

# Safe travel on school transport

## Guidelines for drivers

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### Before setting out

**DO** ensure you are displaying the correct contract number board and child warning signs and are fully familiar with the route. Ensure that the appropriate safety checks have been carried out on your vehicle and that you have checked the interior condition.

**DO** ensure that you clearly display your identity badge when driving any County Council school bus contract.

### On the journey

**DO** approach each pick-up point slowly and with care. Keep the doors closed until you have brought the bus to a complete standstill.

**DO** make sure that doors are properly closed before moving off, checking that nothing is caught in the doors either inside or out; be wary of latecomers. Check the nearside mirror every time.

**DO** ensure that, when pupils are getting off your bus, they and their possessions are completely clear of the vehicle before closing the door and moving off.

**DO** discourage pupils from crossing in front of or behind your vehicle. If you need to reverse in the morning, do so after pupils waiting to board have been picked up. If you need to reverse in the afternoon do so before setting pupils down.

**DO** report misbehaviour to your employer or the school at the earliest opportunity. Unruly pupils must be allowed to travel and may only be banned from travelling by the school or the Council. You can ask to see the bus pass of a misbehaving pupil for identification but should not take away the pass.

**DO** stop the bus until order is restored for particularly bad behaviour. The Police may be contacted if necessary in extreme cases. Do not continue the journey if you feel it is unsafe to do so.

**DO** avoid any physical contact with students. Maintain a courteous and professionally detached relationship with pupils. Avoid inappropriate language and conversation topics at all times.

**DO** Report inappropriate language used by pupils.

**DO** take extra care in severe weather conditions. If conditions are dangerous it is acceptable to avoid certain parts of route - inform your employer about any diversion as soon as practicably possible.

**DO** check your vehicle for damage at the end of each journey and to ensure that no pupils or property remain.

**DO NOT** move away from a pick up point until all pupils are seated.

**DO NOT** allow unauthorised persons to board or travel on your vehicle.

**DO NOT** allow anybody to ride on the platform at the front of the bus or sit on the front window ledge.

**DO NOT** carry more students than the seating capacity. Under no circumstances are pupils permitted to stand. If your bus is full and there are further pupils who wish to board you must not pick them up but please report this fact to the school on your arrival. If it is then practicable, return for the waiting pupils. **(May not apply to Commercial School Bus Services)**

**DO NOT** allow pupils to alight before arriving at the school in the morning (except in the event of a breakdown or accident - see overleaf).

**DO NOT** return pupils to school in the afternoon because of bad behaviour unless the school has been contacted and have agreed to accept the pupils back and the bus is closer to the school than the first drop-off point. Experience has shown that schools can usually investigate poor behaviour effectively the following day.

**DO NOT** play any pre-recorded material on the radio or television. You may have the radio or TV on at moderate volume.

**DO NOT** use mobile phones, including hands free kits, whilst you are driving. If it is essential to make a call in connection with the contract, stop at a safe place and turn the engine off before making the call.

**DO NOT** use centre doors other than for unloading on arrival at school.

### **On primary school buses**

**DO** make sure that you are aware of the additional guidance for drivers of Primary School buses.

### **In the event of a breakdown or accident**

**DO** try to keep pupils on the vehicle unless it is unsafe to do so.

**DO** notify your company - they will organise a replacement vehicle and notify relevant schools. If you cannot contact your company, notify the Customer Service Centre on **0116 305 0002**. Always remain with the passengers.

**DO** impress on pupils that they should wait with the vehicle until alternative arrangements are made. Experience has shown that if pupils make their own arrangements it may lead to confusion and possible distress. Drivers must stay with the students to ensure their safety.

**DO** report all accidents involving pupils to the school, no matter how slight. After any accident to the vehicle or a person, a full written report must be supplied to the Council as soon as possible, preferably by fax (0116 305 7181) or email [Safer.Travel@leics.gov.uk](mailto:Safer.Travel@leics.gov.uk).

**DO** be alert to non-obvious injuries to pupils, including shock. Always call an ambulance if in doubt.

### **In school grounds**

**DO** follow the instructions of duty school staff. Be particularly aware of pupils who move between vehicles and barriers. Remember that younger pupils are not as aware of traffic dangers as most adults.

**DO** report any concerns you have to the school staff who are on duty and then to your employer.

**DO** pick up and set down pupils only as specified in the contract.

### **Bus passes**

**DO** check bus passes on every journey as students board the bus. Passes are issued to all secondary school pupils to ensure that only pupils entitled to travel on your bus do so and to prevent overloading.

If you have been issued with a loading list you may allow any student on the list to travel provided they have proof of identity. Drivers may apply their discretion in the morning to allow travel to students who have misplaced their pass should make a note of the student's name and give it to their manager.

**Photocopied or scanned copies of passes are not acceptable in any circumstances and if detected should be reported to school staff and/or your manager.**

**DO** check passes from the start of the academic year but allow pupils without passes to travel for the first week of term, advising them to get a pass. After the first full week do not permit travel without a pass.

**DO NOT** allow a pupil without a pass to travel on an afternoon journey. You may do so if requested by a member of the school staff, or a member of the Council.

**DO NOT** suddenly refuse to carry pupils who do not have a pass if pass checks have not been carried out regularly.

**DO NOT** allow any pupil without a pass to travel at any time if the Council has applied a strict "No pass - No travel" policy to specific buses - this will usually be following reported overloading.

### **Smoking on school buses**

**DO NOT** smoke in any circumstances during the scheduled hours of the contract, in school grounds or on the bus – this includes the use of e-cigarettes or similar devices.

**DO** report pupils smoking to your employer and the school, with names of those involved, at the earliest opportunity. If you observe pupils smoking on your vehicle, ask them to stop and attempt to take their names from their bus passes.

### **Seat belts**

**DO** inform pupils that seat belts must be worn, if you have been told by your employer to do so.

**DO** ensure that younger pupils are wearing seat belts in cars and some smaller minibuses where it is the driver's responsibility.

**DO NOT** fasten or adjust seat belts for pupils, you may, however, show them how belts work. If you are unsure of the regulations, check with your employer or the Council.

## Code of conduct

Drivers and bus / taxi company staff should conduct themselves professionally at all times. Specifically, drivers will:

- wear appropriate clothing and be presentable at all times
- ensure that their actions do not expose any person to any Health and Safety risks.
- not engage in personal e-mail, telephone, text or social media contact with children.

## Guideline leaflets in this series

This leaflet aims to give advice and information to students, parents, schools, colleges and bus operators who use and deliver transport services provided by Leicestershire County Council.

Other leaflets in this series, available on request, include:

- Anti-social behaviour on school transport
- School Bus Passes: Frequently asked questions
- Guidelines for taxi escorts
- Guidelines for school staff
- Guidelines for parents and students on mainstream transport
- Guidelines for parents – Special Educational Needs transport
- Guidelines of safe working practice for the protection of children and staff
- Guidelines for severe weather conditions - Operators
- Guidelines for severe weather conditions – Schools

If you have any comments about this leaflet or the services it relates to or if you require information contained in this leaflet in an alternative version, e.g. large print, Braille, tape or an alternative language please telephone:

**0116 305 0002**

### or write to:

Customer Service Centre (E&T),  
Leicestershire County Council,  
County Hall, Glenfield, Leicestershire LE3 8SR

**Email:** [customerservices@leics.gov.uk](mailto:customerservices@leics.gov.uk)

### or visit our website:

[www.leicestershire.gov.uk](http://www.leicestershire.gov.uk)

## Commercial School Bus Services and Public Transport Services

Companies operating their own commercial school bus services or public transport services carrying school children will have their own set of guidelines for drivers. Those contained in this leaflet apply to contracted school bus services only.



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