil's misbehaviour.

Following the meeting a decision will be taken on the period of withdrawal of the bus pass and parents advised in writing within 5 days. Parents who wish to appeal the decision to withdraw a bus pass may write to the Chief Executive outlining their grounds for complaint.

5 PROCEDURE FOR THE WITHDRAWAL OF EDUCATION AUTHORITY TRANSPORT

In cases of gross misconduct where it has been decided that the pupil's Authority transport has to be withdrawn the Transport Officer will:

On the day transport is withdrawn the Transport Officer will deliver a letter to the residence of the parents informing them -

- a) of the nature of misconduct.

b) of the period of withdrawal of the transport.

The letter will also include an invitation to the parents to attend a meeting to discuss the withdrawal of transport and future transport arrangements.

A copy of the letter will be sent on the same day, by recorded delivery, to the parents.

The Transport Officer will also immediately inform the Education Officer (Administration) of the withdrawal of transport and subsequently submit a written report.

The Education Officer (Administration) will attend a meeting with the parents, and the Transport Officer to discuss the pupil's misbehaviour.

Following the meeting a decision will be taken on the period of withdrawal of transport and parents advised in writing within 5 days. Parents who wish to appeal the decision may write to the Chief Executive outlining their grounds for complaint.

6 PROCEDURE FOR THE WITHDRAWAL OF AUTHORITY TRANSPORT FOR CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL EDUCATION NEEDS

In cases of gross misconduct a decision to withdraw transport will be taken in conjunction with the Education Officer (Special). The Transport Officer will:

a) contact the pupil's parents to make arrangements to have him/her transported home

or

b) ensure that the pupil is delivered safely home to the care of his/her parents.

On the day transport is withdrawn the Transport Officer will deliver a letter to the residence of the parents informing them -

a) of the nature of misconduct.

b) of the period of the withdrawal of the transport.

The letter will also include an invitation to the parents to attend a meeting to discuss the withdrawal of transport and future transport arrangements.

A copy of the letter will be sent on the same day, by recorded delivery, to the parents.

The Transport Officer will also immediately inform the Education Officer (Administration) of the withdrawal of transport and subsequently submit a written report.

The Education Officer (Administration) will attend a meeting with the parents, the Transport Officer and the Education Officer (Special Education) to discuss the pupil's misbehaviour.

Following the meeting a decision will be taken on the period of withdrawal of the transport and parents advised in writing within 5 days. Parents who wish to appeal the decision may write to the Chief Executive outlining their grounds for complaint.

This procedure will be kept under regular review.