

Passenger Transport Unit Rule Book - A Code of Conduct (V1.0)

Pupils

The rules in place are for your own safety and must be observed at all times and apply to any mode of transport that is provided by the Passenger Transport Unit.

The rules

Waiting and boarding school transport

- Arrive at the designated pick up point or bus stop approximately 5 minutes before transport is due to arrive.
- Have a bus pass or award notice ready to avoid unnecessary delays when boarding.
- Keep well back from the road as transport approaches. When transport arrives do not push other passengers to try and get on first.
- Board the vehicle in an orderly manner.
- Find a seat quickly and quietly. If there are no seats available, please report to the driver. If the vehicle is one that carries standing passengers, hold securely onto a grab rail or grab strap at all times.

Standing passengers

- Pupils are only permitted to stand if the vehicle is licensed to carry standees. A notice will be displayed at the front of the vehicle clearly stating how many passengers are allowed to be standing during a journey. It is against the law for more passengers to stand than that number stated or to stand if seats are available.
- All standing passengers must, for both their own and the safety of other passengers, hold securely to a grab rail or hanging strap.
- Standing passengers must never stand by the driver's cab or by a door.

Safety belts

- Where safety belts are provided you are required by law to wear them at all times.
- If you are provided with a safety belt that is not in working order you must report this immediately to the driver.
- Seat belts must be worn correctly. Lap and diagonal safety belts must be worn to allow the diagonal section of the belt to lie across the shoulder and never across the face or throat. The lap section of a belt must lie across the bony part of the hip and never across the stomach or across the top of the legs. If belts do not adjust so that they can be worn correctly you must tell your parent or guardian when you return home or, on the school bound journey, report this to both the bus driver and school.

CCTV

- CCTV may be in operation on your school transport. This can be used to identify any passengers who break the rules. It can also be used to safeguard passengers, escorts and drivers.
- CCTV can be used by nominated officers of Passenger Transport Unit, or the transport company in the event of a legal action being taken by any stake holder.
- CCTV footage is only monitored if incidents are reported by any party and is password protected so it can only be viewed by specified officers.

Behaviour

- You must not behave in any way that distracts the driver. Examples of unacceptable behaviour are: shouting, throwing objects inside the vehicle or out of windows, hanging out of windows, tampering with safety and emergency equipment on board the vehicle, tampering with doors including emergency exits, ringing the bell unnecessarily, talking to the driver unless in an emergency, moving around inside the vehicle, fighting, bullying, vandalism.
- You must never remove any safety or emergency equipment from the vehicle. Examples of this are: first aid kit, fire extinguisher, glass hammer, seat belt cutter, signs.
- You must never cause stress or fear to any other passengers through actions such as, shouting, threatening someone, bullying.
- When you want to get off the vehicle you should wait for the vehicle to stop, then make your way to the front of the vehicle, keeping hold of grab rails and standing well away from the front door and the driver. You should never attempt to get off the vehicle until it has stopped completely and the doors should remain completely closed until the vehicle has stopped. You must wait for doors to be opened by the driver and not try to open them yourself, unless advised by the driver in an emergency situation.
- Once you have stepped off the vehicle stand well away from it so the driver can close the doors without your baggage or clothing becoming trapped in the door mechanism.
- Always allow the vehicle to move away safely. This will give you a better view of the road if you need to cross to the other side. Never try to cross the road in front of or behind your school bus as motorists are not likely to see you clearly.

If you have a complaint

- If you want to make a complaint about any aspect of your school transport provision which could include a complaint about another passenger, the driver or the vehicle, you must do so either by telling your parent or guardian and/or the school. A complaint form has been issued as part of the parent contract but otherwise can be obtained from your school or Passenger Transport Unit. Your school will have at least one person who deals with school transport issues.
- Complaints when completed can be directed to the school or Passenger Transport Unit.

Injuries

- If you are injured on the journey to or from school you must report to the driver immediately. Upon learning of your injury, the driver will ensure that appropriate action is taken which may involve medical help being summoned.

Bullying

- At no time will you bully any passenger, driver or escort staff.
- If you know that someone else is being bullied you should report this to your school. You can do this in complete confidence and without being identified.
- If you are a victim of bullying you must seek help so steps can be taken to help you and to stop the bullying continuing. You can seek help from several places such as, your family, the school, the Council, Childline, Kidscape, BUSK. You will not make bullying worse by telling the appropriate person.

Consumption of food and drink

- You are not permitted to eat or drink on board school transport. Chewing gum is also not permitted.

Baggage and equipment

- Baggage and equipment such as musical instruments or sports bags are to be stored safely in overhead racks, luggage pens/lockers or under your seat.
- Gangways and all exits must be kept clear at all times from baggage to avoid hampering emergency evacuation in the event of an accident, a fire or other incident.
- If you accidentally leave baggage behind on a vehicle you will need to contact the transport operator directly to make arrangements for the return of it.
- Never try to return to a vehicle to recover baggage you have left behind if the vehicle has started to move away.

Litter

- You must use any litter receptacles provided on board your school transport or take your litter with you when you leave the vehicle.

Drivers

- If your driver gives you an instruction you must follow it especially if there is an emergency.
- The driver will not normally ask you to operate a door but in an emergency he/she may have to. Normally you would not be permitted to operate any doors in the vehicle but if the driver has asked you to do so in an emergency situation then follow his/her instruction. Emergency rear doors of buses and coaches will open on the off-side (onto the road) and other traffic may be passing. It is essential to bear this in mind and remind others to as well.

Escorts

- Where escorts are travelling with you, you must follow any instructions they give you.

Safety education

- You may at some stage be given an opportunity to participate in safety training. This will be given during the school day. This is not an option and is designed to make your journey to and from school safer for you, your fellow passengers, the driver, the escort if one is provided and all other road users.

Smoking

- You are not permitted by law to smoke on board school transport, nor is the driver or any other passenger.
- Cigarettes, tobacco, roll up papers, lighters or matches are all prohibited on school transport services.

Substances

- Substances are not allowed to be carried on school transport. This includes illegal drugs and aerosols.

Weapons

- Knives or other weapons are not permitted to be carried on board school transport.
- Any item that is not required for school that could be used as a weapon must not be carried on school transport.
- Glass bottles are not permitted on school transport.
- Any items by description or used as weapons will be confiscated by driver or escort.

Vandalism

- CCTV may be used to identify any passenger who wilfully vandalises the vehicle.
- Where it is proven that a pupil has caused damage to a vehicle the parent or guardian will be required to pay for that damage in full.
- Where it is proven that a pupil has caused damage to a vehicle, a legal action may be taken by the transport operator and/or the Council.

Pupil's legal rights

Pupils are legally entitled to:

- The provision of a mechanically sound vehicle for school transport meeting all legal requirements.
- The provision of a suitably trained professional driver.
- The provision of a trained escort where personal needs meet the criteria set down for escort provision.
- Be provided with a safe journey.
- Be provided with a stress free journey.

Pupil's legal responsibilities

Pupils have a legal responsibility to:

- Never distract the driver.
- Never threaten the driver, escort or any other passenger.
- Never bully another person or cause any distress or behave in a threatening manner towards any other passenger, escort or the driver.
- Never misuse emergency exits or equipment on board the vehicle or remove same.
- Stand away from the driver and away from doors when the vehicle is moving.
- Wear your safety belt in accordance with seat belt legislation where one is provided.
- Always sit correctly in your seat and never attempt at any time to sit in a stair well or luggage rack.
- Follow the driver's instructions.

If you break the rules you may be committing an offence which may result in a legal action against you.

Advisory information

Pupils are advised that in law drivers have the final word over who they carry. The driver can refuse to allow you to board a vehicle on the grounds of health and safety of all other passengers and himself.

A driver is not permitted to remove pupils from the vehicle whilst en route and leave you stranded. However, it must be understood that if particular behaviour affects the safety of the driver or any other passenger, the driver has the ability to escalate and seek advice from the Passenger Transport Unit. The driver can apply for permission from the Passenger Transport Unit to drive pupils back to school where parents will become responsible for their journey home. The driver may be given the authority to drive pupils to the nearest police station and terminate the journey. Should pupils persistently cause safety breaches on board Home to School Transport services, those actions taken may include the withdrawal of transport.

Any such action could involve a temporary or a permanent exclusion from transport, during which time the parent or guardian would then have responsibility to find alternative methods of transport to/from the school.

Schools may wish to apply disciplinary methods as adopted by them, relative to any behavioural incident(s).

Parents and Guardians

The rules

Pick up and drop off points

- It is the responsibility of parents or guardians to accompany children to bus stops and pick up points in good time for transport arriving in the morning time and to ensure arrangements are made to collect children from drop off points and bus stops at the end of the school day. Neither The Passenger Transport Unit nor the transport operators are responsible for the safety of any pupil prior to them boarding a vehicle.
- Drivers will not be able to wait for a parent or guardian who does not arrive on time to collect their child. In this situation a driver will not leave a young child at the side of a road and will continue the journey with the child on board until the child can be handed over to a suitable adult either by returning them to the school or taking them to a police station.
- Parents or guardians must not park cars in bus stops or pick up/drop off areas as this can affect school transport vehicles pulling safely into the side of the road and cause a hazard to other traffic or endanger pedestrians.

As parents or guardians you are:

- Required to ensure that your son or daughter understands the rules in the Pupil Section of the Rule Book.
- Asked to ensure your son or daughter abides by the rules.
- Asked to ensure your son or daughter understands clearly that if they break the rules and in particular, cause a safety breach by their behaviour that transport could be withdrawn for a period of time or even permanently.
- Asked to explain to your son or daughter that in the event of transport being withdrawn that they may cause you great difficulty in having to get them to school yourself and at your own expense.
- Asked to ensure your son or daughter is clear about their legal rights and also their responsibilities.

Complaints

- Emergency complaints surrounding safety should be made directly to the Council on 01633 644502
- Non emergency complaints may be made using a complaints form which can be requested by telephone on 01633 644777 or applied for by email to:
passengertransportunit@monmouthshire.gov.uk

Transport Companies

The Rules

Transport companies must:

- Provide mechanically sound vehicles which are clean and meet all legal requirements and the terms of the contract.
- Provide vehicles which are suitable for the age group of passengers to be carried and the route to be used.
- Use fully qualified drivers holding the correct licenses for the vehicle they are driving and use only drivers which have been DBS checked for their suitability in working with children and young people.
- Have in place adequate insurance cover.
- Hold the correct Operator Licenses for the number of vehicles in use.
- Keep an audit trail of driver walk around checks and of complaints, the outcome of these and any other record that the Passenger Transport Unit may require from time to time.
- Participate in any training courses related to the safety of school pupils that the Council provides and/or provide specific drivers for this training when necessary.
- Ensure drivers are fully aware of the complaints procedures that apply to them.
- Provide the Passenger Transport Unit with a signed declaration on behalf of the transport operator that they have read a copy of this Rule Book, understand and agree with the contents.
- Ensure all drivers used for school work have received a copy of the Rule Book and that a signed declaration from each driver confirming they have read the Rule Book, understand and agree with the contents, is kept on file for inspection purposes by the Passenger Transport Unit
- Keep on file, a new photocopy of the licence for each driver, reviewing them and entitlements on a 6 monthly basis.
- Hold on file and distribute to relevant staff, risk assessments for passengers with Special Educational Needs.

Drivers

The Rules

Drivers must:

- Hold a current and relevant driving license for the vehicle they are driving.
- Maintain the validity of their licence according to conditions of use i.e. the wearing of glasses, medical, drivers CPC.
- Conduct and record for inspection purposes a daily defect sheet for each vehicle used.
- Maintain a record for inspection purposes of their drivers hours, rest periods and any paid work. This follows for those required to act in compliance with VOSA directives (PCV vehicles).
- Possess a copy of the Rule Book; drivers are required to provide a signed declaration that they have read, understood and agree with the contents of the Rule Book. The signed declaration must be handed to a senior member of management of the company to keep on record.
- Agree to undertake any training courses the Passenger Transport Unit provides related to school transport safety.

- Report any problems immediately to the appropriate authority and follow all complaints procedures the Passenger Transport Unit has in place.
- Maintain an accurate passenger list, reporting any variation to their transport manager/supervisor or Passenger Transport Unit
- Hold any risk assessment document relating to the transport of passengers with special educational needs.

In particular when transporting children and young people drivers must:

- Have undergone and maintain a valid, enhanced DBS check for their suitability to work unsupervised with children and young people and hold the relevant and current document for inspection.
- Be professional at all times and not to be 'over familiar' with pupils.
- Maintain an accurate passenger list, reporting all variations to their employer or the Passenger Transport Unit.
- Never offer presents/gifts to a pupil.
- Never accept gifts from a pupil unless a parent or guardian is present.
- Not to be confrontational at any time with pupils, parent(s) or member(s) of the staff at a school.
- Never act in any manner which appears threatening or causes stress to any pupil.
- Never allow pupils to operate doors unless in the event of an emergency when you may instruct them to do so.
- Never put a pupil off a vehicle if they are misbehaving whilst en route. Drivers must follow procedures for dealing with bad behaviour as set out in the section entitled 'Bad Behaviour'.
- Understand seat belt legislation to include the law surrounding the use of baby/child seats and booster cushions and observe any requirements for enforcing the wearing of them. This will not apply to coaches but may apply to minibuses and taxis.
- Report to management, the school, the police or the Passenger Transport Unit, any concerns about the safety of any pupil if it is felt that that pupil may be the victim of any type of abuse, bullying or is under the influence of alcohol or drugs.
- Report any damage to the vehicle or missing equipment from the bus at the end of a journey.
- Ensure all safety belt mechanisms are in correct and working order and seat belt webbing is not frayed or twisted.
- Ensure that pupils do not stand by the cab or doors whilst vehicle is moving and to ensure that the doors remain firmly closed until the vehicle comes to a complete stop.
- Sound the horn if pupils try to cross over in front of the vehicle to warn them of danger.
- Report the breaking of any rules immediately so the matter can be dealt with swiftly. The driver must not enter into any argument with any pupil/s.
- Report immediately to management any equipment that is found at the end of a journey that could be connected with drug taking during the journey. Drivers who are aware through smell but are unsure if this is drugs and are unable to find any evidence should seek advice from the Council and their management.

Escorts

The Rules

Escorts must:

- Have undergone and maintain a valid enhanced DBS check for their suitability to work unsupervised with children and young people and hold the relevant and current document for inspection.
- Maintain an accurate passenger list, reporting all variations to their employer or the Passenger Transport Unit.
- Have a clear understanding of any disability or learning difficulty of any passenger in your care.
- Make any given risk assessment for passengers available in the event of a medical emergency.
- Be clear about any medication that is carried and have full written instructions to hand for each pupil in relation to their medication and who can administer this and when.
- Hold a First Aid Certificate and understand clearly what the contents are in a first aid box on board the vehicle and how to use this equipment.
- Be clear about any emergency instructions that must be carried out in the event of an accident, breakdown situation or medical emergency that may arise.
- Be clear about where hospitals are situated.
- Ensure wheelchairs are clamped in place correctly and all restraint systems are used correctly.
- Understand clearly how to operate any rear lift equipment and ramps.
- Report any incidents that may occur during the journey to the relevant person. This could be the school, the parent, the driver, the transport operator or the Council.

Schools

The Rules

School Governors must:

- Be fully aware of the legal requirements they must meet in respect of school transport services.
- Include school transport on the agenda of governors meetings.
- Keep an audit trail of complaints and how these are dealt with, monitoring procedures, follow up risk assessments and minutes of any meetings held to deal with school transport issues.
- Have an adequate School Transport Policy in place which will incorporate site management of vehicles and pedestrians.
- Have a workable Seat Belt Policy in place to include details of how seat belt enforcement will work and be monitored.
- Have either a named person responsible for school transport or a small team to work together to ensure school transport operates safely. This is essential so that the school can facilitate the needs of a pupil who may wish to report any incidents or problems related to the school bus journey.

- Have in place a written risk assessment for transport moving inside the school grounds, leaving and entering the school grounds, pick up and drop off points both inside and outside the school gate. The assessment must include staff, parent/guardian and visitor vehicles driving and parking inside/outside the school grounds. Methods of improving safety and the introduction of systems to improve safety must be included.
- Deal with any complaint in writing immediately.
- Attend any training surrounding school transport provision that is provided by the Council.
- Have on file a copy of this Rule Book and provide a signed declaration from at least two current Governors and the head teacher that the Rule Book has been read by them, understood and that they agree with the contents and that these declarations are kept on file by the Council.

The Council

The Rules

The Council must:

- Keep on file a signed declaration from each staff member working in the school transport department that they have their own copy of the Rule Book, have read, understood and agree with the contents of the Rule Book.
- Continually monitor the running of the school transport department, provide appropriate training to any stakeholder when appropriate or necessary and seek to improve all aspects of the service at all times.
- Keep an audit trail of all school transport documents.
- Provide free copies of the Rule Book to all stakeholders of school transport.