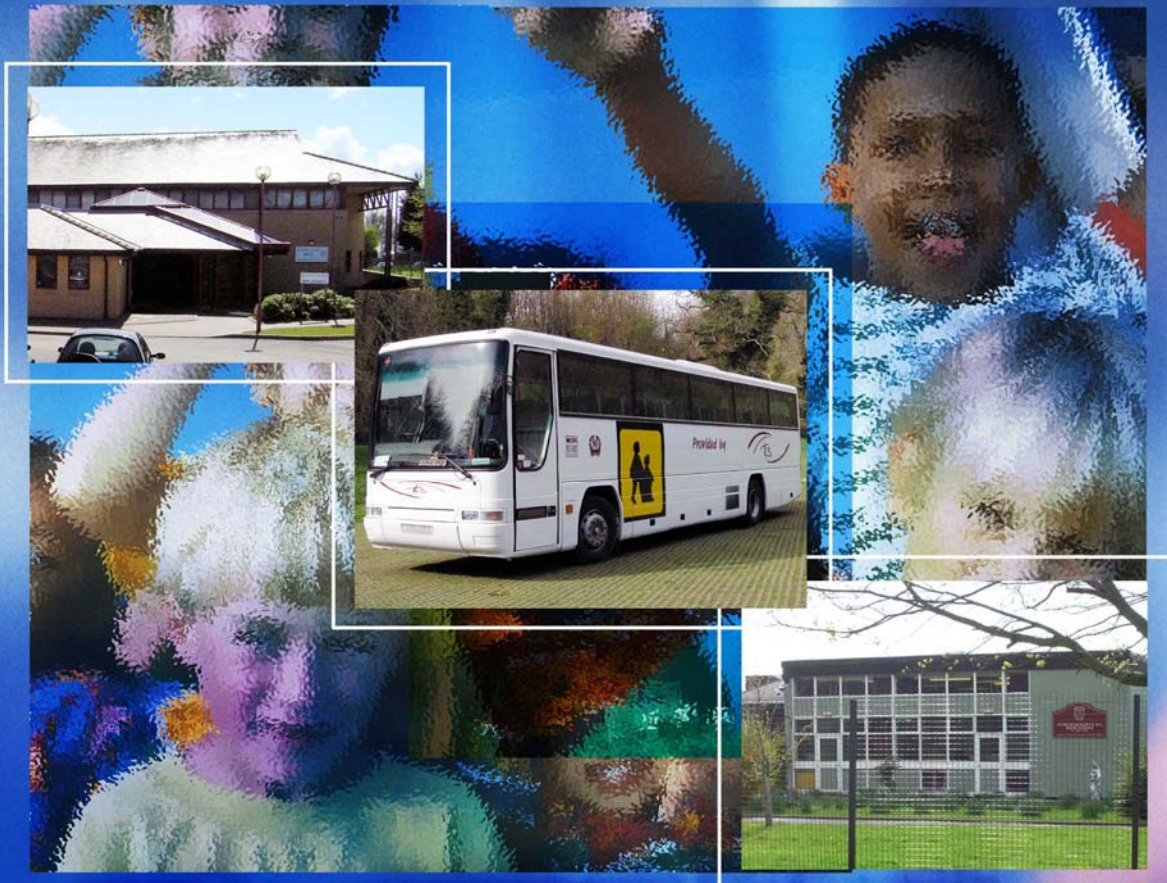


Policy for the Provision of Home to School Transport



Rob Quick

Director of Environmental and Economic Regeneration

Rob Thomas

Head of Planning and Transportation



**VALE OF GLAMORGAN COUNCIL
PLANNING AND TRANSPORTATION DIVISION**

VALE OF GLAMORGAN COUNCIL

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**POLICY FOR THE PROVISION OF
HOME TO SCHOOL TRANSPORT**

(Revised February 2010)

**Rob Quick
Director of Environmental
and Economic Regeneration
Vale of Glamorgan Council**

**Rob Thomas
Head of Planning
and Transportation
Vale of Glamorgan Council**

School Transport Contact details

In the Vale of Glamorgan Council, all functions related to school transport (with the exception of special needs transport) are dealt with by the Planning & Transportation Division, for and on behalf of the Directorate for Learning & Development.

MAINSTREAM SCHOOL TRANSPORT

Any correspondence can be sent to:

Vale of Glamorgan Council,
Planning & Transportation Division,
Directorate of Environmental & Economic Regeneration,
Docks Offices,
Barry Docks,
Barry CF63 4RT

The contact telephone number is: 01446 700111

SPECIAL NEEDS SCHOOL TRANSPORT

Children with statements of Special Educational Need:

This is the only school transport function that is dealt with by The Directorate of Learning & Development. Any correspondence can be sent to:

Vale of Glamorgan Council,
Directorate of Learning & Development,
Provincial House
Kendrick Road
Barry
CF62 8BF

Contact telephone number is 01446 709114 / 115

VALE OF GLAMORGAN COUNCIL

HOME TO SCHOOL TRANSPORT POLICY

It is the Council's intention to provide a reliable system of transportation that will seek to carry pupils safely, punctually and in comfort. These principles apply to all services contracted by the Council.

1. Provision of school transport

The Learner Travel (Wales) Measure 2008 places a statutory duty to provide transport for eligible pupils to and from school. This is defined as more than 2 miles to the nearest suitable school for Primary Pupils and more than 3 miles for Secondary School Pupils. Distances are measured by the nearest available walking route.

However, where pupils attend, as a result of parental preference, a school other than the nearest school or catchment school as recognised by the Vale of Glamorgan Council, it must be understood that parents accept full responsibility for transport costs and arrangements. In circumstances when the nearest school or catchment school is full and admission is refused, free home to school transport will only be provided to the next nearest school or catchment school.

It is the Council, as Local Education Authority in consultation and discussions with school that determines if a school is at capacity in any academic year. Only when the necessary information is received and confirmed will decisions be made by the Council in respect of the provision of free home to school transport to the next nearest school.

Free school transport is provided for pupils who reside within the Vale of Glamorgan Area and in neighbouring Authorities if the school is their nearest and they reside beyond the relevant statutory walking distance.

The Council does not provide free school transport or sell, at separate fares, any vacant seats to pupils who reside outside the Vale of Glamorgan, unless this is undertaken in agreement with a neighbouring Local Authority to assist with its legal obligations. Such an undertaking is only considered on the provision that it does not have any detrimental service and financial implications for this Authority

The Education (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1953 empowers Local Education Authorities to fill, at separate fares, any vacant places in such free transport, and the Public Passenger Vehicles Act 1981 empowers them to provide as a Registered Local Service a school bus carrying fare paying passengers. These duties are unaffected by the Transport Act 1985 but the Act may affect the way in which LEAs discharge them:

- *by the purchase of scholars passes for use on public transport, or*
- *by contract services available also to the public, or*
- *by exclusive contract services, or*
- *by using their own buses.*

The Transport Act 1985/2000 Code of Practice recommends that Authorities consider integrating schools services (whether provided by themselves or their LEAs) into the local services which they propose to subsidise.

Transport may be provided by means of contracted school transport services or existing public transport services (bus, minibus, train, taxi etc.). The efficient use of resources will always dictate the mode of transport provided (subject to any special needs requirements).

In the Vale of Glamorgan Council, all functions related to school transport (with the exception of special needs transport) are dealt with by the Planning & Transportation Division, for and on behalf of the Directorate for Learning & Development. Contact points are inside the front cover of this document.

2. Siblings

From an educational perspective, the Council, as Local Education Authority does cater for siblings of pupils to attend the same school, even in cases where the school is not the nearest available school. However, the Council is not in a position to offer free school transport in such instances and it will be the responsibility of parents to meet the costs and arrangements transporting their child/ren to and from school. There may however be instances where vacant seats on existing school transport services (where capacity exists) can be made available for the appropriate charge. The Council reserves the right to withdraw this facility e.g. when the seat is later required for a child that is entitled to free home to school transport for or in the event of the service no longer being required.

3. Transport for children with special needs

Free transport may be available for children who have statements of Special Educational Needs attending designated schools/units of schools. Such transport will only be provided on the recommendation of the Special Needs Service (Pupil Support Service). Transport may be provided on a short or long term basis and will be subject to a regular review.

(Contact points in The Directorate of Learning & Development are given inside the front cover.)

4. Transport to denominational schools, Welsh Medium schools and post 16 pupils.

Pupils currently attending the nearest denominational or Welsh medium school receive free transport if they reside beyond the statutory 'walking distances' (see 1 above). Whilst, this transport provision is discretionary, it is part of the Vale of Glamorgan policy to provide free travel. This includes transport to denominational schools outside the Vale of Glamorgan where there is not one locally.

Free school transport is also provided for post 16 pupils who reside beyond the statutory walking distances as mentioned above. Likewise, this provision is

discretionary but it is part of the Vale of Glamorgan policy to provide free travel. This however is under review.

5. Transport links to buses

The Council will exercise discretion in determining whether or not it will provide a taxi link to an existing bus service for those pupils living in rural locations.

6. Special arrangements – hazardous routes

The Council has a duty to recognise a route as hazardous if a pupil cannot walk safely when accompanied by an adult. In assessing the safety of an available route, consideration is only given to the potential risk created by traffic, highway and topographical conditions and not personal safety.

Each route will be considered on its own merits having regard to the basic criterion of whether the degree of danger involved is such that escorting parents and children are at risk from the particular traffic situation.

If there is still contention after any initial assessment, the Council may appoint an independent company to assess the route.

The guidelines used to assess an available route will be those produced by the Road Safety GB (Formerly Local Authorities Road Safety Officers Association (LARSOA)).

Should a walking route be deemed unsafe inline with Road Safety GB guidelines the Council will not refund any costs incurred by parents prior to the assessment report being received.

7. Special arrangements - payments to parents/guardians

The authority may agree to a parent/guardian transporting their child to and from school and receiving reimbursement of petrol expenses when this is considered the most appropriate arrangement, usually where there is no other alternative transport provision readily available.

8. Fare paying passengers

From time to time it is possible that the numbers of pupils entitled to free transport will be below the capacity of the vehicle used. In such cases the Council will aim to make spare capacity available to children who live within the walking distance limits listed in section 1. When places on a vehicle are made available under this provision an annual fare will be charged at a cost of £180. A deposit of £60 will be necessary in the first instance before the balance is invoiced and no pass will be issued prior to the deposit being paid in full. It must be understood that the provision of this facility does not represent an obligation on the Council and, being entirely dependent on the capacity of the vehicle used, may result in withdrawal of the facility at relatively short notice. This charge is under review and will be reviewed annually.

No pass will be sold where the balance for the previous years pass has not been settled in full.

9. Changing schools – transport arrangements

Pupils whose families move to an address outside the catchment area of the school they attend will not normally be provided with free school transport if that move takes place during primary education, or in years seven, eight or nine of secondary education, unless there are no places available at schools closer to the new home. Applications made on behalf of pupils who move in years ten (after the half term holiday in October of year 10) and eleven will be considered individually.

10. Seatbelts

Current seat belt legislation requires:

- *Public Service Vehicles (PSVs) with between 9 and 16 passenger seats have a seat belt for each passenger carried in a forward facing seat with effect from 10th February 1997.*
- *PSVs with 17 or more passenger seats and weighing under 7.5 tonnes are not required to have seat belts no matter what their maximum speed (in effect buses used to provide a bus service eligible for Bus Service Operators Grant (formerly fuel duty rebate) i.e. locally registered bus services).*
- *PSV over 7.5 tonnes that not capable of 60mph are not required to have seat belts (in effect buses used to provide a bus service eligible for Bus Service Operators Grant (formerly fuel duty rebate) i.e. locally registered bus services).*
- *PSVs over 7.5 tonnes capable of over 60 mph require seat belts by 10th February 1997 if first used after 1st October 1988 or by 10th February 1998 if first used before 1st October 1998.*

Regulation 12 amends regulation 5 of the Wearing of Seatbelts Regulations so as to require adults and children aged 14years and over to wear seatbelts where available in the rear of all classes of motor vehicle.

The Council will comply with legislation and any amendments made to this legislation will be reflected in the School Transport Policy.

11. Three for Two Rule

Legislation states that in the case of children under the age of 14 years, three seated children may be counted as two where they share a double seat however, this does not apply where seatbelts are fitted i.e. each child must have his/her own seat. (A child who reaches the age of 14 during a school term is deemed to be under 14 years of age until the last day of August next following his/her fourteenth birthday).

It is the Council's intention not to use this concession and to always provide one seat per child on dedicated home to school transport procured under the Education Acts 1944/1996.

Please note that where a registered local bus service is utilised, the Council does not have any jurisdiction.

12. Standing Passengers

The maximum standing capacity of a vehicle with a Certificate of Fitness or Certificate of Conformity issued on or after 1 April 1981 is either the standing capacity stated on the certificate or otherwise issued by a vehicle examiner. In the case of any other vehicle it is not more than eight standing passengers or one third of the seating capacity on a single deck public service vehicle, or in the lower deck of a double deck public service vehicle or otherwise by a vehicle authorised by a vehicle examiner.

The Council's intention is not to allow any standing capacity on school transport, however, where a registered local bus service is utilised, the Council does not have any jurisdiction.

13. Escorts

It is Council policy to provide escorts for all primary school where more than 16 pupils are carried. This reflects the age of the pupil to assist the child on boarding and alighting the vehicle as well as helping where necessary to put seatbelts on. In addition, the policy aims to ensure that young vulnerable pupils stay seated whilst the vehicle is moving. The Council may use discretion to provide an escort on Primary School buses with less than 16 pupils in deep rural areas with limited mobile phone coverage. This will be the exception rather than the norm.

It is not the Council's intention routinely to provide supervision for secondary school pupils. However, where a particular behaviour problem has been identified, supervision or CCTV monitoring may be used, or a Vale of Glamorgan Council Officer or a teacher may ride the vehicle to identify the problem and appropriate action taken to resolve the issue.

14. C.C.T.V.

It is the Council's policy to provide C.C.T.V. where it is identified as being needed on selected routes, to include all double deck vehicles, and to ensure that a range of operators will have C.C.T.V. available on selected vehicles. It is the Council's policy to continue and where practical, extend this provision.

The Council will aim to deploy vehicles fitted with C.C.T.V. in a flexible manner to allow it to respond to instances of misbehaviour.

15. Monitoring and complaints procedure

All vehicles will be subject to random checks by the Vehicle and Operator Services Agency (formerly the Vehicle Inspectorate) or other appropriate body, when required. The Council, on unspecified days, undertakes random checks on contracts, to ensure compliance with contract conditions.

Any complaints received by the Council from parents concerning pupil behaviour, services or vehicles will be immediately investigated. In the event of the complaint being upheld, the Council reserves the right to take any appropriate steps necessary in accordance with contract conditions.

Parents should contact the Directorate of Environmental and Economic Regeneration, Planning & Transportation Division, (Telephone no 01446 700111) with any concerns with regards school transport.

Any complaints received verbally will be logged on the School Transport complaints database, investigated immediately and responded to verbally.

Any complaints that require a written response, will need to be put in writing and will be filed, together with the response, in the designated school transport file. It is the Council's intention where possible to respond to such complaints within a maximum of 14 days.

It is also the Council's intention to analyse complaints quarterly and address any persistent problems that arise.

16. Pupil / Student Misbehaviour

Pupils or students travelling to school or college by service or contract vehicle using a pass supplied by the Council who misbehave, cause, or risk causing damage or injury to the vehicle, driver or other passengers, or in any way threaten the safety of the other passengers and/or the vehicle, may have their pass withdrawn, by the Director of Environmental and Economic Regeneration. Once a pass has been withdrawn, the parents of the pupil(s) concerned will be responsible for ensuring the pupil(s) attend school. See Appendix in respect of behaviour on school transport and sanctions that apply for non-compliance.

Any pupils who are not entitled to free school transport but who travel on contract services on a fare paying basis, will also be subject to the same rules.

*The Public Passenger Vehicles Act 1981 make provision for the following:
A driver must take reasonable precautions for the safety of passengers whom are either boarding or alighting the vehicle or who are already on board a vehicle.*

A driver must:

- *by taking reasonable steps see that passengers comply with conduct regulations.*

- *remove from a public service vehicle any person infringing the regulations.*
- *require any passenger who he reasonably suspects of infringing the Regulations to give his name and address.*

The Public Passenger Vehicles Act 1981 also makes provision for passengers as follows:

A passenger on a public service vehicle must not:

- *Use any door for a purpose other than which is indicated by a notice unless the direction or authority of a driver.*
- *Endanger the safety of or cause discomfort to impede anyone who is travelling on the vehicle, or boarding or alighting from it.*
- *Endanger the safety of or cause discomfort to impede the driver, conductor or inspector or any employee who is working on the vehicle.*
- *Trail or throw anything from the vehicle.*
- *Smoke, carry lighted tobacco, lighted match or lighted cigarette lighter where by notice it is indicated that smoking is not permitted on the vehicle.*
- *Cause distraction by speaking to the driver while the vehicle is moving unless in emergency or to deal with matters of safety or to give directions in respect of stopping the vehicle.*
- *Distract the driver or obstruct his vision.*
- *When instructed by the driver conductor or inspector, stay on the vehicle where:*
 - *The vehicle is full*
 - *The passenger has caused a nuisance*
 - *The passenger's condition is offensive to other passengers*
 - *The passengers clothing is of such a condition that it might soil the clothing of others or the fittings of the vehicle*
 - *Use or play any noisy instrument which may cause annoyance to others on the vehicle*
 - *Deliberately interfere with the vehicle's fitted equipment.*

The Council will investigate all complaints and action will always be taken against any offenders.

As with operational complaints, verbal complaints will always be responded to verbally and written complaints responded to in writing. It is the Council's intention to investigate such complaints immediately and take any necessary action as soon as possible, The Council will make every effort to inform parents prior to action being taken, but the safety and well being of all others travelling must take priority.

All complaints will be investigated jointly by the school and the Vale of Glamorgan Planning and Transportation Division (Public Transport Unit) (and if required, the operator). Both the school and the Council will have the responsibility to deal with such issues.

17. Communication

It is the Council's intention to ensure that each school has a designated contact person for school transport issues and it will be the responsibility of the school to provide the name of this person to those using school transport when issuing their pass.

It is the Council's intention to have parent/pupil contracts whereby each person will agree to abide by the relevant rules. Any abuse of these rules will lead to action being taken against the relevant party. Letters will also be issued with all bus passes advising of the implementation of these policies and procedures against matters relating to behaviour, and requesting signatures of parents/guardians.

It is the Council's intention to have triplicate incident books for schools / operators /drivers to complete to formally record misbehaviour activities. A copy of a report form is attached as an Appendix.

In terms of general communication, copies of this document together with all associated documents are available on the Council's website at www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk. All schools have been supplied with copies of the relevant documents. In addition, it is intended to communicate the policies and procedures via individual school web pages, libraries and Council offices, governing bodies and relevant school prospectus. Town and Community Councils will also be issued with copies.

18. Training

It is the Council's intention, in partnership with the school, to introduce training for all pupils who use home to school transport. This is likely to be with external consultants specialising in school transport behaviour and safety issues. This may involve videos, talks in assemblies, evacuation training, and any other form of training that the Council deems necessary. All pupils will be expected to participate in any such training.

19. Contractor/School Briefings

It is the Council's intention to provide briefing sessions for schools and contractors. Any problems may be addressed at these meetings which may also inspire further good practice. As in the case with training the Council will publish details of the proposed briefing sessions on an annual basis.

20. Criminal Record Bureau Checks on Drivers and Escorts

It is the Council's intention that all drivers and escorts operating dedicated home to school transport in the Vale of Glamorgan are checked against the Criminal Record Bureau, therefore, a rolling programme has been set up to fulfil this commitment. New arrangements in respect of the Vetting and Barring Scheme (VBS) and the Independent Safeguarding Authority (ISA) may be introduced as necessary.

21. Bus Passes

The Council will issue bus passes to each school during the final 4 weeks of the summer term. Any pupil who does not produce either a bus pass or a dated letter from the school, to the driver, will be refused travel. This ruling is to enable the Council to fulfil its commitments to the above 'three for two' and standing passengers policy (sections 10 and 11) and to ensure the safety of the passengers. In these circumstances, the parents of the pupil(s) concerned will be responsible for ensuring pupil(s) attend school regardless of the grounds on which the pupil qualifies for transport.

The Council is trialling photograph passes at certain locations and this may be extended. You may be requested to supply a photograph. However, where possible the photograph will be obtained from the school.

The Vale of Glamorgan Council intends to allocate all pupils, entitled to free school transport, to the nearest available school bus route provided spaces are available.

The Council, when reviewing transport, will not take into account any childcare arrangements or out of school activity /club the pupil may attend.

Where free bus passes are issued, each pupil will receive only one, identifying the name and address of the pupil as informed by the school. A second pass will only be provided free of charge if it can be proven by parents that a pupil is registered as having two home addresses and both entitle the pupil to receive free transport. Alternatively, a second pass can be purchased (where a service or spaces are available)

If an error is made or where legislation is changed this may have an effect on the entitlement of a pupil or pupils using school transport. The council will honour the transport provision for that pupil or pupils for the remainder of the academic year the mistake was found in or the legislation became effective in.

The Council will not backdate and refund any costs incurred by parents where an error has been found with free school transport entitlement.

In all circumstances it is the parent's/guardian's responsibility to pay for the cost of replacement passes that are lost under any circumstances. The cost of a replacement pass is currently £10, which may be reviewed from time to time.

22. Parent responsibility prior to boarding and on alighting the vehicle

It is the responsibility of the parent to ensure the safety of their child/ren prior to their acceptance onto school transport in the morning. Likewise, it is the parent's responsibility to ensure the safety of the child once he/she alights from the vehicle on the way home. The Council will not accept any responsibility when a parent is not at the bus stop at the designated time of arrival on an afternoon journey, or where a pupil forgets their bus pass and is not accepted onto the vehicle. The Council has a clear policy of what action to take when a

parent/guardian has not arrived to meet a primary school child/ren from the vehicle on the return journey home, as follows;

- (a) Where it is identified that parents have not arrived, the operator must contact the Council immediately.
- (b) The pupil will not be left at the roadside, but will be kept on the vehicle whilst it continues its journey, and whilst alternative arrangements are put into place. These may include:
 - Return to school
 - Involvement of education welfare service
 - Return to the bus operators depot or
 - Being taken to a local police station

23. Adverse Weather Conditions

Adverse weather conditions can have major effects on passenger transport services and their continued provision. Therefore, with safety paramount, transport providers will take the ultimate decision as to whether a service will operate and the specific timings of the service in the event it operating during adverse weather. Please note that during adverse weather conditions (e.g. snow) your child may not be picked up for school or maybe returned home early. Parents of primary school children will be notified by telephone prior to the children being returned home early, providing they have already reached school. This procedure will not apply to secondary school pupils, who may be returned home early without any notice.

In severe weather, especially if forecasts predict worsening weather conditions, contractors are advised not to run.

The Council will make every effort to advise schools when home to school transport is likely to be suspended. This may be by reference to the Council's website or by email or by telephone.

The Council will advise schools by email where services are cancelled.

School Bus Travel Behaviour Code

- When at the bus stop, always wait sensibly, off the road.
- Make an agreement with your parents what to do if the bus does not arrive or if you miss it.
- When the bus arrives, wait for it to stop. Never push or rush to the door.
- Show your bus pass (if you have been given one) when you get on the bus.
- On a school bus stay in your seat for the whole journey.
- On a public bus find a seat if one is available.
- Never block the aisle with your bag or other belongings.
- Always wear a seatbelt if one is provided.
- You must not distract the driver when he or she is driving.
- Never eat or drink on the bus.
- Never throw anything in or from the bus.
- Never damage or vandalise any part of the bus.
- Never operate the bus doors or exits, except in an emergency.
- Always follow the instructions of the driver or passenger assistant at all times.
- If there is an accident, stay on the bus until you are told to leave. If it is unsafe to stay on the bus then leave by the safest exit.
- Never try and get on or off the bus until it has stopped.
- Always get off the bus sensibly, taking all your belongings with you.
- Never cross the road in front of or close behind the bus.

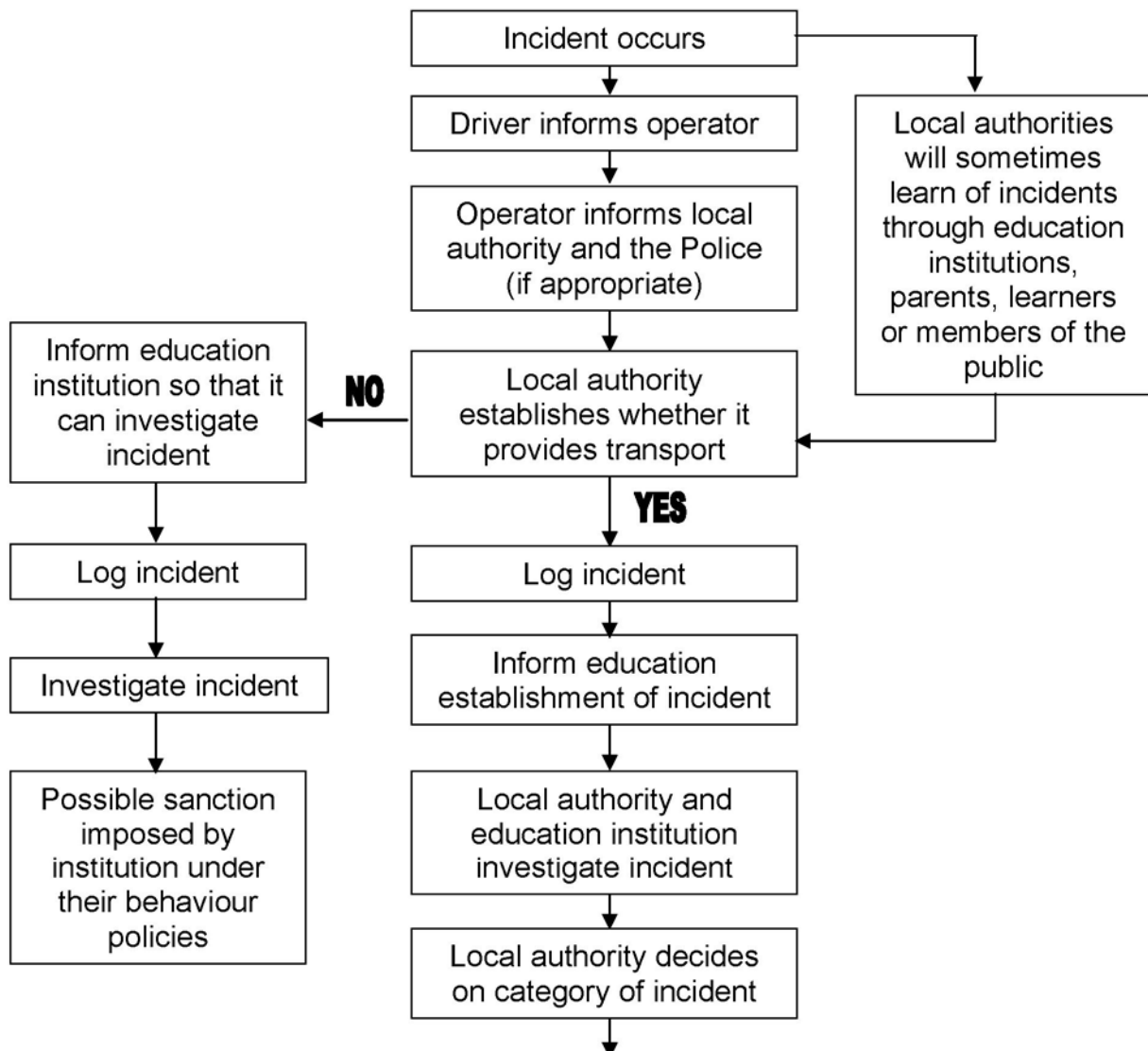
Travel Behaviour Code

Your safety is very important. You must behave responsibly and safely when travelling to and from school or college, whether you go there by bus, train, taxi, bicycle, walking or any other way. If you get a bus to school or college, you must also follow the rules in the School Bus Travel Behaviour Code.

If you do not follow this Code, for your own safety, and other people's local authorities, schools and colleges can take action against you. This might involve taking away your right to school transport and even excluding you from school.

Your Responsibility	Your Safety	Your Rights
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Always respect others, including other pupils, drivers and the public.• Always respect vehicles and property.• Always be polite• Never drop litter• Always obey the law.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Always behave well when travelling.• Always follow the driver's instructions when travelling.• You must not distract drivers.• Always cross the road safely and sensibly.• Always travel by a safe route.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• To be safe when travelling.• To be treated fairly and with respect• To tell someone if somebody or something is causing you problems.• Not to be bullied or picked on.
Please tell a teacher, parent or driver about any bad behaviour or bullying you see.		

Procedure if an Incident Occurs



	Category 3	Category 2	Category 1
First Incident	Verbal warning from the education institution	As a minimum, local authority writes a letter to the learner's parents	Local authority withdraws transport (see 4.27-4.41)
Second Incident	Local authority writes a letter to the learner's parents	Local authority considers the withdrawal of transport (see 4.27-4.41)	
Third Incident or more	Local authority considers the withdrawal of transport (see 4.27-4.41)		

Categories of Misbehaviour

Category 1 – Highly Dangerous/Life Threatening

This includes but is not limited to interfering with the driving controls or doors, assaulting the driver, interfering with safety equipment and pushing others through doors or windows.

Category 2 – Dangerous Behaviour

This includes, but not limited to, harassing and bullying other passengers, verbally threatening or distracting the driver, pushing and shoving when boarding and exiting the bus, spitting or smoking.

Category 3 – Unacceptable Behaviour

This will include, but not limited to, behaviour that may be irritating to others, unpleasant or offensive but not dangerous. For example eating or drinking where not allowed on transport, littering, or rudeness.



GUIDELINES

FOR SCHOOL TRANSPORT SERVICES



VALE OF GLAMORGAN COUNCIL
PLANNING AND TRANSPORTATION DIVISION



Pupils

1. General Behaviour

Please behave responsibly whenever you are on or near vehicles carrying you to or from school. Failure to do this could endanger both yourselves and others.

Instructions from drivers, escorts or other responsible adults must be followed - such instructions will invariably be for your safety and well being, or that of others.

Don't do anything which could distract the driver, who must be allowed to concentrate on driving safely.

On no account should vehicles or their fittings - seats, wall coverings, windows, emergency exits or safety equipment be damaged or defaced in any way. Litter, food or drink etc. should not be dropped or left around vehicles.

Bad behaviour on school transport will not be condoned and the Authority, the schools and the contractors will work together to identify culprits and impose appropriate punishments. Ultimately, persistent or particularly serious offenders will lose their right to travel. In this regard, the Council has in place a framework for dealing with incidents on Home to School Transport.

2. Seating Provision

When you get on the bus, sit down and stay seated until you arrive at your dropping-off point. If seatbelts are provided, use them.

Where there are seatbelts provided the Council requests that you wear them for the entire journey to and from school. However, if you are 14 years old and over it is the law that you wear a seatbelt, where they are provided on any motor vehicle.

On all school buses, it is the Council's policy that there is a seat for every pupil who is entitled to travel.

If your school transport is an ordinary local bus service it may be necessary for some pupils to stand. It is against the law to stand forward of the driver, or on any step or stair, or on the top deck of a double decker.

3. At the Roadside

Never play around at the roadside whilst waiting for your bus or after getting off. Never push other pupils.

In the mornings leave home in plenty of time to get to the pick-up point so that you don't have to rush, especially if there are roads to be crossed.

When you get off the bus, step well away from it and make sure your coat or bag is not caught in the door.

4. Bus Passes

If you have been issued with a bus pass it should be shown to the driver every time you get on the bus. Failure to do so will result in you being refused travel.

Loss of a pass should immediately be reported to your school, when instructions will be given on obtaining a replacement, for which a charge will be made.

Abuse of a bus pass will lead to its withdrawal. Your parents/guardians will then have to make their own arrangements for you to travel to and from school.

You can only travel on the bus stated on your bus pass. If the details on the pass are incorrect you will need to inform your school immediately in order for a replacement pass to be requested.

In all cases your parent's/guardian's will be required to pay for a replacement in the event of it being lost.

5. Vehicle Breakdown or Accident

In the event of a breakdown or accident, or if anything else happens to prevent a journey to and from school being completed in the normal way, you must follow the instructions of the driver, escort or other responsible adult. The driver or escort will seek to telephone for help to their depot. The depot will then inform the Transportation Unit of the Council.

Unless it is unsafe, you will be told to stay on the vehicle in an orderly and sensible manner until help arrives.

If it is not deemed safe to stay in the vehicle you will be taken to a safe place where you should wait until help arrives. Do not walk off to complete the journey by your own means - this will lead to worry for parents/guardians and/or school staff if they do not know where your whereabouts.

6. Crossing the Road

If you have to cross the road after getting off your school bus, wait for the bus to move off before trying to cross the road so that you can see and be seen by other traffic.

Remember the Green Cross Code.

7. Smoking

Smoking is not permitted on any of our School Transport Service Vehicles at any time or by any person. Action in line with the Councils School Transport Policy Guidance on Misbehaviour will be taken against any pupil caught and identified smoking. Their right to school transport could ultimately be withdrawn. In addition, offending pupils details will be passed on to the Councils Environmental Health Officers who can take further action in line with legislation regarding "The Smoke Free Premises etc. (Wales) Regulations 2007", which makes it a criminal offence for any person to smoke onboard a vehicle used by the public, at any time.

Parents/Guardians

1. General Pupil Behaviour

The behaviour of children on school transport is of utmost importance. You are therefore expected to support the Council, the schools, the operators and their staff in maintaining good behaviour. As parents/guardians, you are central in influencing good behaviour.

It should be clearly understood in cases of bad behaviour that the ultimate sanction is the removal of the right to receive transport. In that case the responsibility and full cost of providing transport will fall on yourself/yourself.

2. Pupil Safety at Home End of Journey

It is your responsibility to ensure the safety of your children in getting from home to the arrangements for school transport in the mornings and in getting from the transport provided to home in the evenings. Appropriate supervision arrangements should therefore be made, particularly for younger children.

In the mornings pupils should leave home in plenty of time to get to the bus so that there is no need to rush, particularly if there are roads to be crossed.

In the afternoons, pupils who have to cross the road after getting off the bus should wait until the bus has driven off before attempting to cross so that they can see and be seen by other traffic. Wherever possible, parents meeting pupils should wait at the drop-off point itself, and not on the other side of the road.

Younger pupils will normally only be set down at their designated stop in the afternoons. Should there be any change to the normal arrangements you should inform both the school and the driver/escort.

The Council has a clear policy of what action to take when a parent/guardian has not arrived to meet a primary school child/ren from the vehicle on the return journey home, as follows:

When a parent/guardian of a primary school child has not arrived to meet their child/ren off the vehicle in the afternoon (return journey) the following actions will be taken to ensure the child/ren's continued safety.

- (a) Where it is identified that parents have not arrived, the operator must contact the Council immediately.
- (b) The pupil will not be left at the roadside, but will be kept on the vehicle whilst it continues its journey, and whilst alternative arrangements are put into place. These may include
 - Return to school
 - Involvement of education welfare service
 - Return to depot or
 - Being taken to a local police station

It is the parent's/guardians responsibility to take the pupil to school if they do not have a relevant bus pass in the morning. The pupil will be able to ask for a letter from the school if the pass is lost during the day. This letter can only be dated for up to one week when arrangements must be made to purchase a new pass from the Council or find the existing pass.

In all cases it is the parent's/guardian's responsibility to pay for the cost of replacement passes that are lost.

The Council has produced a parent/pupil contract for use on all school routes.

Schools

1. General

Although you are not responsible for arranging or funding home to school transport, you have an important role to play in ensuring its smooth operation by daily contact with the bus service and pupils carried.

2. Nominated Staff

It would be very useful and helpful if all schools could nominate a member of staff and a deputy with whom operators and the Transportation Unit can liaise directly on transport matters. Operators will be given the names of the nominated school staff.

3. Monitoring of Transport

It would also be particularly useful if all schools could keep a regular general check on the transport provided and report any shortcomings to the Transportation Unit of the Council on the report forms produced, and, in the case of more serious or persistent problems, immediately by telephone. Prompt reporting of problems will help us resolve them for the benefit of all.

4. Supervision of Arrivals and Departures

It would be helpful for the school to provide supervision of pupils, particularly at departure times.

Escorts on transport to Primary Schools are instructed that on arrival at the school in the mornings, the pupils should be escorted into the school grounds and transferred into the care of a responsible member of staff and vice versa in the afternoons. Primary schools are asked to liaise with operators and their staff on the most appropriate arrangements for their particular circumstances.

5. Pupil Misconduct/Discipline

You have a major role to play in ensuring that good standards of pupil behaviour are maintained on school transport. Appropriate disciplinary procedures should be implemented by the school if necessary.

Incidents of misconduct by pupils will be reported to you at the earliest opportunity and an Incident Report should be provided by the bus company within 24 hours.

Please give every assistance in identifying culprits and liaise closely both with the bus companies and the Transportation Unit of the Council on the appropriate course of action which, as well as interviews with the pupils concerned, may include one or more of the following:-

- (a). A personal interview with the parents/guardians
- (b). Temporary withdrawal of entitlement to transport (Following discussion with the Transportation Unit)

- (c). Seeking financial compensation from parents/ guardians for damage caused (Following discussion with operators)
- (d). Involving the police in cases of criminal damage (Following discussion with operators).

6. Changes to Service Schedules

Requests for any changes to the school transport schedules (e.g. for sports days at different locations) must be done through the Council's Transport Unit and any additional financial requirements of the transport provider will be met by the school directly.

Contractors

See also guidelines for Drivers and Escorts

1. General

You are responsible for the safe provision of transport in accordance with the Conditions of Contract. Failure to meet the specification will result in deductions being made from payments, and ultimately in termination of the contract.

2. Standards of Operation

You are responsible for ensuring that the highest possible standards of operation are maintained, including the provision of well maintained, properly licensed and equipped vehicles, appropriately licensed drivers and, where required, suitable escorts. It may assist you to provide litter bags.

You are responsible for the behaviour of your staff carrying out contracts.

3. Liaison with Schools

Schools have been asked to nominate a member of staff and a deputy with whom you can liaise directly on transport matters. You will be given the names of the nominated staff at the schools which you serve and should make contact at the earliest opportunity if there are any problems with transport arrangements.

In particular you will need to liaise with primary schools about arrangements for transferring pupils from the care of the escort into the care of the responsible member of staff and vice versa.

The Transportation Unit of the Vale of Glamorgan should be kept fully informed of any discussions which you have with schools, particularly if any changes to transport arrangements are proposed.

4. Vehicle Breakdown or Accident

In the event of a breakdown, accident, or anything else which prevents a journey being completed in the normal way, the driver or escort should contact you as quickly as possible. You must then immediately arrange alternative transport provision for the pupils, if necessary by sub contracting with another licensed operator approved by the Council.

You must also notify the Transportation Unit and the school(s) concerned so that, if necessary, parents can be advised of the situation.

5. Bus Passes

Drivers and escorts should always check bus passes so pupils get used to showing them.

If a pupil is not entitled to free transport and the parents/guardians refuse to purchase a pass, or if there are no available spaces for parents/guardians to be

able to purchase a pass, then notice will be given to them and to you that, from a given date, transport will be refused. Drivers (and escorts) must then be instructed accordingly.

6. Inability to Provide Transport

If for any reason you are unable, either temporarily or permanently to provide the contracted transport, then the Transportation Unit must be notified immediately so alternative arrangements can be made. In an emergency, sub contracting to another licensed operator approved by the Council is acceptable, but the Transportation Unit must be informed at the earliest opportunity.

7. Pupil Misconduct

In the event of serious misconduct by pupils on school transport, both the school and the Transport Unit of the Council must be notified by phone at the earliest opportunity. An Incident Report must be completed by the driver and escort and copies sent to the school and the Transportation Unit within 24 hours.

Pupils involved in misconduct should not be removed from the vehicle and simply left at the roadside part way along the route to make their own way home or to school. The driver is entitled to stop the vehicle to try to restore order, or to report to you by phone, (under primary legislation, in extreme cases, the driver may put the pupil off the bus if he/she feels that they are a danger to the vehicle or to others).

On morning journeys the vehicle should continue to the school where the driver and/or escort should immediately report the matter. On afternoon journeys if an incident occurs at or near the school the vehicle and pupils can be returned to the school immediately and the matter reported to school staff. In very extreme cases the vehicle and pupils can be taken to a nearby police station. However, you and your staff will need to consider carefully whether a detour and a delay in completing the journey may make matters worse. In practice, it may be preferable to complete the journey in the normal way and report the incident quickly.

In all cases, early reporting to both the school and the Transport Unit is vital. Every assistance will then be given in identifying the culprits, taking appropriate disciplinary measures and obtaining redress.

You must not take disciplinary action, e.g. ban a pupil without prior approval of the Transportation Unit. That approval will not be unreasonably withheld.

8. Carriage of unauthorised persons

Under no circumstances may any person not authorised by the Authority be allowed to travel on school transport contracted within the Education Act.

Drivers

1. General Conduct

Please treat pupils in a business-like, polite and friendly manner. Whilst firmness will be needed, in no circumstances is bad language or aggressive behaviour acceptable.

Physical contact with pupils should not normally be necessary, except to restrain bad behaviour when great care must be exercised. Pupils must not be struck, manhandled or physically threatened.

2. Safety and General Driving Standards

You are responsible for the safety and comfort of pupils travelling on your vehicle. Drivers of minibuses should ensure that seat belts are worn. A high degree of professionalism is expected in the way the vehicle is handled. This will include good awareness of other road users, including pedestrians, anticipation of their possible actions, as well as proper control of speed to avoid harsh acceleration or braking. Never drive with the door open.

3. Boarding and Alighting Points

Particular care should be taken at or near boarding and alighting points. Only recognised bus stops or other authorised points should be used.

Boarding points should be approached with caution, particularly if there are large numbers of pupils waiting, in case there is any jostling to get to the bus before it stops. Look out for latecomers who may take risks in trying to get to the bus before it stops. Do not open the door until the bus is at a standstill, and allow time for pupils to sit down before moving off.

At alighting points care should be taken before moving off so that all pupils are clear of the vehicle and that no coats or bags are caught in the door mechanism. Check the nearside mirror every time, and do not move off until the door is closed.

4. Pupil Misconduct

Whenever serious misconduct by pupils occurs you, or the escort, if one is present, should complete an Incident Report at the earliest opportunity for your company to forward copies to the school and the Transportation Unit of the Council within 24 hours. Whenever possible the names of the pupils involved should be given together with address, date of birth or class, form teachers name or bus pass number.

You are authorised to stop your vehicle if necessary to try to restore order and/or report by phone to your depot. However, you are NOT authorised to remove pupils from the vehicle part way along the route and leave them at the roadside to make their own way home or to school (unless you feel that the pupil is a danger to the vehicle or other pupils and you should then advise the Council

immediately so that alternative arrangements can be made for the pupil for safety reasons).

On morning journeys you should continue to the school and if possible report any incident immediately on arrival to an appropriate member of the school staff.

On afternoon journeys if an incident occurs at or near the school the vehicle and pupils can be returned to the school, in order to report to school staff. In very extreme cases, the vehicle and pupils can be taken to a nearby police station. However you will have to consider whether a detour from the normal route and a delay in completing the journey may simply make matters worse. In practice it may be preferable to complete the journey in the normal way and report the incident quickly.

5. Vehicle Breakdown or Accident

Make sure you have always got the emergency phone numbers you need - e.g. your depot, school(s), and the Transportation Unit of the Vale of Glamorgan Council, together with some coins for a pay phone.

In the event of a vehicle breakdown, accident or anything else which prevents a journey from being completed in the normal way, your first consideration must be the safety of the pupils. Unless it is unsafe, pupils should be told to remain seated. If not safe, pupils should be escorted together to safe location. You should call for help by whatever means possible, including notifying your depot. On services with an escort one of you should stay with the pupils. On secondary school transport, depending on the location and circumstances, a senior pupil may be asked to phone for assistance, making sure that they have the phone numbers and money to make the calls. Where no public phone is readily available, ask to use a private phone (e.g. in a shop, garage, pub or private house). Many people will oblige in the circumstances.

6. Bus Passes

Passes should always be checked so pupils are used to showing them.

Pupils not showing a pass for whatever reasons should not be allowed to travel.

When you have been given specific advance notice by the Transportation Unit, via your employer, that a particular pupil is not entitled to travel, you must refuse travel from the date given. The pupil and parents/guardians will have been given prior notice that travel will be refused from that date.

7. Smoking

You must not smoke whilst carrying out school transport duties. It is an offence in law to smoke on board a vehicle that is used to transport members of the public at any time. The details of any person identified smoking onboard any school transport or public transport service will be forwarded on to the Council's Environmental Health Officers, which may result in further action being taken in line with legislation. In addition, you may be prohibited from driving Vale of Glamorgan Council school transport and supported public transport services.

8. Carriage of Unauthorised Persons

Under no circumstances must any person not authorised by the Authority be allowed to travel on school transport operating under the Education Act. This does not apply to registered bus services operating under the terms of the Transport Act 1985.

Escorts

(Normally only employed on Primary School Transport)

1. General Conduct

Please treat pupils in a business-like but polite and friendly manner. Whilst firmness will be needed, in no circumstances is bad language or aggressive behaviour acceptable.

Physical contact with pupils may be necessary when helping them on or off the vehicle and when seeking to retain bad behaviour, but great care should then be exercised. Pupils must never be struck, manhandled or physically threatened.

2. Safety

You share the driver's responsibility for the safety of the pupils as they get on or off, or travel on the vehicle.

If your vehicle is fitted with seatbelts, you must make every reasonable effort to ensure that they are worn.

3. Active Supervision

Actively supervise the pupils on the vehicle and whilst getting on or off, which may involve moving up and down during the journey, encouraging pupils to stay seated and generally behave properly.

Getting on or off should be supervised from the kerbside with help being given as appropriate, especially for younger children.

Particularly check that pupils who have just got off are clear of the vehicle before the driver moves off.

4. Pupil Misconduct

Pupils misconduct should be minimised by active supervision and by trying to curb bad behaviour as soon as it arises. If an incident of serious misconduct does occur, seek to restore order quickly. If necessary, the driver is authorised to stop the vehicle in order to assist.

Pupils are NOT to be turned off the vehicle part way along the route and left at the roadside to make their own way home or to school.

The driver or yourself should complete an Incident Report at the earliest opportunity for your company to forward to the school and the Transportation Unit within 24 hours.

5. Primary Schools - transfer to/from school

In the mornings, primary school pupils should be transferred into the care of a responsible member of the school staff. Similarly in the afternoons the school should transfer the pupils into your care.

6. Primary School Pupils – Delays during the home end of the Journey

Primary school pupils should only be set down at their normal stop in the afternoons unless there has been a specific request from a parent/guardian directly or via the school.

If a parent/guardian of a primary school child has not arrived to meet their child/ren off the vehicle in the afternoon (return journey) the following actions will be taken to ensure the child/ren's continued safety.

- (a) Where it is identified that parents have not arrived, the operator must contact the Council immediately.
- (b) The pupil will not be left at the roadside, but will be kept on the vehicle whilst it continues its journey, and whilst alternative arrangements are put into place. These may include
 - Return to school
 - Involvement of education welfare service
 - Return to depot or
 - Being taken to a local police station

7. Primary School Pupils - Home end of the Journey

In the event of a vehicle breakdown, accident, or anything else which prevents a journey being completed in the normal way, your first consideration must be the safety of the pupils. Unless unsafe for them to do so, pupils should be told to stay seated on the vehicle. If not safe they should be escorted together to a safe location. Either you or the driver should then stay to supervise the pupils, whilst the other goes to call for help by whatever means possible, including notifying your depot.

8. Bus Passes

Assist drivers to regularly check passes so that pupils get used to showing them.

When you or the driver has been given specific notice, via your employer, that a particular pupil is not entitled to travel, you must refuse travel from that given date. The pupil and parents/guardians will have been given prior notice that travel will be refused from that date.

9. Smoking

You must not smoke whilst carrying out school transport duties. It is an offence in law to smoke on board a vehicle that is used to transport members of the public at any time. The details of any person identified smoking onboard any school transport or public transport service will be forwarded on to the Council's Environmental Health Officers, which may result in further action being taken in line with legislation. In addition, you may be prohibited from undertaking escort duties on Vale of Glamorgan Council school transport and supported public transport services.