

A GUIDE TO SCHOOL TRANSPORT



Operators/ Drivers

Introduction

Derbyshire County Council aims to provide safe and reliable transport by working in partnership with transport providers, parents, pupils and schools. The county council provides a network of bus services to transport approximately 25,000 pupils to and from school each day. Of these, around 9,000 receive a free bus pass.

This guide has been produced to help operators and drivers. Similar guides have been produced for parents/pupils and schools which detail their responsibilities.

Copies of these are available on the county council website at www.derbyshire.gov.uk/buses

Advice for drivers and operators

Operators should be familiar with the county council's Conditions of Contract for passenger transport. Further copies are available on request. To help ensure that the journey is as safe and comfortable as possible, there are a number of guidelines which operators and drivers should follow.

Prior to providing the service

- Drivers must be familiar with the route and timetable and should ensure that it is observed. Problems maintaining the timetable should be reported immediately.
- Ensure that the service number is displayed and the destination display is correct.
- Before leaving the depot, drivers must undertake daily checks to make sure the vehicle is fit for service.

Service operation

- Drivers must check bus passes each day. Pupils will only get in the habit of showing passes if drivers ask to see them.
- The coloured stripe on bus passes will change every year and drivers will be able to identify passes which

have expired. These passes should be confiscated and returned to the county council.

- Pupils who do not have a bus pass must pay a fare on registered services. A ticket should be issued.
- Drivers should use their discretion when dealing with pupils who claim they have lost their bus pass or money. It is acceptable for older pupils to be refused travel but drivers should consider the potential dangers such as the child's age, location and whether or not they are on their own. Primary school pupils must never be refused travel. Problems or concerns should be reported to the school and/or county council as soon as possible.
- Drivers should approach bus stops with care.
- Ensure that the doors are closed before setting off.
- Drivers must not allow the vehicle to be loaded above the capacity of the vehicle. If there are too many pupils, report this to the operator on return to the depot.
- Allow pupils to find a seat before setting off. Never allow pupils to stand on the front platform.
- Drivers must not smoke or allow smoking by pupils





- Drivers should maintain a professional and detached relationship with passengers and must avoid any physical contact and involvement in inappropriate topics of conversation.
- Observe the Highway Code, drive in a courteous manner and keep to speed limits.
- Operators and drivers must co-operate with the county council's enforcement officers who undertake vehicle checks at both schools and depots.

Behaviour on school transport

Derbyshire County Council supports a large number of school services and is committed to providing safe and reliable transport. A number of bus services now have CCTV fitted and partnerships have been established with some schools and bus operators to help deal with problems. The county council also works in partnership with the Derbyshire Community Safety Forum and will, where necessary, use the range of legislative enforcement powers available to help stop anti social behaviour. Parents are responsible for ensuring that their child understands the consequences of bad behaviour on school transport.

Dealing with misbehaviour

Step 1 – Where behaviour issues exist, drivers are expected to speak to the pupil about their behaviour. If problems continue, details should be reported to the school and county council. Once a pupil has been reported, a verbal warning will be given by the school. Pupils may be punished within school for their misbehaviour.

Step 2 – Where a pupil is a persistent offender or commits a serious offence, a written warning will be issued as follows,

either

- a letter will be sent home informing parents/guardians of their child's behaviour along with a warning that further misbehaviour will result in the child being banned from the bus for a temporary period.

or

- a letter will be sent home informing parents/guardians that an immediate ban from the bus has been imposed for a specified period. Pupils may also be asked to sign an acceptable behaviour contract before they are allowed to return to the bus.



Depending on the circumstances, warning letters are issued by either the school, county council or the anti-social behaviour co-ordinator.

In very serious cases, the right to travel on school transport may be indefinitely withdrawn. Parents will have a right of appeal against the withdrawal of transport provision to a panel of council members. When bans are imposed, parents/guardians will be responsible for transport arrangements and costs.

Serious offences should be reported to the police, to be dealt with by way of criminal proceedings. A serious offence can be defined as any type of behaviour which endangers the safety of other passengers, the driver and members of the public. It also includes criminal damage/vandalism to the bus.



Damage/vandalism to the bus

Parents/guardians of any pupil who damages/vandalises the bus will be liable for any costs incurred by the bus company. The county council will support the bus company and will encourage police involvement if necessary.

General advice to operators and drivers

- Derbyshire County Council encourages operators to ensure that their drivers have been checked and cleared through the Criminal Records Bureau.
- Ensure that problems with behaviour are reported to

the school. Provide as much information as possible and record these in the incident report book.

- Liaise with schools. For example, if your service is operating late, remember to contact the school so they can inform pupils or parents.
- Pupils must never be evicted from the bus part-way through a journey. Report problems on arrival at school or on return to the depot.
- Pupils should be encouraged to sit down during the journey and to wear seat belts if they are available.
- Any ban from the bus must have the support of the school and county council. For legal reasons, it is essential that the behaviour guidelines are followed before any ban is imposed.

County council & VOSA inspections

The county council's enforcement officers will undertake vehicle and driver checks at schools. Operators and drivers are expected to co-operate with officers. Checks may also be undertaken at the operator's depot. Additional checks will be undertaken by VOSA and the police.

In emergencies

- In the event of a breakdown, warn other traffic by using the hazard warning lights.
- Contact the depot to arrange an alternative vehicle.
- Encourage pupils to wait on the bus for the replacement vehicle to arrive. Drivers should use their discretion as some pupils may only be a short distance from home or school. If drivers are in any doubt, they should seek advice from the operator, school or county council.
- Drivers should remain with the vehicle and passengers.
- Ensure that drivers have been trained to use emergency exits and any equipment which may be on board such as fire extinguishers.
- Breakdowns or accidents must be reported to the school and county council as soon as possible – drivers should have access to the telephone numbers.



More information

If you have any enquiries regarding school transport, you can write to:

**The School Transport Team
Environmental Services Department
Derbyshire County Council
County Hall, Matlock
Derbyshire, DE4 3AG**

Email: public.transport@derbyshire.gov.uk

Tel: 01629 580000 ext 6740, 6720, 6749, 6739

For b_line ext 7566

Fax: 01629 585740

For calls out of normal office hours, please contact Call Derbyshire 08 456 058 058. (Monday to Friday 8.00am – 8.00pm. Saturday 9.30am – 4.00pm).

Enquires relating to eligibility to free travel should be made to the Student Services Section at your local Area Education Office:

For North Derbyshire contact:

Area Education Office, Kents Bank Road
Buxton, Derbyshire SK17 9HR. Tel: 01298 26121

Area Education Office, St Helena Centre
Chesterfield, Derbyshire S41 7LU. Tel: 01246 204851

For South Derbyshire Contact:

Area Education Office
Library Building, Grosvenor Road
Ripley, Derbyshire DE5 3JE. Tel: 01773 744741

For general public transport timetable information, please contact: **traveline 0870 608 2 608**

This leaflet is available in large print, Braille or on computer disk by calling 08 456 058 058.

You can also print off these guidelines at www.derbyshire.gov.uk/buses