



VALE OF GLAMORGAN COUNCIL

SCHOOL TRANSPORT

(Special Educational Needs)

**TRANSPORT POLICY AND CODE OF
GOOD PRACTICE**

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Introduction

TRANSPORT ARRANGEMENTS FOR CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS (SEN)

This document has been produced by The Vale of Glamorgan Council to provide Contractors, Drivers, Escorts, Schools and Parents with a policy and good practice guide concerning the provision of Special Educational Transport.

This document is issued to -

- Parents of pupils who travel on Special Education transport;
- All Schools served by SEN transport provision
- All Contractors for subsequent distribution to all drivers and escorts.

Useful telephone numbers –

SEN School Transport Co-ordinator: Tel No 01446 709115

Pupil Support Service: Tel No 01446 709183

If you have any queries regarding the contents of this Policy and Code of Practice, please contact the Educational Services on Tel 01446 709727 or **Email**
MMatthews@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk

VALE OF GLAMORGAN COUNCIL

SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS 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.

Entitlement to Special Education Transport

The policy on the provision of transport for children with a disability and/or experiencing special educational needs has been developed to be consistent with guidance within the Special Educational Needs Code of Practice for Wales 2002 and the SEN and Disability Act 2001.

Transport requirements are considered as part of the full assessment of a child's special educational needs. If a child's needs are such that there are no associated transport requirements, the mainstream home to school transport policy will apply.

School age Children – Assessment of Transport Requirements

Pupils whose individual needs are considered to determine whether there is a requirement for special education transport include those with severe and/or complex:

- Cognition and Learning;
- Social, emotional and behavioural difficulties;
- Physical, medical or sensory difficulties;
- Communication difficulties or an autistic spectrum disorder.

In undertaking formal assessment of a child's individual needs the Authority will gather information from a range of sources and determine the provision and placement necessary to meet those needs. Any individual requirements for transport will be assessed by the statement as part of this process. Key sources of information in respect of transport will be: educational psychologist, staff physiotherapists, and the school or setting attended by the child. For some children information provided by social services will also be relevant.

A child will be eligible for free transport if:

- Attending a designated special school irrespective of distance criteria;
- Attending a designated special unit/class in a mainstream school setting which is outside of a child's normal designated catchment area school, irrespective of distance criteria and
- Attending a special unit/class in a mainstream school, which is within the designated catchment area of the child's home address but where it is more than

2 miles from the parental home for primary aged children and 3 miles for a secondary age child. Distance will be measured by the nearest available route.

Pre-School Age Children

Pre-school age children attending the nearest appropriate special school, who have a statement or are undergoing formal assessment will normally qualify for free school transport as part of the statement process.

Pupils requiring medication

Advice has been received from the Principal Schools Medical Officer that escorts on school transport should have training on first aid and epilepsy awareness. This currently takes place.

However the PSMO and the epilepsy trainer advise that no medication is given on transport, in particular buccal medazolone, rather that the following take place:

- Escorts to be trained in first aid and epilepsy awareness (as part of an annual programme, generally carried out prior to the start of a new academic year.)
- Risk assessment initiated by the school with advice from the relevant health professional
- Health care plan in place for each pupil
- Details of emergency procedures and contact, with medication to 'travel' with the pupil.
- Escorts to be made aware of the general health needs of the pupil.
- Should the pupil suffer a seizure on the transport 999 should be called, or taken to their home or school if in close proximity. (This should be clarified in the health care plan)
- Medication handed to the paramedics on arrival.

Inclusion

It is the authority's policy to support inclusive education. This means that individual needs will be met as local as possible to a child's home. In making decisions about any placement the Authority will take into account transport issues including transport and cost.

For some pupils, dual placement is appropriate to enable them to attend their local school, while also assessing the necessary resources or expertise within a specialist setting. When the authority determines that dual placement is appropriate consideration will be given to whether transport should be provided and the organisation of sessions to minimise transport costs, consistent with the child's educational needs.

Day placements outside of the Vale of Glamorgan

If provision to meet individual needs is not available within the Vale of Glamorgan, a decision may be taken that a day school in a neighbouring LEA is the nearest appropriate placement. Transport will normally be provided on a daily basis.

Residential Placements outside of the Vale of Glamorgan

A very small number of pupils with the most complex needs attend residential schools or settings. The decision that this is appropriate is taken by the Learning and Development Department. Transport arrangements and costs are considered as part of the overall decision making about the placement. Transport may be provided on the following basis.

- **Weekly or fortnightly boarding** – transport for the child to return home weekly or fortnightly during term time
- **38 week Termly boarding** – transport at the beginning and end of each half term and one additional return journey per half term
- **51/52 Week Residential Placements** – one return journey per term

Where appropriate and agreed parents may be reimbursed transport costs for transporting children in the above circumstances.

Only in exceptional circumstances will the authority consider requests for additional transport, which must be discussed and agreed in advance with the Pupil Support Service and Transport Co-ordinator.

Escort Provision

Where it is deemed appropriate to the child's health and safety needs an escort will be provided on the journey to and from school. The continuing need for an escort will be reviewed annually with a child's statement.

Escorts will be required to attend relevant training, which would help in their understanding and management of children with special needs (e.g. First Aid, Lifting Manual Handling etc), and the use of appropriate wheelchair and safety restraint systems.

Parental Preference of Educational Placements

If parents decline an offer of a placement at an appropriate school for their child's needs and prefer their child to attend an alternative appropriate school, parents assume responsibility for associated transport costs to that preferred school. Parents would be responsible for both making transport arrangements and the financial cost of the transport. This responsibility will be specified in the child's statement.

Parental Responsibilities

The parents/carers of children accessing special needs transport provision maybe asked to supply information to ensure transport arrangements meet the specific needs of their child.

Parents should also be aware that:

- Children must be ready at the times agreed to ensure efficient running of the service. Where pupils are persistently late in boarding the transport causing delays in the route, this may result ultimately in the withdrawal of transport until the difficulty is resolved. Parents must meet the transport in the mornings.
- It is parental responsibility to ensure that an appropriate adult is there to meet the transport and collect their child when they return from school. Failure to do so could result in the withdrawal of the transport provision until the difficulty is resolved. Where an escort or driver has found no appropriate adult available and is unable to leave the child they would need to seek advice from the Transport Co-ordinator. Where no responsible adult can be located, the child may be left in the temporary care of Social Services or at the nearest police station.
- Transport is provided from home to school only and alternative arrangements should **not** be made with the driver/escort. There is no obligation to transport children to an alternative address. If, in an emergency, a child needs to be conveyed elsewhere, permission must be sought, from the Transport Co-ordinator.

Additional Journeys

All journeys must be agreed in advance with the Pupil Support Service and Transport Co-ordinator. The authority will not be responsible for the cost of any additional journeys arranged by parents and school. School transport operators are instructed only to transport children to and from their home address in accordance with their contract.

Transport to Respite Care

The authority is under no obligation to provide school transport to respite care provision. Transport may be provided but only where adequate notice is given and an existing contractor is able to carry out the particular request. Where an additional charge is made this is recouped from Children's Services. **If a contractor is unable to comply with a request parents, social services, Vale Short Breaks (NCH) assume responsibility for transportation organisation and costs.**

Looked After Children (LAC)

The aim is for all looked after children to attend their local mainstream school, or special school or provision as appropriate. Whenever a Looked After Child is moved out of the area and it is preferable for the child to remain at their current school,

school transport maybe provided. If a long-term placement is arranged, it may be preferable for a LAC to move to the local school where transport may not be required.

Transport may be provided only where adequate notice is given with a minimum of two weeks notice. Social Services will fund transport for these first two weeks and thereafter transport costs will be shared between the Pupil Support Service and Children's Services.

VALE OF GLAMORGAN COUNCIL

CODE OF GOOD PRACTICE/GUIDELINES FOR SCHOOL TRANSPORT SERVICES FOR CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

These guidelines are intended to clarify the responsibilities of the education service, contractors and their staff, schools and parents to ensure the smooth operation of school transport services.

They are to be read alongside the transport policy and are intended to offer guidance and advice on all matters relating to Home to School Transport for Special Educational Needs Pupils.

Our Commitment

The Vale of Glamorgan Council aims to provide the transport necessary for pupils to travel to and from school without undue stress, strain or difficulty such as would prevent them from benefiting from the education their school has to offer. Pupils should be able to travel in safety and reasonable comfort. We will take such steps, as we consider necessary to satisfy ourselves of the appropriateness of vehicles, drivers and escorts.

Role of the Pupil Support Service

The pupil support Service is responsible for:

- Determining entitlement and any subsequent review of transport for pupils with special educational needs.
- Determining the requirement for escort provision.
- Providing the Transport Co-ordinator with information on pupils to be conveyed and their transport requirements, changes in address, changes in circumstances and children leaving or changing school. This information should be provided in writing giving at least two weeks notice where possible.
- Providing the Transport Co-ordinator with information of the requirements for special equipment (for example harnesses, special seats etc).
- Where necessary, Pupil Support Service staff will liaise with the Transport Co-ordinator on special training requirements for escorts

Role of the Transport Co-ordinator

Contract Procurement.

- Following receipt of information from Pupil Support Service staff, the Education Service/Transport Coordinator is responsible for arranging contracts for appropriate home to school transport for pupils with special educational needs.
- The Transport Co-ordinator will determine routes, types of vehicles, picking up and dropping off arrangements.
- The Transport Co-ordinator will liaise with the Pupil Support Services in determining individual requirements for special equipment for pupils with special needs as well as in the allocation of this equipment.
- The Transport Co-ordinator is responsible for maintaining contracts, including allocating new pupils to routes, arranging changes to routes, negotiating contract price adjustments and investigating complaints about transport operations in accordance with the Vale of Glamorgan Complaints Procedures.

Monitoring of Transport

The transport Co-ordinator will:

- Monitor contract operations and compliance.
- Log and investigate all complaints relating to the operation of transport in accordance with The Vale of Glamorgan's Complaints Procedures.
- Ensure that all drivers and escorts have a Criminal Records Bureau check.
- Be the main point of contact for Contractors and school staff in emergencies, such as breakdown, adverse weather conditions etc. and will, if required, initiate any emergency procedures to ensure the safe return of pupils to an appropriate place.

Training

- The Education Services/Transport Co-ordinator is responsible for arranging the training of escorts and/or drivers and any special requirements for working with children with special educational needs.

Notification of Transport Arrangements

- The Transport Co-ordinator will notify parents of transport arrangements in advance of the commencement of the academic year or at the earliest

opportunity for arrangements within the academic year. Timings will be approximate and children should be ready in advance of time indicated for the first morning of travel. The driver will be able to give a more accurate indication of timings after the first day.

The Contractor

(See also guidelines for Drivers and Escorts)

General

- The contractor is responsible for the safe provision of transport in accordance with the Council's Terms and Conditions of Contract. Failure to comply will result in penalties and ultimately in termination of the contract.
- The contractor shall report any problems regarding routing/operational matters, e.g. access problems, seating, harnessing etc as soon as is practicable, to the Transport Co-ordinator.
- The authority will not be held responsible for damage to the vehicle caused by children traveling.

Vehicles

As a contractor you must ensure that:

- All vehicles used in the performance of the service are licensed in all respects, insured, equipped, and maintained in a thoroughly safe and roadworthy condition in accordance with Department of Transport Regulations, manufacturers' recommendations and the requirements of the Council.
- All vehicles will meet the requirements contained in the Terms and Conditions of Contract.
- All vehicles used will be kept clean to a high standard inside and out. They shall be comfortable, properly heated and ventilated to ensure the comfort of the pupils.
- The Transport Co-ordinator is provided with information on all types of vehicles to be operated on the Contract prior to contracts commencing.
- Where it is considered necessary to replace or temporarily substitute a vehicle due to service requirements, renewal etc., you must ensure that the replacement vehicle is of an equivalent standard in so far as age, size, quality and accessibility are concerned and that the details are passed to the Transport Co-ordinator.
- All Hackney Carriage Vehicles, Private Hire Vehicles will be fitted with seat belts on all seats. It is the responsibility of the driver to ensure that passengers wear seat belts in accordance with the Council's Conditions of Contract.
- All vehicles transporting passengers in wheelchairs/buggies will be fitted with an appropriate tracking system on which to fix clamps, webbing and seatbelt

restraints in accordance with the Department of Transport Code of Practice “The safety of passengers in wheelchairs on buses (publication VSE87/1)”. A seat belt restraint such as a three point inertia reel harness, must also be provided. These will be utilised at all times.

- All vehicles transporting passengers in wheelchairs will be fitted with a mechanical tail lift. The use of a gradient ramp (which should not exceed 1 in 12) maybe considered necessary but only after discussions with Education service and Transport Co-ordinator.
- All vehicles will be fitted with a First Aid Kit and a Fire Extinguisher. These shall be fitted in an easily accessible position in accordance with The Road Vehicles (Constructions and Use) Regulations 1996 and BS5423. The contents of both the First Aid Box and the Extinguisher(s) are to be checked at appropriate intervals and replenished as necessary. The location of the equipment should be clearly signed, and be accessible without the need for keys.
- All vehicles operated with a capacity in excess of eight passenger seats will preferably have a bottom step a maximum of 325 millimeters above the ground, at the rear of the vehicle and to other main exits.
- The roof height of vehicles that carry more than two wheelchairs should be such as to enable escorts to maneuver passengers to and from seats and wheelchairs.
- All seats will be fitted with appropriate seat belts in accordance with the conditions of contract and current seat belt legislation.
- Distinctive yellow and black signs are required to be displayed to the front and rear of all vehicles with more than eight seats transporting children to and from school, in accordance with the Road Vehicles Lighting (Amendment) Regulations 1994. These signs are to be plainly visible to other road users.
- A mobile phone must be carried on vehicles at all times for communication and emergency situations.
- Vehicles arrive no earlier than 10 minutes before school commences unless with prior arrangement between Transport Co-ordinator and School.
- Vehicles are in place at least five minutes before the end of the school day to receive pupils.

Drivers and Escorts

- Contractors should ensure that drivers are appropriately licensed and that drivers/escorts have a valid Criminal Records Bureau before using them on a school contract. You will be required to provide drivers/escorts details, names

addresses etc, to the Transport Co-ordinator prior to contract starting and where necessary inform of any changes throughout the year.

- Contractors must ensure that all drivers and escorts, where appropriate, introduce themselves to parents prior to the commencement of the school term. This will ensure that parents familiarise themselves with drivers/escorts and allay any anxieties that they may have with regard to their children's travel arrangements to school. All parents will also be notified in writing informing of contractual arrangements for their children's travel to school.
- Contractors must assign regular staff to specific routes as part of their conditions of contract to avoid undue distress to passengers and parents. This is essential for continuity purposes for parents, children and schools, particularly where specific transportation needs are identified and are in place for a particular child/children.
- Contractors must inform parents, school and the Transport Co-ordinator at all times when there is a change to a driver/escort.
- Contractors must ensure that new drivers/escorts are made aware of any specific medical and transport needs required for those children travelling.
- Contractors must advise drivers and escorts that no medication should be administered to pupils whilst on home to school transport. The transport co-ordinator must be advised if a parents requests medication to be administered for a child whilst on transport.

Passengers

- Passengers shall be transported between designated pick-up points at home and school, unless alternative arrangements have been agreed with the Transport Co-ordinator.
- Each passenger should be passed over to a member of school staff in the morning and a parent/responsible person in the afternoon. The escort/driver should not leave the vehicle unattended at any time with other children on board.
- Passengers should not be transferred from one vehicle to another en route except where such and breakdown or other emergency. Safe transfer practices will be observed. No child will be left en route unsupervised whilst waiting for another vehicle to arrive.
- The contractor shall ensure that passengers are taken directly to the intended destination (home or school) and under no circumstances must a Contractor deviate from the specified service or undertake other work whilst engaged on the school contract.

- All passengers must be provided with their own individual seat on the vehicle and may not 'double up' and place two children on an adult seat or three children on two adult seats. The Contractor shall also ensure that the vehicle does not carry more passengers than it is licensed for.
- Should a passenger require urgent medical assistance, the passenger concerned should be made as comfortable as possible and the driver/escort should contact the emergency services or take the passenger to the nearest point where help will be available. This could be either back to school, to the passenger's home base or to the nearest available Medical Centre (whichever is closest). In all instances parents must be contacted to advise of the situation. Such arrangements will be specified in a child's Individual Pupil Profile/Risk Assessment, where appropriate, where a known significant medical risk exists. If necessary, the other passengers should remain on board until the sick passenger is delivered to an appropriate responsible person. If other passengers are delayed because of the emergency, contact should be made with the Transport Co-ordinator and home base/school as soon as practically possible.

Special/Safety Equipment

- Contractors are responsible for the security of any special equipment (seats, harnesses etc.) provided by the Transport Co-ordinator that are used on vehicles and for the return of such equipment at the end of the contract period.
- The Contractor shall fit safely and securely, in accordance with manufacturer's instructions, any special child seats, harnesses or other specialised equipment as specified by the Transport Co-ordinator. These items may be supplied on loan by the Council for the duration of the Contract and shall be returned in good condition either at the request of the Transport Co-ordinator or upon expiry of the Contract.

Vehicle Breakdowns, Accidents and Hazardous Weather Conditions

- In the event of a vehicle breakdown, accident or anything else that prevents a journey being completed, all reasonable precautions should be taken to ensure the well being of passengers. Under no circumstances must the passengers be left alone and, where possible, they should remain in the vehicle. If it is deemed unsafe to do so, then they should be escorted to a place of safety. The driver should alert the Transport Co-ordinator or the Contractor immediately to any such occurrence. The utmost care should be taken to minimise distress or discomfort in the event of a breakdown.
- In the case of bad weather when roads may be particularly bad and hazardous, contractors should decide whether or not to operate their vehicle(s). Any decision should be made with the safety of passengers in mind. Contractors must alert the Transport Co-ordinator, parents as soon as possible to a decision not to operate.

Pupil Misbehavior

- Problems experienced with behavior should be reported to the Transport Co-ordinator, Head Teacher and Parent. Repeated misbehavior must be reported to the Transport Co-ordinator.

Medical Issues

- Any problems experienced with medical difficulties must be reported to the Transport Co-ordinator and Head Teacher.

Training

- Contractors must be available to attend any relevant training which would help in their understanding and management of children with special needs (e.g. first aid, lifting and handling etc), and the use of appropriate wheelchair and safety restraint systems.

Smoking

- The contractor shall ensure that drivers and escorts do not smoke in and around the vehicle whilst passengers are on board.

Carriage of Unauthorised Passengers

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

The Driver

General

- Avoid physical contact with pupils wherever possible. Maintain a courteous and professionally detached relationship with your passengers, parents and escort. Do not give gifts and avoid inappropriate conversations, topics and language at all times.
- Drivers shall wear a personal identification badge with a photograph issued by the Vale of Glamorgan Council, which must be worn at all times.
- All drivers must have a satisfactory CRB checked before commencing duties.
- The escort and driver should work as a team with the escort being responsible for the control and supervision of the passengers.
- Drivers accompanied by an escort, where appropriate, must arrange to meet and make themselves known to parent(s)/carer(s) in advance of the first day on which transport is to commence.
- Drivers provide an important link between home and school and should note the time, place and details of any medical or serious incident whilst traveling and ensure that it is recorded in school on the day of the occurrence or if the incident occurs on the homeward journey on the following day.
- Be prepared to act as a messenger between school, parents and pupils but do not take instructions from parents or children, such as varying the transport arrangements without first discussing with the Transport Co-ordinator.
- Passengers shall be transported between designated pick-up points at home and school, unless alternative arrangements have been agreed with the Transport Co-ordinator.
- Each passenger must be passed over to a member of school staff in the morning and a parent/responsible person in the afternoon. The driver must not leave the vehicle unattended at any time with other children on board.
- On the advice of the Principal Schools Medical Officer, **no medication** should be administered to pupils whilst on home to school transport. The Transport Co-ordinator must be advised immediately if a parents requests medication to be administered for a child whilst on transport.

Safety

- The driver is in overall charge of the vehicle and its operation and is responsible for ensuring that the vehicle is driven in a safe and secure manner.

- The driver will comply at all times with current road traffic legislation.
- Ultimately it is the responsibility of the driver to ensure that all doors are closed and all passengers are seated safely and securely fastened as appropriate before the vehicle moves off and that no coats, bags or other obstructions, are caught in the mechanism of the door (inside or outside).
- The driver should ensure that all passengers' belongings and equipment are safely stored and clear of aisles.
- Drivers must make absolutely sure that all disembarked children are well clear of the vehicle before moving off and that no one is dashing back for property left behind.
- When reversing, drivers should ensure that everyone is well clear of the vehicle.

Passengers

- Drivers should assist passengers to board and alight the vehicle but must not leave the vehicle unattended, particularly when other pupils are left on board.
- Passengers in wheelchairs should be correctly secured in the vehicle in accordance with the 'Code of Practice on the Safety of Passengers in Wheelchairs on Buses' (VSE 87/1) and council contract terms and conditions.
- Assistance should be given to the escort, (if applicable) when required, in carrying out his/her duties including use of the tail lift, securing doors etc.
- Upon arrival at a child's home or school, the driver should assist the passenger to alight from the vehicle before handing responsibility over to the nominated responsible adult whom should meet the child from the vehicle. The driver should not leave the vehicle, with other pupils, unattended.
- Passengers should not be left unattended in the vehicle at any time except where assistance is being given to a passenger in boarding or alighting from the vehicle. The driver must not at any time leave the vehicle completely unattended with passengers on board. If a driver has cause to leave his vehicle with the escort in charge, the ignition keys must be removed.
- Should a passenger require urgent medical assistance, the passenger concerned should be made as comfortable as possible and the driver/escort contact the emergency services or take the passenger to the nearest point where help will be available. This could be either back to school, to the passenger's home base or to the nearest available Medical Centre (whichever is closest). In all instances parents must be contacted to advise of the situation. Such arrangements will be specified in a child's Individual Pupil Profile/Risk Assessment, where appropriate, where a known significant medical risk exists. If necessary, the other passengers

should remain on board until the sick passenger is delivered to an appropriate responsible person. If other passengers are delayed because of the emergency, contact should be made with the Transport Co-ordinator and home base/school as soon as practically possible.

- If a parent or guardian is not at home when the driver delivers a passenger, the passenger should be returned to the vehicle. The driver should alert the Transport Co-ordinator immediately to the problem by phone and again after 5 minutes for advice. If the parent has not returned, the vehicle should continue on its route. A note must be left for the parent/guardian and should explain what has been done. The driver should seek updated advice from the Transport Co-ordinator at the end of the route and before returning to the home address. The passenger should never be taken to the home(s) of the driver/escort. The driver may be instructed by the Transport Co-ordinator to take the passenger to an alternative address or to a local police station.

Boarding and Alighting Points

- Drivers must follow the scheduled route and use only designated pick up and set down points. If it proves impossible to maintain the scheduled timetable, notify the Transport Co-ordinator.

Change in Circumstances

- If there has been a change in circumstances, without prior notification, such as a change to a child's wheelchair or different picking up and dropping off points, and there are health and safety concerns associated with a change, a driver/escort should advise the parent that transport is not available. An example of this is where a child travels in a different wheelchair, without prior notification, and the appropriate clamps and restraint systems are not available for that particular chair, a driver must resist pressure from a parent to transport on the grounds of health and safety.

Mobile Phone

- A mobile phone must be carried on vehicles at all times for communication and emergency situations. Mobile phone regulations must be adhered to at all times.

Vehicle Breakdowns, Accidents and Hazardous Weather Conditions

- In the event of a vehicle breakdown, accident or anything else that prevents a journey being completed, all reasonable precautions should be taken to ensure the well being of passengers in that immediate help is summoned. Under no circumstances must the passengers be left alone and, where possible, they should remain in the vehicle. If it is deemed unsafe to do so, then they should be escorted to a place of safety. The driver should alert the Transport Contractor and Transport Co-ordinator immediately to any such occurrence to ensure the safe and expeditious completion of the child's journey. The utmost care should be taken to minimise distress or discomfort in the event of a breakdown. Outside

of office hours information may be faxed, but all further appropriate measures must also be taken, including, if necessary, contacting parents to advise them of the situation.

Pupil Misbehaviour/Injury

- Report any incident of misbehaviour to the headteacher and Transport Co-ordinator.
- Drivers must never try to deal with a misbehaving child whilst the vehicle is moving. Where the driver needs to intervene, he/she should stop the vehicle, deal with the problem and then drive on if it is safe to do so, otherwise contact the Transport Co-ordinator for advice. Children should be dropped off at the usual point. The misbehaviour should be reported to the Transport Co-ordinator at the earliest opportunity.
- Where a vehicle has no escort and a child absconds, the driver must inform the school and the Transport Co-ordinator immediately.
- Any injury to a child must be reported immediately to the Transport Co-ordinator for a permanent record to be made.

Training

- Drivers must be available to attend any relevant training which would help in their understanding and management of children with special needs (e.g. first aid, lifting and handling etc), and the use of appropriate wheelchair and safety restraint systems.

Smoking

- Drivers must not smoke in and around the vehicle whilst passengers are on board. It is an offence in law to do so whilst the vehicle is in motion or when it has passengers on board. Drivers should not smoke at any time whilst responsible for the vehicle.

Carriage of Unauthorised Passengers

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

The Escort

General

- The driver is in overall charge of the vehicle and its operation and is responsible for ensuring that the vehicle is driven in a safe and secure manner.
- The escort should be of good character and medically fit and suitably clothed to work with school children.
- Escorts shall wear a personal identification badge with a photograph issued by the Vale of Glamorgan Council which must be worn at all times.
- The escort and driver should work as a team with the escort being responsible for the control and supervision of the passengers.
- Escorts will accompany a driver to meet parent(s) / carer(s) in advance of the first day on which transport is to commence.
- All escorts must have a satisfactory CRB checked before commencing duties.
- Maintain a courteous and professionally detached relationship with your passengers, parents and driver. Inappropriate conversations, topics and language must be avoided at all times.
- Be prepared to act as a messenger between school, parents and pupils but do not take instructions from parents or children, such as varying the transport arrangements without first discussing with the Transport Co-ordinator.
- Escorts provide an important link between home and school and should note the time, place and details of any medical or serious incident whilst traveling and ensure that it is recorded in school on the day of the occurrence or if the incident occurs on the homeward journey on the following day.
- Passengers shall be transported between designated pick-up points at home and school, unless alternative arrangements have been agreed with the Transport Co-ordinator.
- Each passenger must be passed over to a member of school staff in the morning and a parent/responsible person in the afternoon. The escort should not leave the vehicle unattended at any time with other children on board.
- On the advice of the Principal Schools Medical Officer, **no medication** should be administered to pupils whilst on home to school transport. The Transport Co-ordinator must be advised immediately if a parents requests medication to be administered for a child whilst on transport.

Safety

- The escort is responsible for the direct supervision of the pupils and must remain on or within the immediate vicinity of the vehicle at all times while passengers are on board.
- Actively supervise the children on the vehicle and whilst getting on or off, which may involve moving up or down during the journey, encouraging pupils to stay seated and generally behave properly.
- Provide assistance where necessary to children in distress.
- Escorts must ensure that all children are properly seated and fastened appropriately into their seat belt, special seat, harness and, in the case of wheelchair passengers, that the wheelchair is suitably fastened by use of clamps/webbing and the pupil fastened into an appropriate seat belt/restraint. Passengers in wheelchairs should be correctly secured in the vehicle in accordance with the 'Code of Practice on the Safety of Passengers in Wheelchairs on Buses' (VSE 87/1).
- Escorts should ensure the safe transit of passengers' belongings and special equipment if required.
- Ensure the vehicle completes its routes, and all children are picked up according to the timetable.
- Make sure you are familiar with the particular problems of the children you are escorting.
- Make sure you have received adequate instruction from the appropriate staff at the school and that you are familiar with any safety equipment, i.e. seat belts, wheelchair clamps, first aid kit, fire extinguisher and emergency exits.

Passengers

- Escorts should assist passengers to board and alight the vehicle but must not leave the vehicle unattended, particularly when other pupils are on left on board.
- Passengers in wheelchairs should be correctly secured in the vehicle in accordance with the 'Code of Practice on the Safety of Passengers in Wheelchairs on Buses' (VSE 87/1) and council contract terms and conditions.
- Upon arrival at a child's home or school, the escort should assist the passenger to alight from the vehicle before handing responsibility over to the nominated responsible adult whom should meet the child from the vehicle. The escort should not leave the vehicle, with other pupils, unattended.

- If a responsible adult is not available at the drop off point, be prepared in certain circumstances to take the child for the remainder of the journey before returning to the child's address. Seek updated advice from the Transport Co-ordinator at the end of the route and before returning to the home address. The passenger should never be taken to the home(s) of the driver/escort. The driver may be instructed by the Transport Co-ordinator to take the passenger to an alternative address or to a local police station.
- At the end of the journey, on no account should a passenger be left either alone or with an unauthorised person (Driver will have instructions what action should be taken under these circumstances).
- Should a passenger require urgent medical assistance, the passenger concerned should be made as comfortable as possible and the driver/escort contact the emergency services or take the passenger to the nearest point where help will be available. This could be either back to school, to the passenger's home base or to the nearest available Medical Centre (whichever is closest). In all instances parents must be contacted to advise of the situation. Such arrangements will be specified in a child's Individual Pupil Profile/Risk Assessment, where appropriate, where a known significant medical risk exists. If necessary, the other passengers should remain on board until the sick passenger is delivered to an appropriate responsible person. If other passengers are delayed because of the emergency, contact should be made with the Transport Co-ordinator and home base/school as soon as practically possible.

Boarding and Alighting

- Ensure that children board and alight safely by:-
 - * Keeping doors closed until the vehicle is at a complete standstill
 - * Not allowing children to open or close vehicle doors
 - * Getting off the vehicle to ensure that all children are well clear of the vehicle and that nobody is going back for property they have left behind
 - * Assisting parents to help pupils board and alight
 - * Closing doors before moving off and ensuring nothing is caught in the door
 - * Ensuring all children are seated before the vehicle starts
 - * Stowing all luggage safely and ensuring gangways are kept clear
 - * Ensuring, with the driver, that any restraints and wheelchair clamps are correctly fastened

Change in Circumstances

- If there has been a change in circumstances, without prior notification, such as a change to a wheelchair, and there are health and safety concerns associated with a change, a driver/escort should advise the parent that transport is not available. An example of this is where a child travels in a different wheelchair,

without prior notification, and the appropriate clamps and restraint systems are not available for that particular chair, an escort must resist pressure from a parent to transport on the grounds of health and safety.

Vehicle Breakdowns, Accidents and Hazardous Weather Conditions

- In the event of a vehicle breakdown, accident or anything else that prevents a journey being completed, all reasonable precautions should be taken to ensure the well-being of passengers in that immediate help is summoned. Under no circumstances must the passengers be left alone and, where possible, they should remain in the vehicle. If it is deemed unsafe to do so, then they should be escorted to a place of safety. The driver should alert the Transport Contractor and Transport Co-ordinator immediately to any such occurrence to ensure the safe and expeditious completion of the child's journey. The utmost care should be taken to minimise distress or discomfort in the event of a breakdown. Outside of office hours information may be faxed, but all further appropriate measures must also be taken, including, if necessary, contacting parents to advise them of the situation.

Pupil Misbehaviour/Injury

- Escorts should report any cases of misbehavior by pupils to the Contractor, Headteacher, Transport Co-ordinator and Parents.
- Incidents of violence (verbal or physical) or of serious or repeated misbehavior should be reported to the Contractor, Headteacher, Transport Co-ordinator and Parents as soon as possible.
- Should any pupil be involved in any minor accident whilst on school transport, it will be the responsibility of the escort to ensure that the Headteacher and transport Co-ordinator are informed. On homeward journeys, parents should also be informed.
- Any injury to a child must be reported immediately to the Transport Co-ordinator and school for a permanent record to be made. On homeward journeys, parents should also be informed.
- If a pupil absconds whilst under the care of an escort and/or a driver, the escort must inform the Transport Co-ordinator immediately.

Training

- Escorts must be available to attend any relevant training which would help in their understanding and management of children with special needs (e.g. first aid, lifting and handling etc), and the use of appropriate wheelchair and safety restraint systems.

Smoking

- Escorts must not smoke in and around the vehicle whilst passengers are on board.

Carriage of Unauthorised Passengers

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

Schools

General

- To assist the Council with the distribution of this document.
- To raise an awareness of banned activities – smoking, vandalism, moving about on vehicles, eating, drinking, litter, bullying and fighting.
- School staff should ensure that children have an opportunity to visit the toilet before boarding vehicles.
- In the case of special needs passengers, the Transport Co-ordinator, Pupil Support Service and a school, where appropriate, will be expected to pass on any appropriate information to the escort/driver that will help him/her to better carry out his/her duties and responsibilities. This information could include short-term medical and/or behavioral issues.
- Any messages received from the parent during the day concerning transport arrangements, absences, changes to the responsible adult who will meet the pupil at home etc should always be passed on to the escort in writing.
- To assist the Transport Co-ordinator to notify parents of any breakdowns or accidents, significant changes in transport times in emergencies, absconding of pupils from transport etc.
- Schools must inform the Transport Co-ordinator of any changes of address or other changed circumstances (for example a child leaving school, change of wheelchair, change of child seat etc) that affects school transport. It is important that the Transport Co-ordinator is informed of changes as early as possible.

Staff Supervision

- Ensure adequate staff supervision is available for the reception and departure of children.
- School staff will be expected to ensure the safety of passengers between the school and the vehicle or any other such arrangement in place. The duty to take the children on and off the bus rests with the escort and driver.

Pupil misconduct/Discipline

- To assist the Council with cases of pupil misbehavior. Appropriate disciplinary procedures should be implemented by the school, where necessary, in liaison with the Council.
- Incidents or misconduct will be reported to you at the earliest opportunity.

- Please give every assistance in identifying culprits and liaise closely with bus companies and the Transport Co-ordinator on the appropriate course of action, as well as interviews with the pupils concerned.

Monitoring of School Transport

- Should a transport vehicle fail to operate satisfactorily, schools should contact the School Transport Co-ordinator. Schools should always advise the Educational Service and Transport Co-ordinator when any aspect of a contractor service falls below expected standards.
- Any concerns or complaints identified with seating, restraints etc, or other transport issues should be reported to the Transport Co-ordinator.

Parents and Guardians

General

- Transport is provided from home to school only and alternative arrangements should not be made with the driver/escort. The authority is under no obligation to transport children to an alternative address. If, in an emergency, a child needs to be conveyed elsewhere, permission must be sought, from the Transport Co-ordinator.
- In the case that the parent may not be home from work in time to meet their child from the vehicle then arrangements should be made for someone else to receive the child at the home address.
- The timetabling of transport cannot always be arranged to fit in with parents' domestic arrangements.
- Parents/Guardians should advise the Transport – Co-ordinator, driver/escort and school wherever possible of any short-term absences or alternative arrangements for transport that will mean their child will not be traveling on school transport. Notification should be made in writing.
- Parents/Guardians should also advise the escort if there are any particular difficulties with their child on a particular day.
- Should parents or guardians have any cause for concern about the operations of the contract they should contact the Transport Co-ordinator. Any concerns on entitlement to transport should be discussed with the Pupil Support Section.
- Transport can be withdrawn if a child's behavior is unacceptable and is a danger to those on the transport or other road users. Parents are responsible for any misbehavior or vandalism caused by their child/children. Persistent misbehavior, particularly bullying or fighting, may result in exclusion from a vehicle and serious incidents will be reported to the police. Withdrawal of transport does not excuse your child from attending school.
- It is the responsibility of parents to inform in writing the Transport Co-ordinator and Pupil Support Services of any changes to your circumstances or transport requirements such as a change of address, a change of wheelchair specification etc. Parents should give as much advance notice as possible of any changes as inadequate notice may result in your child being refused transport for a short period.
- Arrangements should be made for telephone numbers to be made available to all parties involved for use in emergencies.

- No medication is to be given to a child whilst on school transport. Advice has been received from the Principal Schools Medical Officer that escorts on school transport should have training on first aid and epilepsy awareness. This currently takes place.

However the PSMO and the epilepsy trainer advise that no medication is given on transport, in particular buccal medazolone, rather that the following take place:

- Escorts to be trained in first aid and epilepsy awareness (as part of an annual programme, generally carried out prior to the start of a new academic year.)
 - Risk assessment initiated by the school with advice from the relevant health professional
 - Health care plan in place for each pupil
 - Details of emergency procedures and contact, with medication to 'travel' with the pupil.
 - Escorts to be made aware of the general health needs of the pupil.
 - Should the pupil suffer a seizure on the transport 999 should be called, or taken to their home or school if in close proximity. (This should be clarified in the health care plan)
 - Medication handed to the paramedics on arrival.
- Parents/Guardians should ensure that any medication needed by their child at school is given to the escort together with any written instructions for the Head Teacher.
 - Any messages to school should be written not verbal where this is possible.
 - It is the responsibility of the parent to take and meet a child from a vehicle as the driver/escort cannot leave a vehicle unattended.
 - Where a service is not door-to-door, it is the parent's responsibility to get their child to and from a pick-up point.

Transport to School

- Parents/Guardians should make sure that their child has visited the toilet before he/she boards the vehicle.
- Parents/Guardians must have children ready for collection at the allotted pick up time as any delays affect the other children being conveyed and lateness in arriving at school, although it is appreciated that this maybe unavoidable in isolated circumstances. Contractors will only wait up to 5 minutes for a child and who will leave after that waiting period.
- It is the responsibility of the parent to take a child to meet the vehicle. Drivers and escorts must not leave a vehicle unattended.

- If the child wears a harness other than that fitted in the vehicle, parents/guardians must make sure he/she is wearing it correctly before the vehicle arrives.
- Children's possessions should be contained in a named bag wherever possible.

Transport from School

- It is the responsibility of the parent to meet the child from the vehicle as the driver/escort cannot leave a vehicle unattended.
- If parents/guardians will not be home when a child is due home, they must write the escort a note in the morning telling him/her who will meet their child at home that afternoon. This information should also be confirmed with the school. If a child is to be returned to a place other than the normal stopping place, then parents/guardians will be responsible for making alternative transport arrangements. In such circumstances both the escort and the school must be notified, in writing in the morning, that the usual transport will not be required home from school that afternoon. Parents/Guardians should also provide details of the arrangements that have been made.
- A responsible adult must be available to receive the child home on return from school. Drivers cannot wait for parents as they often have other duties to fulfill and other families may be inconvenienced
- If, for unavoidable reasons, parents/guardians are not at home when their child arrives, the driver will wait 5 minutes only and will then leave a note and continue on his journey with the other children. If the parent/guardian continues to be unavailable, the driver may be advised to take the child to a care agency such as the Social Services or the nearest police station. Under these circumstances, parents/guardians will be responsible for collecting their child. Drivers/escorts have been instructed not to take children home with them.

Emergency Medical Procedures

- Should a passenger require urgent medical assistance whilst being transported, the passenger concerned will be made as comfortable as possible. The driver and escort will either contact the emergency services or take the passenger to the nearest point where help will be available. This could be either back to the school, to the passenger's home base or to the nearest Medical Centre (whichever is the closest). In all instances parents will be contacted to advise of the situation. The other passengers will remain on board until the sick passenger is delivered to an appropriate responsible person. If other passengers are delayed because of the emergency, contact will be made with the home base as soon as possible with an explanation of the reason for the delay.
- Parents will be advised by the driver/school staff of any medical or serious incident which involves their child on the bus on the day that the incident occurs.

Vehicle Breakdowns, Accidents and Hazardous Weather Conditions

- In the event of a vehicle breakdown, accident or anything else that prevents a journey being completed, all reasonable precautions will be taken to ensure the well-being of passengers in that immediate help is summoned. Under no circumstances will passengers be left alone and, where possible, they will remain in the vehicle. If it is deemed unsafe to do so, then they will be escorted to a place of safety. The driver will alert the Transport Contractor and Transport Co-ordinator immediately to any such occurrence to ensure the safe and expeditious completion of the child's journey. The utmost care will be taken to minimise distress or discomfort in the event of a breakdown.