



Passenger Transport Service

PASSENGER TRANSPORT SERVICES
ESCORT HANDBOOK 2022-23



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ROLE OF AN ESCORT

- The role of a Coach Escort is to support vulnerable children, young people & adults with special needs, disabilities or complex needs, to and from schools/centres, via Travel Assistance or via an alternative travel option
- Coach Escorts are responsible for ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all service users in their care
- No written instructions will ever cover all the circumstances that may arise, but you should find the information in this Handbook helpful
- Where the Handbook has made reference to ‘**child[ren]**’, **this refers to ALL** service users including young people and adults
- These guideline notes should be safely kept and read in conjunction with your issued job description. If you have any queries regarding your duties, please contact Line Manager for advice. **IF IN DOUBT ASK!**

DRESS CODE

- As a Council Officer, you should ensure to promote and represent a positive image of the Council
- When you are on duty you are expected to wear your identification badge and Hi Visibility vest **at all times**
- If your identification badge is lost, report this to the Transport Office immediately for a replacement to be arranged
- Appropriate clothing is recommended whilst on duty. Vest tops, hot pants, skirts above the knee, big jewellery [earrings, rings & necklaces] are **NOT** considered to be appropriate. Flat shoes that do not expose your toes are highly recommended
- It is recommended that long hair is tied back

- Finger nails should be kept short for Health and Safety reasons. With long nails you can scratch the children/ adults in your care. You could also catch your nail causing serious damage to yourself. Long nails will also prohibit you from securing the wheel chair clamp and harness appropriately.

GUIDELINES ON COLLECTION & DROP OFF OF PASSENGERS

- We are continuously reviewing the service we provide to our service users. Following the success of the changes made last academic year, we will continue to promote independence for all children and young people on transport where possible. We will also continue to explore shorter journey times and will ensure Escorts are present in the vehicle at all times to promote safety for all service users

TRAVEL ASSISTANCE OPTIONS / SERVICES AVAILABLE:

- Home collection and drop off of service users
To enable Escorts to provide undivided support for children whilst on transport, Escorts must remain on the vehicle at all times, except when loading and off loading wheel chair users. Parents / carers will be required to bring their child/young person to the vehicle, and hand over their child to the Escort, and also collect their child/young person from the vehicle in the afternoon
- End of Road collection and drop off points
Parents / carers of children and young persons who are physically able, will be requested to meet the vehicle at the end of their road, handing over and collecting their children from the Escort
- Centralised collection and drop off points

Parents / carers of identified children and young persons [or young persons / adults where practicable] will meet the Escort and vehicle at a designated collection point and then at drop off points that has been risk assessed for safety purposes

- Travel Buddy Scheme

Travel training has proven to be beneficial in enabling young people with a disability on public transport, to have equality of access and independence. It assists in overcoming challenges, removes barriers to independent travel and gives people greater access to jobs, services and social networks. It empowers people to take greater control in their lives, enabling them to learn new skills and take advantage of opportunities in their communities.

PROTOCOL FOR HOME COLLECTION/ DROP OFF

- The agreed waiting time for passengers collected from home is 2 minutes with a discretionary 1 minute depending on the need of the child. If the child/young person is not ready by the given time, you should seek authorisation from the office before texting parent/carer advising you are moving to the next point
- If you are unable to deliver a child to their home address in the afternoon due to no responsible adult being, available, contact the Transport Office, continuing your journey and deliver the remaining children home, before returning to the **child's** address
- If upon return there is still no one available to collect the child, contact the Office for further advice.

PROTOCOL FOR END ROAD/ CENTRALISED COLLECTION/ DROP OFF

- o The agreed waiting time for passengers collected from the end of their road or from a Centralised point is up

to **3 minutes**. If the child/young person is not at the meeting point by the given time, you should seek advice from the Office before continuing with the journey

- In the afternoon, if there is no responsible adult available to collect a child/young person you should seek advice from the Office before continuing your journey and deliver the remaining children/young people, before returning to **child's** drop off point
- You should call each parent/carer 5- 10 minute before you arrive at the meeting point, in the morning and afternoon
- If upon return there is still no one available to collect the child, contact the Office for further advice.
- You should not lose your temper or argue with any person turning up late [parents, teachers or drivers]
- Remember that the child in question may be uneasy or upset about no one being available to receive them. Do not make the situation worse for them. Try to reassure them if need be
- If you are running late, you should call your parent/carers to advise them
- You should not deviate from these instructions unless with specific authority from the Office
- If you receive any information relating to any students on your route, please pass this on to the team at the office

TRANSPORT POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

STAFF GUIDANCE

- All drivers are under strict instructions to pick up and set down escorts, only at the designated point agreed by the Office and nowhere else. Drivers/Contractor may be issued penalty points if they deviate from these instructions
- Escorts must be the first person on the vehicle after the driver and the last to leave

- Drivers must not leave the vehicle unattended, unless they are operating the tail lift
- As part of your role you should expect to be transferred to different routes as and when required in order that the Service meets the needs of all children, young people or adults on transport.
Remember....Change is good experience!
- Every school will have their own procedure for how a child [ren] should get off and on the vehicle at the school. Escorts must make every effort to be patient and work in collaboration with school procedures
- In the absence of an agreed procedure, children will be brought to and from the school by a member of staff at the school
- If the school provides a register / report book, it should be completed on arrival at school and before departure from school
- Do not deviate from the designated pick up and alighting points. No child may be on board or alight other than at the point stated on the transport list, unless this is requested in writing by the parent
- Do not hand children over at unauthorised points
- Escorts should relay messages between parents and school. However, safeguarding information should **not** be passed from schools or parents. If unsure, contact your Line Manager for guidance
- You are responsible for any necessary valuables; including school bags, clothing items, or medication carried on the vehicle throughout the journey. These should be kept away from the reach of children.
- Ensure such items are handed to a responsible teacher or parent at each end of the journey
- On arrival at the school and at the end of the evening journey, check the vehicle to make sure **ALL** students are off the vehicle. Check thoroughly behind and under seats
- Ensure no personal effects have been left behind

- You should not agree to transfer money [cash/cheques] between parent/carers & schools /centres.

VEHICLE BREAK DOWN PROCEDURES

PASSENGER COMFORT & SAFETY

- In case of a breakdown on a main road or motorway, the Transport Office should be informed as soon as possible. In all cases of breakdowns on a motorway, the police should immediately be informed of the breakdown and the passengers carried. This task will be undertaken by the Transport Office staff or if urgent by the driver on the scene
- Escorts should note that under no circumstances should passengers be transferred from a broken vehicle to another vehicle on a motorway without the presence of the police to secure the area first, unless it is deemed safe to transfer. **Seek advice from your Line Manager if unsure.**

TRANSPORTING WHEELCHAIRS USERS

LOADING

- You are not expected to operate the tail lift system. This is the responsibility of the driver. Your duty is to assist the child/young person onto the rear of the vehicle and ensure the safety clamps are fastened correctly
- Do not release brakes or unclamp wheelchairs UNTIL you are ready to off load the wheelchair user and the tail lift is fully raised in position. For more information relating to wheelchairs please refer to the Wheelchair and Harness Handbook
- **Under no circumstances should you or your Driver attempt to physically lift a Wheel Chair passenger**

onto or out of the vehicle. This is a serious breach of Health and Safety!

- Escorts, children, parent/carer, or school staff are not allowed to operate the tail lift of the vehicle
- Your Driver should park the vehicle on the same side as the child's address. If there is no parking space available outside or close to the service users address, the driver is permitted to park in the middle of the road

Before accepting a wheelchair user from their parent/carer, check the following;

- All functional parts are in full working order [including inflated wheels, effective brakes, secure head/foot rests]
- The lap belt is securely fastened [discreetly check under blankets or any items covering the belt]
- There are NO items hanging on the handles i.e. bags & coats [medical equipment is acceptable]
- If you have any concerns about a particular wheel chair please check with the Office BEFORE accepting any service users

SECURING WHEELCHAIR INSIDE VEHICLE- FOUR POINT WEBBING

- Wheelchairs must be securely fixed to the body of the vehicle [floor tracking]
- Straps should always be secured at the side of the minibus, out of harms way when not in use. This not only prevents accidents but also protects the equipment from damage and keeps them clean. Select the correct straps for the wheelchair being carried. Under no circumstances are the straps to be mixed, you must use straps from the same manufacturer front and back
- If any of the four straps are missing – **DO NOT continue with journey. Contact the Office immediately**

- When positioning the wheelchair ensure the front wheels are facing forward and the brakes are securely applied
- Starting with the front straps, lock the strap into the floor tracking and attach the other end to a sturdy part of the wheelchair frame. (Never attach to footrests, as these may be removable)
- When securing the front straps ensure each fixture is located in the floor tracking level (mirrored) with the other
- Once the front of the wheelchair is secured, release the brakes and pull the wheelchair back to make front straps taught and then re-apply brakes
- Move to the back of the wheelchair and position the rear straps into the floor tracking
- Attach the clamps to the appropriate position on the lower part of the wheelchair frames - Never attach to the wheels - Pull the strap tight and finally secure by locking lever bar
- Pull strap tight and lock into position
- Repeat for both sides ensuring wheelchair sits square on the minibus
- All wheelchair passengers must wear a lap and diagonal belt unless they have an Exemption Certificate from a Doctor
- Pull the lap belt out from the housing and pass through the side frame of wheelchair across the body of the passenger. Pass through the frame on the other side of the chair and lock into place in the frame securing post. Be mindful of the **passenger's** personal space when applying the lap and diagonal belt
- NEVER unclamp wheelchairs until a member of staff from the school/centre is available to receive the child/passenger. You should then ensure the tail lift is fully raised in position before starting to un-clamp the restraints
- You must not allow any wheelchairs or buggies on board the vehicle unless this has been crash tested and authorised by a Transport Officer.

- If you notice any missing or faulty equipment you must report this to a Manager **BEFORE** accepting responsibility for the service user from parents/carers or schools/centres
- If the brakes on any wheelchair are faulty you should inform the passengers parents/carers and school. At your earliest opportunity you should also inform the Transport Officer
- You must **not** purchase your own safety equipment
- You must not allow mobile passengers to travel on the **tail lift**. If you have concerns about a passenger's mobility, you must raise this with a Manager.

For more detailed guidelines on assisting passengers with wheelchairs refer to the Wheelchair Training handbook.

FIRE PROCEDURES

In the event of an emergency, it is important you follow the **Six Golden Rules** [Dial 999]:

1. **Your Priority is to get your passengers out first, starting with the walkers then those in wheelchairs.**

The reasons for this are:

- It takes time to access a fire extinguisher and discharge it
- If you fail to put the fire out you will have wasted valuable time, which could have been spent getting the clients out of the bus and to a place of safety
- It is unlikely that you will be able to completely extinguish a fire on a minibus.

FIRE EXTINGUISHERS

Preferably the driver should perform this task, while you look after the clients. However, if you decide to use a fire extinguisher, remember the following points:

- Only use the extinguisher once all passengers have been evacuated from the vehicle.

- Only use the extinguisher if you can do so without endangering yourself and others.
- Stay 'upwind' of the fire to avoid heat, smoke inhalation and bad visibility.
- Always test the extinguisher before approaching the fire.
- Adopt a crouched position and be prepared to retreat quickly if necessary.
- Never let the fire block your escape.
- Aim the extinguisher at the base of the fire.
- A standard Minibus fire extinguisher will only last between ten and fifteen seconds.

2. Do Not Put Yourself At Risk!

- Hazards associated with vehicle fires are HEAT, SMOKE and FUMES; protect yourself and your passengers from harm from these factors.
- Heat - A vehicle fire can generate temperatures of over 1000 degrees Celsius [1000C].
- Smoke/Fumes - There will be choking and highly toxic fumes in smoke from a vehicle fire. PVC can breakdown to a Cyanide based gas.
- The lack of visibility makes it very disorientating - Perception of size, direction and distance alter.
- A normally familiar vehicle will suddenly become very strange.

3. Do Not Panic!

- If you panic, your passengers will panic. Panic must be avoided if the evacuation is to be controlled and efficient.
- The way to avoid panic is to take control.

4. Take Control

- If the passengers are able to identify someone who is in charge and has control of the situation they are more likely to listen and less likely to panic.

5. Give Clear Instructions

- Having gained the attention of your passengers through taking control, give clear and concise instructions and avoid using alarming language.
6. **Protect Your Passengers**
- Having got your passengers off the vehicle you don't want them to be harmed by any other factors
 - As the passengers are likely to be confused, anxious and disorientated it is important that once you have them off the vehicle they should remain in a place of safety until they are instructed to move. They should be supervised, if possible, to reduce the risk of them wandering into the road or returning to the vehicle
 - A 'place of safety' will very likely be different in every case but generally it should be:
 - At least 25 metres away from the vehicle to protect from heat and risk of explosion.
 - Behind a crash barrier is appropriate.
 - Upwind of the vehicle to avoid smoke / fume inhalation and to maintain best visibility.
 - Away from traffic hazards such as bends and oncoming traffic.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

- Whilst we encourage good team work between you and your driver, you have the lead responsibility for the **children's** safety and general well being. The driver should be allowed to concentrate on driving and have no responsibility for control of the children at this time
- Every effort will be made to provide you with the medical/travel profile for all the children in your care either verbally or in writing where necessary. This could be generalised or individualised pending any Risk Assessment recommendations

- If you receive important information relating to a **child's** medical needs, pass this information to the Transport Office or your Line Manager
- If you require further information/clarification on how to support any child you should contact the Transport Office and discuss your concerns
- You should ensure to remain vigilant and attentive at all times **[no falling asleep, reading or having personal conversations on your mobile whilst on duty!]**
- The Driver should make every effort to park on the same side of the road as the pick up/drop off point to avoid the child/young person crossing the road
- For your own health and safety and that of the child, we advise you not to carry a child at any point [unless there is an emergency evacuation]. Please seek advice from the Transport Office if you notice a particular child/young person experiencing difficulties getting to and from the vehicle
- You should not administer any medication to a child, this includes tablets and injections. If you have **concerns about a child's medical condition, please contact your Line Manager.**
- Escorts & Drivers are expected to have a professional relationship whilst on duty for the benefit of the children. If you have any concerns about your Driver, you should report this to the Transport Office
- The Driver is not permitted to make unscheduled stops throughout the journey i.e. shops, petrol station, cash points or for the purpose of using the toilet. If your Driver makes any unscheduled stops you must report this to a Transport Office/Line Manager immediately
- You must not bring passengers to the Transport Office – unless this has been authorised by a Manager.
- Make sure that all children are safely seated and wearing their seat belts before the vehicle moves off. You must not allow any passengers to travel without a seat belt. This includes you. **This is the law.**

- Escort should sit in a position where you can see all passengers and provide support to those that need extra assistance. This is usually at the rear of the bus
- Escorts & children are not permitted to sit in the front passenger seat of any vehicle. If there is insufficient seats on your vehicle, call the PTS Office **before** boarding the vehicle
- If you are travelling in a minicab, you should sit directly behind the Driver [not the child/young person]. You should also check that the child safety lock has been activated. Speak to the Driver if you are unsure
- Only authorised passengers may travel on the vehicle. Parents, carers and teachers are not permitted to travel on the vehicle unless authorised by the Office
- Escorts and Drivers must not allow their own family members or friends to travel on transport at any time
- Parents/Carers have been informed that toys are not permitted on the bus, however small soft toys may be allowed at the discretion of the Escort
- Students are not permitted to consume food or beverages on board transport for health and safety purposes. All food/drink items must be appropriately packed away **in the child's bag**
- In severe hot weather conditions children may be allowed water in plastic bottle – parents/carer will provide this if required
- Escorts and Drivers **must not** consume food or drinks on board transport for health and safety purposes. If you suffer from a medical condition which requires you to eat or drink during working hours, you must discuss this with your Line Manager.

AUTISTIC SPECTRUM DISORDER

- Autism is a disorder that disrupts the development of social and communication skills

- Children/young people with Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) may have difficulties in 3 areas:
 - Communication
 - Social Interaction
 - Imagination (this means that they have restricted interests, do not generally imitate or generalise ideas and they cannot predict what is going to happen)
- Due to frustration or anxiety, children with ASD may exhibit inappropriate behaviour. This may include shouting, swearing, spitting, hitting, biting, scratching, hair pulling. This behaviour should not be taken personally.

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- Children/young people with autism may:
 - Find loud or high pitched noises painful
 - Find changes in routine distressing
 - Do things which they find comforting but which other people may think is unusual
 - Not respond to ordinary social interaction
 - Not follow ordinary social conventions
 - Have difficulty understanding or communicating
 - Guidance for Dealing with Children with Autistic Spectrum Disorder

ATTENTION DEFICIT HYPERACTIVITY DISORDER (ADHD)

- ADHD (also known as Hyperkinetic Syndrome) affects an individual's social behaviour
- Traits usually associated with ADHD include:
 - displaying energetic, impulsive or aggressive behaviour
 - difficulty concentrating
 - difficulty learning
 - having few or no friends

- It is important to remember that a child with ADHD is not naughty & should not be referred to as being 'Naughty'

TOURETTE SYNDROME (TS)

- TS is a neurological disorder characterised by tics - involuntary, rapid, sudden movements that occurs repeatedly in the same way
- Two categories of TS and some of the more common examples are:
 - **Simple**
Motor - Eye blinking, head jerking, shoulder shrugging and facial grimacing

Vocal - Throat clearing, yelping and other noises, sniffing and tongue clicking
 - **Complex**
Motor – Jumping, touching other people or things, smelling stuff, twirling about and self-injurious actions including hitting or biting oneself.

SUPPORTING CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE WITH AUTISM, ADHD & TS

- All escorts and drivers are expected to wear their ID badges at all times. Children/young people with autism identify individuals by their photo ID
- If you require support getting a child onto or off the vehicle, you should seek assistance from a member of staff at the school [or the parent if the problem occurs outside their home]
- All children must have their seatbelts fastened whilst on the vehicle. If a passenger removes their seat belt whilst the vehicle is moving, you should alert your driver to stop the vehicle where possible

- Whilst there are alternative methods to securing children in their seats, these must only be considered when all other options have been explored
- We encourage Escorts to communicate to all students according to their level of understanding by;
 - Being observant
 - Being aware of what may trigger any distress
 - Using their name first to get their attention
 - Speaking directly to them
 - Not assuming they cannot understand you
 - Using plain speech, not baby talk, speak calmly
 - Giving positive instruction
 - Avoid shouting [at the individual & others]
 - Avoid speaking in high pitched tone of voice [at the individual and others]
 - Using MAKATON signs if appropriate
- There may be occasions when children become anxious or distressed and need a few minutes to calm before leaving the classroom in the afternoon. Please be patient. It is in everyone's best interest that they are calm before commencing the journey home
- If a child/adult is agitated and anxious, try and calm the situation. Sit next to the child/adult; speak in a calm, non-threatening voice. It is often the case that reciprocated challenging behaviour; loud voice, shouting (threatening) instruction and/or response in an attempt to modify the behaviour will only agitate further. Dealing effectively with the behaviours requires experience, knowledge and patience
- To help calm the behaviour, engage in conversation such as 'How was your day?'
- Speak calmly yet clearly throughout all conversations even if disruptive behaviour is displayed
- You may experience children/young people using swear words or other inappropriate words. Whilst this can be upsetting, it should not be taken personally. Try to discourage the language
- Spitting should not be taken personally

- Some factors that can trigger change in behaviours can include:
 - Change of routine - lateness, stuck in traffic, incident, environmental chaos
 - Sickness (often when children are unwell and cannot verbalise their pain or discomfort they demonstrate this in a change of their behaviour)
 - Attention - frustration at not being listened to or understood
 - Noises - loud noises, sirens/fire alarms, screaming (that of others)
 - Weather
- Children that are likely to hit out, should be seated away from other vulnerable children to avoid causing injuries to themselves and others

DEAF AWARENESS

If you've **never communicated with a child** or adult with hearing impairments before you may feel nervous about how to do it. But don't worry - **it's not as hard as you think.**

It's important to understand that every individual's impairment is different – with different levels of deafness, hearing equipment and communication preferences but the tips below are useful for communicating with all.

1. Find out how they communicate

Not all people with hearing impairment use British Sign Language (BSL). Each individual will have a preferred way of communicating, so find out if they use speech [Makaton], BSL or a mixture of both. If they do use BSL ask their parents if they will need an interpreter

2. Get their attention

To get their attention you can wave or tap their shoulder lightly

3. Face them when you're talking

Try to get down to their level so that they can see your face clearly. **Don't move around while you're talking as this will**

make it impossible for the person to hear your voice and lip read.

4. Speak clearly and naturally

People with impairments will try to lip read, so they need you to say words as you normally would. Speaking slowly or too loudly makes lip reading much more difficult.

5. Watch your mouth

Covering your mouth with your hands, eating, chewing gum or smoking can make lip reading very difficult. It will also **muffle any sound you're making.**

6. Use visual cues, where possible

Point to what you're talking about, and don't be shy about using appropriate gestures to support your communication. For **example, if you're telling a group of children dinner is ready,** you can do a knife and fork action and point to the dinner table.

7. Make it clear what the topic of conversation is

The person will find it easier to guess your words if they **know what you're talking about.** Make sure the person knows when the topic changes.

8. Stand with your face to the light

Standing by a window or in poor lighting makes lip reading very difficult.

9. Speak one at a time

Group conversations can be difficult for someone with hearing impairment to follow. Make it easier by asking everyone to take their turn talking and to make a sign if they want to speak next.

10. Reduce background noise

Hearing aids and cochlear implants amplify hearing, which means the individual will have to concentrate very hard on your voice to hear it over everything else. Background noises such as traffic or the radio can make it difficult for the person to listen. Block out unnecessary noise as much as possible by closing windows, doors and turning machines off.

11. Never give up or say “I’ll tell you later”

People with hearing impairments do not like it when people say “I’ll tell you later”. They want to be involved, so if one method doesn’t work, don’t be scared to improvise. You can try texting on your phone, emailing, or good old fashioned pen and paper.

Bespoke BSL training is available. Contact your Manager for further information

IMPORTANT INFORMATION RELATING TO SEIZURES

If a child has a seizure whilst in your care:

- Ask the driver to stop the vehicle
- Observe the time duration of the seizure. If this exceeds 3-5 minutes **call 999** for an ambulance
- **Protect and support the child’s head gently but do not hold the head**
- Gently tilt the head upwards to ensure the tongue does not block the airways
- Do not put your fingers or anything else **in the child’s** mouth
- Do not hold the **child’s** body down
- Move other children out of the way
- If possible, lie the child on their side in the recovery position
- An adult must stay with the child at all times until the ambulance arrives
- Inform the Transport Office as soon as possible so they can notify the parent

PROCEDURE IN THE EVENT OF SICKNESS OR OTHER EMERGENCIES ON TRANSPORT

- If a child is ill on the journey you should:

- Ask the Driver to stop the vehicle at the nearest and safest place; do not add to the problem by stopping in a dangerous place. Consider the risks of where you stop not the traffic law implications
- Follow the guidelines taught in First Aid training, ensure that the passenger is in a safe and comfortable position. If necessary administer basic first aid and assess the condition of the casualty then call 999 for assistance
- Never administer medication to a person unless authorised by paramedic or other appropriate medically trained person [seek advice from Transport Office]
- Telephone the office for assistance. The ambulance services and/or police may also be asked to assist in the emergency. The office will inform all interested parties as soon as is practical to do so
- Deal with the immediate danger to the person concerned but in all cases be mindful of the need to secure the safety of all other passengers on the vehicle. As much as possible de-stress the situation by adopting a calm manner
- Do not continue with your journey until authorised to do so by the Transport Officer/Police
- If a child is injured whilst on the vehicle, you must report this to the parent, school, complete an incident report and submit to the office within 24 hours of the incident occurring
- If a child is sick on the journey from home / designated pick up point to school, you may have to return the child back home **IF you are close to the child's home [depending on parent/carer's availability and following authorisation from the Transport Office]**. The same will need to be considered when you are collecting students from school in the afternoon
- Parents are advised to keep their child at home for at least 48 hours to minimise cross infection to other

children on the bus. Seek clarification from the Transport Office in such cases.

BODY FLUID AND SPILLAGE PROCEDURES

- Spillages of all body fluids should be dealt with as quickly as possible, following the guidance outlined below:
 - Put on disposable gloves and open window to improve ventilation if possible.
 - Cover spillage with disposable paper towels to limit the spread of the spillage.
 - Carefully wipe up the spillage with more disposable paper towels soaked in alcohol gel.
 - Place disposable paper towels and gloves in bins provided on vehicle.
 - Wash hands with soap and water. Dry with paper towel or alcohol gel.
 - The driver will ensure vehicle is cleaned thoroughly [if this has not been done, please notify the Office]
 - If you are unsure of how to deal with body fluids, please seek advice from your Line Manager before attempting to deal with the spillage
- Do not tell the child to clean up themselves

Hygienic Hand Disinfection for Outbreak Control

This can either be achieved by using Alcohol hand gel, or by routine hand washing followed by application of an alcohol hand rub

Six-step decontamination technique



MEDICAL INFORMATION

- You are strongly advised to have a complete set of Hepatitis B vaccination as a general precaution
- It is your responsibility to arrange this through your GP or nearest Walk In Medical Centre
- You will be reimbursed for the cost of these vaccinations; however this will be approved on receipt of proof for the 1st, 2nd, 3rd set of vaccination and also the clearance report
- If you are scratched or bitten by any child/adult on transport and your skin is broken you are strongly advised to attend the nearest medical centre or A&E for an antibiotic injection
- You must also complete the accident book and an incident form.

SAFEGUARDING

- Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility
- What is abuse?
 - A violation of an individual's human and civil rights by any other person or persons
 - May be single or repeated acts
 - Anyone can behave in a way that is abusive, the abuser could be a carer, family member or stranger
 - May result in significant harm or exploitation

- **Types of abuse**
 - Physical
 - Psychological/emotional [includes verbal]
 - Sexual
 - Financial/material
 - Neglect or acts of omission
 - Discrimination
 - Institutional
 - Domestic

If you have any safeguarding concerns about a child's welfare, including neglect, you must report this to your Line Manager and member of staff at school - do not address this with the parent/carer & do not ask probing questions to the child

- The School/Transport Office will notify The First Response Team or LADO [Local Authority Designated Officer] following the established Child Protection Procedures as appropriate
- If you notice a child has injuries or unusual marks you must report it to a senior member of staff at school [i.e. Head Teacher] and notify the Transport Office. Ensure to take a note of the member of staff you have reported to. If a child suffers from an injury whilst in your care you must report this to the Transport Office immediately and notify the parents and school staff
- **Escorts must complete and submit an Incident Report Form within 24 hours of the incident.**
- Do not strike a child or use force of any kind to enforce discipline (Haringey Council has a policy of no corporal punishment, and striking a child or using force is therefore a criminal offence). Should a child strike you, notify the responsible teacher and the Transport Office. Children can however be physically restrained using minimum force if this is necessary to prevent injury to themselves and others
- You must not hug or kiss any of the children in your care

- You must not take pictures or video recordings of any passengers.

GENERAL CONDUCT, POLICIES & PROCEDURES

- You are expected to follow the Council's Code of Conduct. All staff [including Drivers], Managers and members of the public must be treated with respect. Abusive, confrontational or aggressive behaviour [including refusal to work] is unacceptable and the Council operates a zero tolerance for such behaviour. Disciplinary action may be taken against staff exhibiting such behaviour
- It is prohibited for Escorts and drivers to smoke at any time whilst on duty [this includes electronic cigarettes]. Please consider the health implications towards the vulnerable clients that you support
- Use of mobile phone for personal calls whilst in charge of the children [on board or out of the vehicle] is **prohibited**. **Staff should take into consideration the needs of children, particular those that are sensitive to noise and chatter**
- Staff should not read books, magazine or engage in any other activities that may distract attention away from passengers. This includes the use of head phones
- Failure to adhere may result in formal action

DECLARATION OF INTEREST AND HOSPITALITY/GIFT POLICY

- During certain times of the year, you may be offered a gift by parents/carers. You are advised to consider the type of gift accepted and the appropriateness. If you are unsure, please speak to your Line Manager

- In line with the Council's Code of Conduct, all employees must declare any offers of gifts or hospitality which they receive and complete the hospitality Form. This includes any external financial or other interests which may bring you into conflict in your employment
- In line with the Council's Code of Conduct, all staff are required to declare an Interest if supporting a child/young person that they have a relationship with the parent / carer. This does not mean an automatic withdrawal from the route but will be noted and monitored to avoid any conflict
- For more information or for a Declaration Form, please speak to your Line Manager

DATA PROTECTION

- Escorts are expected to adhere to data protection & must not discuss issues/incidents relating to children or parents/carers with drivers or others **[this includes with other Escorts]**
- Escorts must not keep electronic or hard copy records of incident reports or any other information relating to children without authorisation of a Line Manager
- It is your responsibility to ensure your route list is kept safe and not left in any public places
- You may be re-assigned to different routes from time to time and must refrain from keeping in personal contact with parents/carers
- Confidentiality Policy must be observed at all times
- Failure to adhere to any of the above guidelines may result in disciplinary action taken.

COMMUNICATION

Communicating with Others

Haringey Council is one organisation. Whether talking to a parent, carer, school staff, Driver or any other person, you should always remember that you are a representative of, and an ambassador for, the council.

- Set an example to the children both in language and behaviour. Inappropriate language and confrontational behaviour must not be used at any time

When communicating with others you should:

- Be friendly, helpful and professional
- Smile
- Use positive body language (avoid folding arms, pointing and scowling)
- Speak in a polite, helpful and positive manner
- Focus your attention on the service user and listen attentively
- Make sure you can be understood

Inappropriate behaviour – Refer to Council Code of Conduct

When communicating with passengers:

- Reduce language - use minimal spoken words;
- Use child's name first (to gain attention) when addressing them;
- Use symbols and gestures to back-up speech;
- Do not discuss the children in front of them;
- Avoid negative language, e.g. do say 'sit on seat' not 'don't stand up';
- **Do not refer to the child as 'bad' or 'naughty'**
- Give children time to process (understand and act upon) instructions - this can take them a bit longer than other children - be patient;
- Never use sarcasm or irony;
- If a child is very upset or distressed, reduce spoken language still further - even to the point of silence;
- Only use a raised voice in an emergency (you could cause greater distress / anxiety)

Other Behaviours:

- Try not to take negative behaviours personally - it is not aimed at you in a personal sense. Remember the child suffers from special educational needs and some will be on various medications which will have an impact on their mood and behaviour
- Avoid holding a child by their joints, e.g. hold forearm not wrist
- Don't grab children - unless it is a dire emergency
- If your hair is pulled, do not pull away. Move closer to the child and hold their forearm (the one pulling the hair) to your head and ask for assistance
- If a child bites you, again do not pull away, instead push the arm being bitten gently towards the child's mouth and ask for assistance.

Ask Transport Office Staff for advice/support if you are having difficulty with the communication or behaviour of a particular pupil.

INCIDENT AND ACCIDENT REPORTING

- If an incident occurs on the vehicle or whilst the children/young persons are in your care, you should phone the Transport Office and inform an Officer as soon as is practicable; and then complete an Incident Report Form and bring into the Transport Office **within 24 hours**
- If your vehicle is involved in a Road Traffic Collision [RTC] or if you or any passenger on transport sustains an injury whilst you are on duty you must notify your Line Manager as soon as possible and come to the Transport Office to complete an Incident Form and the Accident book
- You should report unruly or unacceptable behaviour such as, bad language, fighting or anything likely to cause the driver to be distracted or affect the safety of

others on board. Report to a responsible teacher immediately on arrival with names and details and fill out an incident form and bring into the Transport Office. If a child's behaviour on the vehicle causes a real danger to the safety or well being of the other children, or his/her language is very abusive, then advice should be sought from the Transport Office

- If a child refuses to get onto the vehicle either at home or at school and you have made every effort to support/assist the child; you must inform the Transport Officer for advice. **You must not leave the child without seeking advice from a Transport Officer**
- In exceptional circumstances, transport can be suspended for a child/young person, pending a strategy meeting with school, parents and other professional. This will provide an opportunity to resolve the situation and explore alternative methods to support the individual.

SEATBELT CLIP/ BUCKLE GUARDS

- Seatbelt clips/ buckle guards are no longer allowed to be used on transport. You are not allowed to use seatbelt clips/ buckle guards to transport passengers, even if the passenger continues to unsecure their seatbelt in transit. The Department for Transport (DfT) have decided that seatbelt clips/ buckle guards contravene regulation 48 of the Road Vehicles (Construction and Use) Regulations 1986 regulations which says:

(d) the buckle or other fastening of the seat belt shall —

.....

(ii) be kept free from any temporary or permanent obstruction

- If a passenger unsecures their seatbelt, you must follow the usual procedure of bringing the vehicle to a stop and fastening the seatbelt yourself.
- Where the issue is persistent, you must contact your line manager for support.

AUDIT FORMS & TIMESHEETS

- The new combined audit and timesheet form has proved to be useful & will continue in the same format
- All Escorts are required to carry out an audit of their assigned route to enable us to efficiently monitor the service provided by Contractors [except if you are assigned to the role of Independent Travel Training or Travel Buddy]
- Your audit form and timesheet should be completed daily for any routes covered and submitted or posted at the end of each working week [Friday] to the Transport Office, using the Freepost addressed envelopes provided
- All sections of the Audit Form and timesheet should be completed
- Urgent issues concerning your vehicle must be raised with the Transport Office by phone in the first instance
- Late submission of timesheets may result in additional hours being paid late
- Making up hours in retrospect, adding extra hours or any other form of falsifying timesheets may result in disciplinary action
- If you need assistance completing your timesheet or audit form please contact your Line Manager.

HOLIDAY & RETAINER PAY

- All Escorts are employed on a term time, part time contracts [40 weeks per annum]. The term dates are in line with Haringey School dates. As part of your annual

salary, you are paid annual leave, 1/3 retainer and an extra 10 days for the purpose of training and meetings [see further information below]

- You will be notified in writing of your Leave allowance at the start of each calendar year. Please ensure you complete your leave form before the start of a new financial year. This must be completed and returned before or during the February half term holiday. If you need assistance completing your annual leave form, please speak to your Line Manager
- If you do not complete and submit your leave form on time, you may be expected to work during the school holidays, covering Day Centres & Colleges

RETAINER PAY

- As part of your annual salary you are paid two additional weeks for any training/meetings etc in accordance with the requirements of the service. Also you are paid a retainer for the school closure weeks outside of your leave entitlement.
- You are entitled to 1/3 retainer pay during school closure; however you must be available for work during this period [unless you have pre-booked leave]. Your retainer pay may be affected if you are unavailable for work.

RETAINER REQUIREMENTS

- All Coach Escorts are required to attend work on the last day of school according to Haringey term dates [before a school holiday/half term] AND also on the first day back to school according to Haringey term dates [after a school holiday/half term]. Your retainer may be deducted if you do not attend work

SCHOOL CLOSURES

- If you are aware of any school closures you must notify your Line Manager as soon as possible

- If your school is closed for either an Inset Day or for local reasons, you **must** attend a One to One [1:1] support and development meeting with your Line Manager at the Transport Office during your normal working hours i.e. 7:30 – 9:00am
- If you are unsure of the Haringey term dates, contact the Escort Charge Person on 0208 489 5692
- Failure to attend or confirm availability may be recorded as unauthorised absence, which could result in disciplinary action and a deduction of pay.

TRAINING

- Staff will be provided with mandatory training prior to commencing their role and will receive regular refresher training throughout their employment
- All training sessions are **compulsory**. The purpose of training to enhance your personal development and build your confidence levels within your role. **It's** also an opportunity to keep you up to date with changes in legislations pertaining to safeguarding vulnerable service users
- It is your responsibility to ensure your training record is kept up to date by ensuring you attend as and when required
- Failure to keep your training up to date will result in your existing certificate being invalid. You may not be able to work until this has been validated
- Where possible, training sessions are arranged during half terms/school holidays. On some occasions specialised training and behaviour management session may be arranged at schools. Staff will be paid for such trainings
- Failure to attend training may result in deduction of pay and may lead to disciplinary action against staff

OFFICE MOBILE PHONE POLICY

- If you have been issued a work mobile phone, you must ensure this is fully charged and with you at all times whilst you are on duty
- Transport Officers may have to relay important messages to Escorts, therefore it is advisable to keep work mobile phones switched on [put on silent if attending other duties or meetings]
- You may use the office mobile phones to contact the Transport Office, Schools, parents/carers & emergency services
- You are advised to resist using office phone to make personal calls. Calls are itemised at the end of each calendar month and you will be notified in writing of call charges to be paid
- If you wish to use your office phone to make personal calls, contact your Line Manager for approval
- Inappropriate use of work mobile phones will be treated with formal action in line with the Council Code of Conduct
- If you lose or misplace your work phone, contact your Line Manager immediately so the phone can be blocked. You must then report this to the Police and obtain a Crime Reference number which you must then pass on to your Line Manager.

SPECIAL LEAVE [INCL. MEDICAL APPOINTMENTS]

- Under the terms and conditions of your contract, you can only take leave during Haringey school holidays
- Request for time off during term time is **not** permitted unless agreed in advance by your Line Manager and subject to authorisation by the Service Team Leader
- If agreed, a Special Leave form should be completed and submitted along with supporting documents where required. Avoid booking travel tickets prior to

- seeking authorisation
- Failure to comply may result in your absence being recorded as **unauthorised** and may also lead to proceedings for Formal Action
- Medical appointments should be arranged outside of working hours

TIMEKEEPING

- It is important that you attend your duties on time. The role of a Coach Escort does not permit you to make up lost hours. Lateness can have a serious impact on the vulnerable passengers you support
- If you are running late, you **must** contact the Transport Office yourself and notify an Officer of your situation. You must not send messages via a third party or via email or text
- If you rely on public transport, it is your responsibility to ensure you allow plenty of time for your journey
- Timekeeping is monitored and repeated instances of lateness may lead to disciplinary action

ABSENCE REPORTING PROCEDURES

- If you are sick or have an emergency which results in you being unable to attend your duties, please give as much notice as possible (**no later than 7:15am for morning duties and no later than midday for afternoon duties**)
- You must contact your Line Manager yourself by phone [text and email is not acceptable – unless agreed by your Manager]. You must not pass messages via a third party
- You should contact the Transport Office on **0208 489 5629**.
- On the 1st day of sickness, you should phone the office no later than 7:15am and speak to a Manager

confirming reason for absence/type of sickness and any other information that may be necessary

- If by the 4th working day, you are still unwell, you must notify a Manager of your continued absence and give an estimate of how much longer you are expect to be absent and any other information that may be necessary.
- If you are likely to return to work before the 4th day, contact your Line Manager
- On the 8th calendar day of absence, Escorts must obtain a medical certificate and submit by no later than the 8th day of absence
- Scanned/ emailed copies of medical certificates will not be accepted
- If you are absent for 2 weeks or longer you are required to provide regular updates to the Escort Team Coordinator
- Failure to adhere to the requirements could result in sick pay being delayed / withheld and may result to disciplinary action
- Upon returning to work, Escort must attend a Return to Work meeting with your Line Manager at the Transport Office **before** commencement of duties
- In accordance with the Council sickness Monitoring Procedure, an Attendance Review Meeting will take place on or after the 6th day of sickness [in a rolling 12 month period]. Thereafter if further sickness is recorded a formal meeting **in line with the Council's** Sickness and Absence Monitoring Procedures will be convened
- **If you are unsure about the Sickness and Absence Reporting Procedures, please ask your Manager for clarification.**

WORKING HOURS

- Staff are contracted to commence their duty from 7:30am [in some cases earlier] in the mornings and from 2:30pm in the afternoons
- Escorts residing within the Borough of Haringey that commence their duty before 7am have the option to be collected/dropped off from/to their home address if desired
- If you live outside of the Borough of Haringey, you are expected to allow sufficient time to attend your duty on time
- Staff that have second duties must bear in mind their contractual hours with Passenger Transport. Lateness due to second duties will not be accepted and may result in formal action
- Second duties will not be taken into consideration when assigning routes to ensure fairness to all staff
- Staff will commence their duty at the time specified on the route schedule, from the designated point confirmed on the route schedule [please do not deviate from this point or ask your driver to pick you up from any other point. In the afternoon, if preferred, you can meet your Driver at the school/Centre
- Staff assigned to In Borough Schools/Centres will end their duty at the assigned school/centre
- Staff assigned to Out of Borough Schools/Centres will end their duty at the original pick up point

RECORDING WORKING HOURS ON YOUR TIMESHEET

IN BOROUGH ROUTES

Morning Start Time

The start time to record on your timesheet for the morning duty will be the time you commence your duty [i.e. meet your driver, time specified on your timesheet]

Morning Finish Time

The finish time to record on your timesheet for the morning duty will be the time you finish your duty at the school

Afternoon Start Time

The start time to record on your timesheet for the afternoon duty is 15 minutes prior to the time the students finish school/college/centre [e.g. if students finish school at 3:15, your start time will be 3pm]

Afternoon Finish Time

The finish time to record on your timesheet for the afternoon duty will be the time you finish at the last child's address

OUT OF BOROUGH ROUTES

Morning Start Time

The start time to record on your timesheet for the morning duty will be the time you commence your duty [i.e. meet your driver, time specified on your timesheet]

Morning Finish Time

The finish time to record on your timesheet for the morning duty will be the time you return to your original pick up point

Afternoon Start Time

The start time to record on your timesheet for the afternoon duty is will be the time you commence your duty [i.e. meet your driver, time specified on your timesheet]

Afternoon Finish Time

The finish time to record on your timesheet for the afternoon duty will be the time you finish at the last child's address

REMINDER – CONDUCT, POLICIES, PROTOCOLS:

1. Meet driver at pick up and drop off designated point – no private arrangements with parents / drivers

2. **Time off for hospital / doctor's appointments should be** taken in person time; outside working hours
3. Contracted 40 – 50 weeks depending on years of services
4. Retainer payments will be affected if you do not work last day of term or first day back to school – Haringey term dates
5. Must be able to carry out ALL of the role including, securing wheelchairs, and dealing with challenging behaviour and flexibility of working hours. Should be available to work from 7:00am unless on out of borough routes which may have to commence before 7:00am.
6. Must notify the Office by 7:00am if not available to work
7. Must be sensitive to the different characteristics of Equality Act including sexual orientation of our service users and colleagues.

TRANSPORT OFFICE CONTACT DETAILS

- 0208 489 5629

DO NOT TEAR OFF THIS PAGE

ESCORT HANDBOOK 2022-23

I CONFIRM RECEIVING & READING A COPY OF THE ESCORT HANDBOOK.

I UNDERSTAND THAT FAILURE TO COMPLY WITH THE PROCEDURES MAY RESULT IN DISCIPLINARY ACTION

PRINT NAME

SIGNATURE

DATE

Return photocopy of this page to:
Escort Team Coordinator,
Passenger Transport Service,
Level 5, 48 Station Road,
London,
N22 7TY

