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## **School Transport/Bus Escort Policy**

### **Introductory Statement:**

Bus Eireann is responsible for the day-to-day operation of the school Transport Scheme under the general direction of the Department of Education and Skills. All references in this document to 'bus' relate to buses and all other vehicles engaged to provide school transport.

### **Rationale:**

It is necessary to have a policy for school transport and bus escorts to:

1. Ensure safe journeys to and from school
2. Clarify duties, roles and responsibilities of all involved

### **Aims:**

1. To ensure safety of all on the bus
2. To ensure everyone is aware of his/her responsibilities
3. To establish a clear system and support structure.

### **Responsibilities:**

#### **The school:**

- Submits applications to the Special Educational Needs Officer (SENO) for all new entrants
- Employs bus escorts as sanctioned by the Dept of Education
- Informs Bus Eireann of new addresses or changes of addresses
- Informs Bus Eireann Inspector of any safety/medical concerns
- Responsible for compliance of Child Protection Procedures
- Provision of safe Bus Parking spaces at school

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The School Principal/Deputy Principal:

- Link with Bus Escorts
- Ensure SNA's are at collection point on time
- Notify parents if there are unavoidable issues which stop transport
- Draw up a list of substitute bus escorts
- Link with SENO/DES/Bus Eireann
- Contact parents if behaviour concerns are causing an on-going danger to the child or other children. Parents will be asked to make other arrangements until the problem is resolved.

The Class Teacher:

- Link with Bus Escort regarding children on bus
- Have children ready in time for collection

Bus Eireann Inspector:

- Gives contracts to companies/drivers
- Assigns children to routes and gives contact details to drivers
- Contacts parents in cases where child's behaviour is causing danger to himself or others
- Informs parents of time of morning collection

The Driver:

- Safe Transport of those on board the bus
- Time keeping (5min wait period is allowed at each house)
- Safe delivery home – if a parent is not home and the driver has tried his emergency contact numbers, the driver should leave the child at the nearest Garda station
- Will ensure wheelchair/buggies are on ramp correctly and securely
- Will adhere to school policies to ensure the safety and well being of all on board the Bus. - (Anti-bullying Policy, Health & Safety Policy, Mobile phone Policy, Child Safeguarding statement)

The Bus Escort:

- Ensures that each child meets the designated person at each drop off – home and school
- Must always remain on the bus with the children.
- Assists the child on and off the bus safely.
- Secures the children's seatbelts
- Always supervises and watches over the children.
- Informs the school if they are aware of any issues which may cause harm to themselves or others.
- Does not use their mobile phone during the transfer of children
- Discourages use of electronic devices
- Can use Friday treats to encourage good behaviour if necessary.
- Must maintain a good working relationship with the driver
- Must inform the parents of any changes in routes or drivers in advance.
- The Escort is a Board of Management employee so will adhere to the school policies to ensure the safety and wellbeing of the children.

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#### The Parents:

- Must inform the driver in advance if their child is not attending school or not coming home on the bus
- Must have the child ready on time
- Brings the child to the taxi each morning.
- Must be available to collect the child at the agreed times
- Must provide the driver with the details of a named adult in case of an emergency
- Must supply booster seats if necessary
- Must teach their child basic rules for travelling on public transport.

#### **GUIDELINES.**

Pupil Supervision Escorts are expected to supervise pupils with Special Educational Needs whilst they are being transported from home to school and vice versa.

This includes:

- Making sure that the pupils being transported do not distract the driver whilst the vehicle is in motion.
- That the pupils behave in a suitable manner whilst on the vehicle.
- Appropriate physical contact with pupils to enable comfortable entry and exit from the vehicles.
- Not leaving children unsupervised on a vehicle. To enable supervision, parents are expected to escort their child to and from the vehicle each day.
- Escorts must sit in the back of the vehicle with the pupils, and not in the front with the driver.
- Escorts should also note that some pupils may have medical conditions which could also affect them during the journey, for example, epilepsy. If this is the case, then guidelines are available from the school. This also applies to those pupils who show unacceptable behaviour whilst travelling on the vehicle as the school may wish to reprimand or apply sanctions to those pupils. Safety Checks

#### Safety Checks:

The escort should make sure that all aspects of safety are carried out effectively:

- o Fastening all seat belts where provided.
- o Informing the Driver when all pupils have been safely seated before the vehicle sets off.
- o Securing the appropriate children into their harnesses if they have been provided. This may also include fitting the harnesses into the vehicle if the driver removes them after a journey.
- o Making sure that doors are closed and if possible locked before the vehicle starts to move.
- o Making sure that the pupils on arrival at school are handed over to a member of school staff-On no account should a child be left unattended in a vehicle.
- o When collecting pupils from school you must ensure that they are escorted to the vehicle after the staff have handed over pupil(s) to your care, once on the vehicle with a pupil(s) you should remain there to receive any other pupils that are to be taken home.

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- o That on the return journey it is imperative that pupils are only taken to their home address unless escorts have been instructed otherwise by the Services for Children and Young People, Special Educational Needs Service Unit. It is important not to leave a pupil with neighbours.
  - o Making sure that all bags are stored safely e.g., Placed under the seats.
  - o Making sure that all medication and any information from parents is handed to a member of staff at the school.
  - o Under no circumstances must children be left unattended in the vehicle.
  - o Escorts are required not to smoke on the vehicle whilst transporting children. The duties of the escorts do not include loading and unloading of wheelchairs. This is the sole responsibility of the driver, and the escort should remain on the vehicle.

Generally, the escort should consider the safety of the pupils he/she is travelling with at all times as the prime consideration.

Collection of Pupils from home:

- When collecting pupils please wait outside the home address for approximately 5 minutes.
- If the parent fails to bring the pupil out to meet the transport the driver must post the appropriate collection card through the letterbox.
- This card informs parents that they must contact the driver to resume transport.
- Pupils who fail to use the transport will not be collected until parents have contacted the driver Drop-off of pupils to school
- Pupils need to be dropped off on time as per our Attendance policy and the importance of being on time for school
- The driver must post the appropriate information card through the letterbox informing parents where their child has been taken to. Signing in sheets
- Each Escort should sign in at school once all the children have been handed over to the staff in the morning and before receiving the children in the afternoon.
- Escorts should record the dates/ times/ hours of work, which they have arrived at school and hand in this sign in sheet every Thursday to the office secretary the schools will file the sheets for the attention of the SENO when required

In the event of sickness the following procedure should be followed:

- The transport company/ driver must be notified immediately so that a replacement escort can be found as soon as possible.
- The school must be notified with sufficient notice.
- The school will forward payment to the substitute escort. It is unacceptable for any escort to make arrangements to forward the payment to their friend in lieu of work carried out in their absence.
- The appropriate certification for sick leave should be supplied, i.e. Doctor's Note or a self-certification form.
- The school and transport company should be kept informed of your absence from work and notified prior to your return to work.

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Leave of Absence:

- Leave of absence will not be granted except in exceptional circumstances and Escorts should make a written request to the principal in advance. Each request will be assessed individually on its own merit. Escorts booking holidays during the term time at the school to which they are located will not be granted leave of absence retrospectively.


**Review Date:** March 2026

Signed

School Principal

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Eir Fitzpatrick". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above a horizontal line.

Chair of BOM

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Denis Bohane". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above a horizontal line.

