



HULL CITY COUNCIL – STREETSCENE SERVICES

GUIDELINES FOR PASSENGER ASSISTANTS ON THE TRANSPORTATION OF PUPILS

These guidelines have been produced to help Passenger Assistants carry out their duties and responsibilities when transporting children on school transport contracts. They cannot cover every possible situation and Passenger Assistants should seek further guidance in the case of difficulty, from the staff within the Transport Team who arrange home to school transport for children with special educational needs. They can be contacted on the following numbers:

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| Darren Ward – Internal Delivery Team Leader | 616230 |
| Christine Conway – Internal Delivery Officer | 612808 |
| Debra Moore – Service Support Officer | 612810 |
| Julie Hoque – Service Support Officer | 615245 |

GENERAL GUIDANCE

- The journey to and from school can be an important part of the school day for many children and should be comfortable, stimulating, and enjoyable for them.
- For everyone's comfort the vehicle should maintain a reasonable temperature in all weathers. The contractor should ensure that all heaters and vents are in good working order. Doors should not be left open longer than is necessary in cold weather.
- Although noise can cause distress to some children, some Passenger Assistants may find the playing of popular music can help control pupils with bad behavioural difficulties. Passenger Assistants should use their judgement about the use of radio or tapes for this purpose in conjunction with the driver. Music should not be played loudly, possibly deterring communication with the children.
- All children enjoy communication with other people. Some children with special needs will however have greater difficulty in communicating and the passenger assistant may have to make a special effort to keep the child's attention.
- Children with special needs are often treated as though they are younger than their actual age. Whenever you communicate with a child in your charge you should do so in a way which is appropriate to his/her ability and age as you would with any other child. Physical contact should be avoided unless necessary.

- When speaking to children with hearing difficulties you need to face them and speak clearly so that those who can do so, can lip read. The use of a child's name will not be adequate to gain his/her attention. These children may have limited speech so careful listening and patience is required.
- You should also have a pen and paper available so that, if necessary, a child can communicate by writing.
- You should not discuss a child in front of the child concerned assuming that he/she cannot understand what is being said. This could lead to embarrassment or anxiety for the child in question. Similarly, you should not discuss a child with any other person whilst children are present.
- Visually impaired children usually only need a steadying hand. When speaking to these children you need to make certain that you have their attention as using facial or physical expressions may not suffice.
- Children with learning difficulties will not generally require specific assistance to board and alight the vehicle but may need assistance with seat belts etc.
- Care should be taken particularly when lifting older children that their clothing is not disarranged.
- Passenger assistants must not offer children, sweets, food, drinks etc. to eat on the vehicle. Some children may have a medical condition or allergy, which prohibits them from eating certain foodstuffs.

RESPONSIBILITIES

As a Passenger Assistant you are an employee of and responsible to Hull City Council Neighbourhood and Families. You should always wear your identification card you are on duty.

- You are responsible for the care, supervision, and reasonable behaviour of the children whilst they are being transported to and from school and should not oversee their conduct and safety during the journey in such a way that the driver is not prevented from the carrying out his/her duties. The driver can be requested to stop the vehicle and come to your assistance should a difficult situation arise. You must inform the Headteacher and/or the parent of any incidents regarding conduct which cause you difficulties and complete an incident form which should be returned to Neighbourhood and Families.
- Passenger assistants must sit where they can see all the children, not in the seat adjacent to the driver. You should plan where the children are to sit on the vehicle to allow maximum supervision of those travelling.

- Where seatbelts are fitted these must be used by all children whilst travelling. Neighbourhood and Families provides special seats and/or harnesses for some children who are unable to sit unaided or for those who are very young and hyperactive. When you are advised that a child is to be supplied with a special seat or harness you must ensure that these are fitted in the vehicle by the contractor on every journey and used all the time the child is travelling. If for any reason the special seat or harness is not fitted to the vehicle the child must not be allowed to travel in the vehicle and you must report the matter immediately to your contract in the Transport Team.
- Anyone, adult, or child, whilst aboard the vehicle is under the legal authority of the driver who is responsible for his/her vehicle and passengers' safety
- No one must smoke in the vehicle whilst it is undertaking the contracted journey, or whilst waiting for the children to board.
- Fare paying passengers or any other unauthorised persons must not be carried, or other contractual work undertaken by the advisor and/or the vehicle whilst you are aboard. Should this occur, you must contact the Transport Team immediately.
- It is essential that you attempt to establish a good relationship with the children and their parents.
- Any threatening or challenging behaviour must be reported immediately to staff on the Transport Team.
- Your duties do not end until the last child has been taken to his/her appropriate stop. On no account should this duty be delegated to any other person.
- As the Neighbourhood and Families representative on the vehicle you can contribute to the operation of the transport contract by advising Transport Team staff of any concerns which you may have about the vehicle, or the equipment used. You may also see ways which you think could improve the operation of the contract which you should also discuss with staff on the Transport Team.
- It is accepted that physical control may be necessary on some occasions. The degree of force should be the minimum required to control the behaviour and it should be applied in a manner that attempts to reduce rather than provoke aggressive action. Physical restraint may only be used when other measures have failed and/or there is an immediate risk unless physical control is exercised. Physical control is only permissible in circumstances where staff are attempting:
 - To avert danger or risk to the child or another individual
 - To avoid serious damage to the vehicle
 - To prevent serious disruption

Should a Passenger Assistant need to use physical control during the journey this must be reported to the school staff or the parent/guardian when the child is handed over.

PREPARATION

- Staff on the Transport Team will provide you with a schedule showing the route to be taken, a list of the children, their needs and whether they need to be accompanied to and from the vehicle, a timetable and boarding and alighting points. Transport is provided on a home to school basis only and on no account should you alter the scheduled arrangements without authorisation from the Transport Team staff. Parents/guardians requesting alterations must be referred to the Transport Team.
- Passenger assistants will be provided with relevant details of a child's special needs. Parents/guardians and school staff will also be advised on methods of caring for individual children. It is good practice for a Passenger Assistant to contact parents/guardians of any new children travelling on the vehicle.
- It would be useful to note against each child's name a parent/guardian's home and emergency telephone number. It is advisable to carry coins for a telephone box for emergency situations.
- It is essential to meet and board the vehicle each morning before the first child is collected and be at the school as the children are due to board in the afternoon.
- Ensure that all the children on your schedule are accounted for on each journey.
- Information on the transport schedule is confidential. Passenger Assistants must follow the guidelines issued in relation to the Data Protection Act 1998.
- A nominal payment of £7.50 will be made each term to cover incidental expenses. This is intended to cover the purchases of such items as a notebook, tissues, disposable gloves, work related telephone calls and any small item which Passenger Assistants may need to purchase to assist them with their duties. A Passenger Assistant who identifies a need for special equipment to assist a child should discuss the matter with the Senior Transport Officer, (Passenger Assistants).

BOARDING AND ALIGHTING THE VEHICLE AND YOUR JOURNEY

- The Passenger Assistant is expected to help the children in and out of the vehicle.
- Your responsibilities may include a degree of lifting as each child boards and alights the vehicle. Where lifting aids are provided (e.g., tail-lifts/ramps) these must be used. The Manual Handling Operations Regulations 1992 seek to prevent injury from manual handling operations and apply to any operation/work activity where there is a risk of injury when performing manual handling tasks such as lifting, pulling, pushing, and carrying loads. 'Loads' may be defined as the object(s) or person(s) being transported or handled.

Where it is not possible to avoid a manual handling operation that may involve a risk of injury, an assessment of the handling operation must be undertaken. Concerns must be referred to the Transport Service Manager. Assessments will be undertaken by the Neighbourhood and Families Health and Safety Team.

- Always ensure that all children are seated safely and comfortably before the vehicle sets off. Wheelchairs must be safely secured to the vehicle by the driver using the safety devices provided. The driver must also arrange for wheelchairs not in use to be securely stored.
- Children must not operate the doors. The driver is responsible for personally opening, closing, and properly securing the doors, tail-lifts, and ramps of the vehicle always. As a passenger assistant, you must ensure that the doors are not tampered with during the journey.
- Children should always remain seated during the journey. Never allow children to board/leave the vehicle until it is at complete standstill. The driver should always park so that children can step onto the footpath and not onto the carriageway.
- Children must not be left in the vehicle unsupervised by a Passenger Assistant.
- Children should be supervised as they leave the vehicle at their respective schools and handed over safely to the staff at the school.
- On the journey home where your schedule indicates the 'Met?' column that a child must be met by their parent/guardian, or other responsible adult known to yourself as being nominated by the parent/guardian, then this instruction **must** be followed. On no account should a child be left on their own or handed over to someone not made known to you by the parent/guardian. (Please see The Responsibilities of parent/guardian's section and the Abandoned Child Procedure.)
- Children who do not require to be met can be allowed to make their own way home from the set down point unaccompanied.

THE PASSING OF MESSAGES/MEDICATION/CHILDRENS PERSONAL POSSESSIONS

- Passenger assistants will be occasionally required to convey messages, preferably written, and other small items between the parent/guardian and the Headteacher.
- When you are given any money or medication by a parent/guardian to pass to school staff you should be sure, before accepting it that it is in a sealed envelope or container, clearly marked with the child's name and, in the case of medication, the dosage prescribed.

- Medication and money should be stored in the vehicle during the journey and handed over to a member of staff or the parent/guardian. No medication to be administered by passenger transport staff.
- Passenger assistants must not take responsibility for pupils' personal possessions. On completion of a journey any personal possessions given to a Passenger Assistant for safekeeping should also be handed over.

THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF PARENT/GUARDIANS

Parents have an important role to play in the successful operation of home to school transport and have been sent a copy of the attached information leaflet outlining their responsibilities in this area.

- Parent/guardians need to be sure that the Passenger Assistant is aware of their child's requirements for the journey.
- Parent/guardians have been asked to have their children ready for the journey at all scheduled times. You should not wait longer than five minutes for any child who is late. Any regular occurrences of lateness must be reported to the Transport Team.
- Where parent/guardians are advised that they must be at the pick-up point at the scheduled times and bring their child to the vehicles they must make appropriate arrangements. This duty can be given to a responsible adult nominated by the parent/guardian if they are unable to do this personally. A Passenger Assistant must not leave other children unsupervised on the vehicle. If a parent/guardian has difficulty in making suitable arrangements to accompany their child, then they should be asked to contact staff on the Transport Team.
- Similarly, on the return journey, parent/guardians or their nominated responsible adult known to you should be present at the set-down point to meet the child when they have been advised that this is a requirement. These children **must not** be left at set-down point on their own. Passenger Assistants must follow the Abandoned Child Procedure (copy attached.) Parents/guardians have been advised that the child will be returned to the school from where they will be contacted. Should for any reason the school are unable to accept the child then he/she will be taken to the nearest Social Services Establishment from where the parent will be contacted and advised of the action taken.
- Parents have been advised to let the Passenger Assistants know if their child is ill and unable to travel for a period. They should also inform you of any difficulty with their child, as it arises, to assist you in ensuring, the child's comfort and safety during the journey. If in your opinion a child is not fit or unable to travel, you should not allow the child to board the vehicle. The parent should be advised of the reasons for your concern e.g., their child's welfare, the safety and comfort of other children, the possibility of the driver being distracted. If you have found it necessary to take this action, you should inform staff on the Transport Team immediately.

EMERGENCIES AND DELAYS

- If a vehicle breaks down, or in the event of an accident, give clear instructions to the children and ensure that they remain supervised, their safety is paramount. If there is a risk of fire, however small, evacuate the vehicle moving the children to a safe place and do not leave them unsupervised.
- Road Safety guidelines state that the occupants of the vehicle, when parked on the hard shoulder, should wait for the emergency services out of the vehicle behind the crash barrier.

However, where there are problems with supervision or where pupils have mobility difficulties

The passenger assistant and pupils should remain in the vehicle, but it is essential that the driver advises the emergency services.

- In case of breakdown the contractor has a responsibility to provide a suitable replacement vehicle. The driver should contact the school and the Transport Team at the time that he/she telephones for a relief vehicle so that everyone is informed of the delay. Should you need to transfer to a placement vehicle all special harnesses/seats must be transferred as well.
- If there is any serious delay during the journey at the earliest opportunity Transport Team staff must be informed so that arrangements can be made to inform parents or the school. A lone Passenger Assistant must seek assistance from the driver in this matter, as children must not be left unsupervised by a Passenger Assistant.
- If additional assistance is required by the Passenger Assistant and the driver to prevent unreasonable behaviour by a pupil you should ask the driver to telephone for assistance from a suitable source e.g., parent, school, or police.
- Should a child become ill on a journey you should act in accordance with the advice and instruction provided by the parent/guardian and/or school staff. If in doubt seek medical assistance either by going to the nearest hospital or by asking the driver to telephone for an ambulance. Any first aid administered by the Passenger Assistant should be recorded on an incident form which should be sent immediately to the Transport Team.
- If the Passenger Assistant or driver requires first aid or becomes seriously ill on the journey the vehicle should be stopped and appropriate assistance/advice sought.
- All accidents, whether first aid is administered to children, Passenger Assistants and drivers should be recorded on the Council's incident reporting forms supplied for your use.
- If you are ill and unable to attend work, you should contact the Transport Team and the Contractor immediately so that alternative arrangements can be made.

NB: No Passenger Assistant must administer First Aid without training recognised by the Authority.

MONITORING

As a Passenger Assistant you form an important link between the parents, Contractor and Learning Services staff who organise the transport. It is part of your duties, therefore, to report any irregularities/concerns to staff on the Transport Team so that they can be investigated and dealt with as appropriate.

Listed below are some general points, which you can look out for, but please remember that anything at all which causes you concern should be discussed with staff on the Transport Team.

- Vehicles used to transport pupils in their wheelchairs must be fitted with floor rails and clamps or webbing to secure the chair.
- All special seats and harnesses supplied for the children must be securely fitted and used.
- All cars and minibuses should be fitted with three-point seat belts which must be used by the children not provided with special seats and harnesses.
- Minibuses should have a passenger door to the side and rear and be fitted with forward facing seats.
- The vehicle must have a seat fitted with the appropriate seat belt, special seat, or harnesses for each passenger. Any overcrowding must be reported immediately to the Transport Team.
- All vehicles must be equipped with a fire extinguisher and first aid kit provided by the Contractor.
- Your vehicle is arranged under contract and must not be merged with any other contract. No unauthorised passengers are allowed to travel.
- The scheduled timetable must be adhered to. Persistent lateness by contractors or by parent/guardians should be reported immediately to the staff on the Transport Team. A contractor may also arrive too early. This can also cause disruption for the journey and should be reported.
- The driver must not smoke, use offensive language, threatening behaviour or play loud music, whilst the vehicle is contracted to Neighbourhood and Families, Transport Team.