

School Transport Code of Conduct



The safety and welfare of students travelling on home to school transport is of paramount importance and therefore it is expected that all parties will abide by the School Transport Code of Conduct at all times. Failure to do so could result in home to school transport being withdrawn from a student or a contract with a Service Provider being terminated.

Any incident reported to Oxfordshire County Council involving school transport and the behaviour of students using school transport will be taken seriously and will be investigated by Quality Monitoring and some cases may be referred to Schools Safeguarding Transport and if necessary the School or Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) before any action is taken. Where there is a consistent concern or refusal to comply with the School Transport Code of Conduct and a student is excluded from travelling, it will then be the responsibility of parents or carers to ensure that there is a continued attendance at school.

Responsibilities of Oxfordshire County Council

- To provide free home to school transport by the most cost-efficient means for students living in Oxfordshire, who qualify for free travel under the Home to School Travel and Transport Policy (Please refer to the Home to School Travel and Transport Policy for further information)
- Provide a safe journey on all home to school transport contracts between the designated pick up point and the school site, and vice versa
- Ensure that the Service Provider provides a suitable vehicle and that all drivers and vehicles are suitably licenced and insured for the conveyance of students. Agree all routes and schedules with the Service Provider
- Ensure all Drivers and Passenger Assistants have an enhanced DBS check and Safeguarding and Disability Awareness Training
- Ensure all Drivers and Passenger Assistants are issued with an OCC Identification Badge
- Provide route schedule for mainstream primary and secondary routes
- Provide a pass for students who travel on vehicles of 20 seats and above
- Monitor contracts with Service Providers to ensure contract and law compliance
- Carry out risk assessments where appropriate to establish suitability of provision and routes
- To ensure there is a robust complaints procedure in place
- Investigate all complaints, liaising with schools and Service Providers, where necessary, and respond to all parties advising of the outcome
- Ensure that all confidential information is handled in line with General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR)

Responsibilities of the Service Provider

- To provide students safe travel between their designated collection point and the school site, and vice versa ensuring all safeguarding protocols are followed
- To provide vehicles and drivers that meet all legal and contractual requirements
- To have appropriate employers' liability, public liability and vehicle insurance cover
- Ensure they hold an appropriate operator's or local authority licence where applicable
- Comply with all terms and conditions of contract
- Ensure all Drivers and Passenger Assistants hold a valid Oxfordshire County Council Identification Badge

- Ensure that all Drivers are issued with the most up to date route and schedule
- Ensure that no changes are made to the schedule without approval from the Supported Transport Service. This includes location of designated pick up and drop off points.
- Immediately inform Oxfordshire County Council where a serious incidence has occurred
- To notify Oxfordshire County Council and the school of any incidents of unacceptable student behaviour as soon as possible
- Ensure Drivers and Passenger Assistants conveying students with Special Educational Needs have sight of students Risk Assessment Passenger Passport
- Ensure that all confidential information is handled in line with General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR)

Responsibilities of the Driver and Passenger Assistant

- Always be presentable and courteous
- Adhere to the Taxi Driver, Passenger Assistant and Coach Driver Code of Conduct
- To be in possession of an appropriate license to drive the vehicle being used to convey students and be able to produce it on demand
- Hold a valid Oxfordshire County Council Identification Badge and be able to produce this when requested
- To undertake Oxfordshire County Council Safeguarding and Disability Awareness Training
- Follow the route and schedule as agreed and not deviate from this without prior authorisation, unless exceptional circumstances (e.g. a road closure) make a deviation necessary – they should notify their controller in these circumstances so that the school and/or parents and carers may be notified of any delay
- Never leave a designated collection point earlier than the published time
- Do not pick-up or drop-off at any point other than a designated stop
- Check passes issued to students on vehicles over 20 seats, on a regular basis and only transport those students who can produce a valid pass for the vehicle that they are attempting to board
- In the event of a vehicle breakdown, maintain a safe environment for all passengers and contact their controller
- Must not sell or supply goods of any kind to students or stop en route for students to obtain goods of any kind
- To be responsible for the safety of the students for the entire duration of their journey
- If there is an emergency on board and it is safe to do so, stop the vehicle and follow protocols. If appropriate consult with the student's Passenger Passport and where necessary, ring 999. If it is not safe to stop, or it would be safe to continue, once at the nearest safe destination (home or school) inform their controller who will then inform the Supported Transport Service, school and parents
- Never try to resolve any acts of misconduct (unless a student's behaviour presents a danger to the vehicle or other students on board) but report the names of the miscreants to the school at the earliest opportunity
- Unless there are genuine concerns for the safety of the students on board the vehicle, the vehicle should not be stopped. If stopped, it must be in safe place and for as short a period of time as possible and the school and Service Provider must be notified of such a break to the journey
- Serious incidents or accidents involving the safety of children, the vehicle or other road users must be reported immediately to the Service Provider who will be responsible for notifying Oxfordshire County Council's Supported Transport Service.
- Must not provide food, sweets or drinks to students in their care
- No student should be put off any vehicle mid-journey
- Seek immediate advice from the Service Provider where a serious incident occurs

- Report any incident to their management as soon as it happens
- Where a student travels in a wheelchair, anchor and secure the webbing on the chair on all journeys
- If conveying a student with Special Educational Needs will ensure they have read the Risk Assessment Passenger Passport
- Ensure when transporting a primary aged student or student with Special Educational Needs they are handed over to an appropriate responsible adult before leaving designated stop (school, home or bus stop)
- Can refuse to transport a student whose behaviour would put the driver, passengers and any other road user in danger for the immediate short term and until further guidance has been received from Supported Transport Service
- If the student's behaviour on the vehicle presents a danger to themselves or others, transport may be withdrawn - we will work extensively with the parent/carer and school, college or unit before withdrawing transport. The parent/carer has a responsibility to manage the student's behaviour and if transport is withdrawn, it does not excuse the student from attending their school, college or unit
- The Driver and Passenger Assistant's duty of care does not end until the last student has been discharged. On no account must this duty be delegated to any other person

Drivers and Passenger Assistants are responsible for ensuring that a seat belt or safety harness is provided for passengers and that it has been secured. However, they are not responsible for securing seatbelts or harnesses. Neither are they responsible for escorting students from the vehicle into home or into school premises. Drivers are not permitted to lift or assist by manually handling passengers in or out of vehicles.

Responsibilities of the School

The Department for Education expects schools to promote appropriate standards of behaviour by students on their journey to and from school through rewarding positive behaviour and using sanctions to address poor behaviour. The Education and Inspections Act (EIA) 2006 empowers headteachers to take action to address unacceptable behaviour even when this takes place outside the school premises and when students are not under the legal control of the school, but when it is reasonable to do so. In the Department for Education's view, this would include behaviour on school transport, or otherwise on the route to and from school, whether or not the students are in school uniform. A school cannot exclude a student from transport provided by Oxfordshire County Council.

- To be responsible for the behaviour of students from the start to end of their home to school transport journey, both morning and afternoon.
- To have a zero-tolerance policy in relation to inappropriate behaviour on home to school transport
- Identify a lead member of staff to have responsibility for home to school transport and provide contact details for this person. This person will act as the main point of contact for reporting incidents of misconduct and will be responsible for notifying Oxfordshire County Council's Supported Transport Service Quality Monitoring Team of such incidents
- To be the initial point of contact for complaints about student misconduct or anti-social behaviour on all school transport.
- Keep an up to date record of all incidents, misconduct and anti-social behaviour on home to school transport
- Treat seriously any notification of an incident that is reported on home to school transport and notify the Supported Transport Service Quality Monitoring Team

- To work with students, parents and carers to ensure that any unacceptable behaviour issues either on the home to school transport journey or at the designated stop are addressed and take action to issue appropriate sanction
- Only issue temporary passes for travel on transport provided by Oxfordshire County Council where a current bus pass has been lost, stolen or forgotten. However, a temporary bus pass should not be issued to a student who does not already have entitlement to travel
- School staff are responsible for assisting students onto and off of school transport

Responsibilities of Parents and Carers

- To support the school and the Service Provider by ensuring that the Student Code of Conduct has been read and is followed at all times
- Ensure that your child is at the boarding point five minutes before transport is due and that young children are accompanied until the transport has departed
- Ensure that your child arrives at the designated stop safely in the morning and reaches home safely from the designated stop in the afternoon.
- Where a student is of primary school age or has Special Educational Needs or a disability and they hold an EHCP, they will need to be met at the designated stop or home address by a responsible adult. Failure for a responsible adult being present could result in a child being returned to the school or the nearest police station.
- Teach your child, where they do not need to be accompanied to and from the designated stop, the safest walking route between home and the designated stop, including the safest crossing points on their route
- Teach your child to think about their own and others' safety, while walking to and from the designated stop and on the transport
- Teach your child the importance of waiting for the transport in an orderly, courteous and calm manner and ensure that they know what to do if the transport does not arrive within 15 minutes of the scheduled time, or if access to the transport is refused
- Ensure that any travel pass is carried at all times (drivers and Service Providers will make necessary checks that students are permitted to travel and have the right to refuse to carry a student without a pass)
- Prior to the start of transport ensure your child has read the No Pass No Travel Guidance, where a pass has been issued
- Ensure any Special Educational Needs Risk Assessment Passenger Passports are carried at all times
- Where a student's behaviour in a vehicle presents a danger to themselves or to others, home to school transport may be withdrawn. However, where a student's behaviour in a vehicle is due to their Special Educational Needs or disability, the Supported Transport Service will work extensively with parents, carers, school or college before withdrawing transport in these cases
- If transport is withdrawn it is the responsibility of parents and carers to ensure their child's continued attendance at school
- Remind your child that they need to wear any seatbelt or harness that is provided at all times
- For students with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities, ensure that seat belts and harnesses are fastened and secured before the vehicle pulling away
- Ensure your child is aware that in the event the vehicle has to make an unscheduled stop, that they must follow the driver's instructions. If the driver's instruction is not followed, then this is at the student's own risk
- Cooperate with the school, Service Provider and Oxfordshire County Council if your child exhibits bad behaviour on home to school transport

- Ensure that any incidents or concerns are reported to Oxfordshire County Council and the school as soon as possible. You should not contact the Service Provider directly unless you have been asked to do so
- Ensure that the school and Oxfordshire County Council School Transport Eligibility are advised of any change in the students' personal circumstances or family circumstances which may have an impact on eligibility for free home to school travel e.g. change of address, no longer eligible for free school meals. Where there has been a change of address, evidence of the new address will be required before any new travel arrangements can be approved.
- Parents and carers are not permitted to board the vehicle
- Parents and carers should not act in a threatening or abusive way towards the driver, passenger assistant or any other students either on or around the vehicle. Any concerns should be reported to the school and or the Supported Transport Service. If there are any additional adults or children present with you at the stop when the school transport arrives, you are responsible for ensuring that they also adhere to the rules.

It is important that students should behave in an appropriate manner towards any Driver, Passenger Assistant, other students or members of staff at Oxfordshire County Council. All students who use home to school transport are expected to abide by the School Transport Code of Conduct and any student who fails to abide by this when using any transport provided by Oxfordshire County Council may be excluded from using the transport in accordance with Oxfordshire County Council's Home to School Travel and Transport Policy.

If your child is excluded from home to school transport for a fixed-term or permanently, you will be responsible for ensuring that they continue to attend school. Alternative travel arrangements will not be put in place.

If your child is found to be responsible for bad behaviour on home to school transport, which does not result in them being excluded, it is your responsibility to ensure that reasonable steps are taken to modify that behaviour and to stress to your child the importance of behaving in an appropriate manner while travelling on home to school transport. It is also your financial responsibility to meet the costs for repair or replacement of equipment or any property intentionally damaged as a result of your child's actions.

Oxfordshire County Council has a determined procedure for dealing with cases of poor behaviour reported to us and will write to you to warn you that your child is at risk of being excluded from home to school transport.

If your child has been excluded from travelling under the School Travel Code of Conduct and you feel that it has been applied unfairly or incorrectly, you can lodge an appeal by emailing schooltransporteligibility@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Responsibilities of the Student

- To ensure they abide by the School Transport Code of Conduct at all times
- To act responsibly while travelling to and from the designated stop and while travelling to and from school on home to school transport
- To behave well at all times and not to act in a way that may compromise the safety of others
- Show respect at all times for the driver, Passenger Assistants and all other passengers
- Ensure that they follow the instructions of the driver or Passenger Assistants at all times
- To report any concerns about safety to the named member of staff at school

Before the journey to school

- Arrive at the designated stop 5 minutes before the scheduled pick-up time
- Wait at the designated stop for 15 minutes past the scheduled pick-up time before notifying Supported Transport Service and await advice. If transport still has not arrived, follow the procedure you have agreed with your parent or carer (for example go home to organise alternative transport) and notify your parent/carer and school.
- Wait in an orderly, courteous and calm manner
- Keep away from the kerb and well clear of other traffic
- Only board the home to school transport you have been allocated when it is stationary
- Always carry your pass (if a pass has been issued), and show it to the driver when boarding the vehicle – see No Pass No Travel Guidance. Photocopies eg on mobile phones, will not be accepted.

During the school journey

- Find a seat quickly and remain seated for the whole journey
- If provided, seatbelts and harnesses must be worn
- Only occupy one seat per passenger
- Never distract the driver or be discourteous
- Do not be abusive or shout at the driver, other students or other passengers in the vehicle. Bad language and unruly behaviour will not be tolerated
- Treat all on board with care and respect and do not bully any other students. Any form of bullying will not be tolerated
- Follow any instructions given by the driver or Passenger Assistant quickly and without hesitation
- Do not vandalise the vehicle or other people's property
- Do not smoke, use electronic cigarettes, drink alcohol or consume illegal substances
- Do not carry an offensive weapon, real or replica
- Do not throw objects from or within the vehicle
- Do not eat or drink while on the vehicle or leave litter
- Keep the aisle clear. Bags go under the seat, on the parcel shelf or on your lap. Make sure you have all your belongings as you leave the vehicle
- Do not open the emergency door unless the driver instructs you to, or if there is a genuine emergency

At the end of the school journey

- Ensure all of your belongs are taken with you when you exit the vehicle
- Stand back from the road when the vehicle moves off
- If you need to cross a road, only do so once the vehicle has moved off and the road is clear in both directions

It is important to understand that bad behaviour of any kind will not be tolerated and may lead to students being excluded from home to school transport. Where students are excluded this does not excuse them from attending school and parents and carers will be responsible for the cost and provision of transport during this time. Where students fail to attend school, they may be referred to the County Attendance Team.

Any criminal offences that result in a student being excluded may also be reported to the police.

Oxfordshire County Council may choose to refuse Spare Seat Scheme applications from students who have been excluded multiple times for disobeying the School Transport Code of Conduct.

Complaints and Concerns

If at any time, you wish to report an incident involving the behaviour of an adult or student in connection with school transport you should email Quality Monitoring & Contract Compliance at QMCC@Oxfordshire.gov.uk.

All complaints regarding passenger or parent behaviour received by Oxfordshire County Council will be investigated and, if necessary, they will be passed for further investigation to the Transport Safeguarding Officer, the School, Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) or the Police.

'No Pass No Travel' Guidance for Parents, Carers and Students

Where a pass has been issued it MUST be shown in order to travel. This is necessary to ensure everyone has a seat and can travel safely and in reasonable comfort.

- If a student who is entitled to travel is unable to produce a bus pass because they have forgotten to carry it, or the pass has been lost or stolen, a temporary pass can be obtained from the school.
- Temporary passes are valid for 10 days to enable a replacement pass to be arranged. If a valid replacement pass cannot be produced after 10 days, the driver can refuse travel.
- If a pass has been lost or stolen a replacement can be purchased. Further information can be found at:
<https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/residents/schools/travelling-school/information-existing-users-travel-assistance/replacement-school-bus-pass>
- Parents or carers who take students to a stop to meet the vehicle are advised to either ensure that the student is carrying a valid pass or wait with them until the vehicle arrives and advise the driver accordingly.
- Out of date passes will be confiscated.
- If the vehicle has not arrived 15 minutes past its normal pick up time, students should call the number on the back of their pass.
- Transport is arranged by Oxfordshire County Council through its Supported Transport Service.
- Queries regarding Mainstream School Transport should be sent to mainstream.schooltransport@oxfordshire.gov.uk and for SEND School Transport to ee-specialeducationalneedsITU@oxfordshire.gov.uk
- If your enquiry is urgent and you need to speak to us by phone you can contact Mainstream School Transport on 01865 323500 and SEND School Transport on 01865 323795
- If transport is no longer required, please return the pass to Supported Transport Service, PO Box 867, Oxford, OX1 9NR. This will enable us to allocate the place to another student.