

# Guidance for parents of children with special educational needs who receive transport services



### **Richmond Transport Services commitment:**

Our principal aim will be to ensure safe and efficient journeys to and from school in order to support the learning of these pupils.

We are committed to the highest standards of safety and safeguarding when transporting children and young people with special educational needs (SEN).

We will minimise journey times as much as possible and provide a service that is fully compliant with the SEN transport policy.

### **General introduction**

The purpose of this document is to inform parents and pupils of the expectations and responsibilities with regard to transporting pupils to and from school as well as giving further information regarding general issues around transport.

It sets out our commitment to you and also what you can do to ensure a safe and efficient service for your children.

Richmond Transport Services will transport all pupils in the quickest and safest possible way, balanced against cost and resource constraints.

- All drivers and escorts will have had a Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) check and have received training in safeguarding procedures.
- Route assessments are carried out usually during the school summer holiday period. New pupils are added, routes checked and estimated pick up times are set. Times are monitored to ensure a regular collection time is set 10 minutes before or after the agreed time.
- Often several children attend the same school resulting in larger vehicles being used on a multi pick up route. This is determined by the transport demand centre staff, which may occasionally incur changes to pick up times and this may also happen during the school year.
- We understand that parents and pupils need to know of any changes to transport arrangements as early as possible and we shall ensure that you are notified as far in advance as possible of any changes to transport arrangements.
- Travel arrangements will be confirmed with parents and carers or they will be advised of any changes before the beginning of each school year.

### **Travel times (in borough schools)**

- Travel times for home to school transport in the borough should be within 75 minutes from collection. We are aiming to reduce this time to 60 minutes.

### **Travel Times (out of borough schools)**

- Travel times are not limited for out of borough schools. Every effort will be made to ensure the journey is safe and as comfortable for the passenger as possible.
- Routes are organised and set to ensure the most efficient and quickest journey. Unfortunately, this will not always coincide with parents' and carers' own circumstances. We hope you will understand that but first priority must be to get pupils to school as quickly and efficiently as possible.

The following information lays out the responsibilities that the Transport Service has towards parents and children and also the expectations that we have of parents and children to ensure that transport is as safe and efficient as possible.

In the interest of safety and efficiency we kindly request that parents and carers:

- have pupils ready for collection at the arranged time. (Drivers are instructed to wait no more than three minutes from the appointed time);
- bring pupils to the vehicle and hand over to the escort or driver;
- ensure that someone is at home to receive the child after the return journey;
- tell the Demand Centre of changes in the person receiving the pupil before the journey starts; and
- contact the Demand Centre of any changes or if there is any request for an alteration to a route.

Parents need to be aware that if there are delays in collecting your child, this will have a knock-on effect for the collection of other children on the route. This may result in lengthening the journey time and may lead to a late arrival at school.

Parents are strongly encouraged to discuss with their children how they feel about their journeys to and from school. If your child raises any concerns then we ask parents to contact the Transport Demand Centre or SEN service without delay so that any concerns can be looked into.

### **Driver and escort responsibilities**

(Detailed in the attached document)

**The Demand Centre is contactable on: 020 8891 7092**

The Demand Centre will:

- manage the transport requirements and schedule resources accordingly;
- liaise with parents, carers, schools and relevant services regarding all aspects of travel arrangements; and
- instruct all staff on procedures to be adopted for each route whether general or specific to each child.

### **Behaviour standards**

Most pupils travel to and from school without incident. The Transport Service understands that some children with special educational needs will occasionally display inappropriate or challenging behaviour and that it is the responsibility of adults to keep all children as safe as possible and manage poor behaviour. We have the same expectations of behaviour that are set in school.

We shall monitor and inform parents and carers of challenging and inappropriate behaviour. We will always try to work with you as parents and carers to manage your child's behaviour whilst being transported.

If a situation arises where a child's behaviour proves exceptionally challenging, then it may be necessary on a temporary basis for the responsibility for transport to pass to the parents or carers.

### **Contact details**

Richmond Transport Services  
Langhorn Drive  
Twickenham  
TW2 7SG

Phone: 020 8891 7092  
Fax: 020 8744 1097  
Email: [transport.services@richmond.gov.uk](mailto:transport.services@richmond.gov.uk)

# Procedures for escorts and drivers

## Applicable to Transport for Special Educational Needs (SEN)

### General responsibilities

These procedures should be adequate for most children who have access to transport services. However, they may not be appropriate for some children owing to their specific needs. In these circumstances it must be reported to the Demand Centre so an individual risk assessment can be carried out in order to agree the safest way to transport the child.

### Escort responsibilities

All escorts, without exception, will have:

- undergone a CRB check;
- received training in safeguarding procedures;
- an understanding that responsibility for the wellbeing of children whilst travelling lies with them; and
- received general information regarding any medical or behavioural issues of the children they escort.

### Route information

All escorts, without exception, will:

- check the route list drawn up by the Demand Centre; update information held on amendments to rounds lists including pick-up orders;
- advise the driver of the route order;
- not amend the route listings without prior agreement with Demand Centre management; and
- complete the Duration and Loading information.

### Messages

All escorts, without exception, will:

- inform the Demand Centre management if a child is not attending;
- hold any information, letters, medication and personal belongings; and
- pass the 'message book' containing confidential information between parent and carer and the Demand Centre management or School.

## Concerns

All escorts, without exception, must:

- report any concerns about a child, for example appearing unwell, to the Demand Centre management at the end of the round.
- report accidents and incidents and so on involving children to the Demand Centre management.

## Driver responsibility

All drivers without exception will:

- have received appropriate training regarding safeguarding children;
- report accidents and incidents involving the vehicle to the Demand Centre;
- have undergone a CRB check;
- hold the requisite licence for the vehicle being driven;
- be responsible for the vehicle, its passengers and its use;
- understand and follow the Quality Assurance Procedures;
- be responsible for all equipment on the vehicle and ensure that adequate supplies of any items are maintained on the vehicle at all times;
- be solely responsible for the operation of any passenger lift or ramp; and
- be responsible for ensuring the correct fastening of wheelchairs.

## Collection of individual children

Parents and carers are responsible for bringing the pupil to the vehicle. The vehicle should wait for three minutes from the appointed pick-up time before contacting the Demand Centre. You may be advised to wait a little longer or to continue as normal and record non-attendance.

## Driver

- The driver will be expected to assist the escort in any of the tasks associated with helping pupils onto the vehicle. In all these tasks the driver will provide assistance subject only to his prime duty relating to the vehicle and passengers.
- **A vehicle must never be left unattended with the engine running or whilst a child is on board.**

## **Escort**

- The expectation is that the escort will go to the child's home address and receive the child from the parent or carer at the vehicle unless other arrangements have been made by SEN as part of the policy for developing independence, which may be temporary in nature. Similarly at the end of the day the escort must deliver the child to their parent or carer as required who will again receive them from the vehicle.
- Escorts are not to modify these arrangements at the request of anyone without prior instructions from the Demand Centre.

## **Escort duties for young children**

- The escort should liaise with the parent or carer, school and demand centre management for safe handling techniques, as young children require different approaches.
- Where child specific or additional safety equipment is required, the escort should liaise with the Demand Centre to see that this equipment is available before travel.

## **Management of wheelchairs on the passenger lift**

- Only one child at a time should be escorted on the passenger-lift.
- Children must never be left alone on the passenger-lift.
- Wheels must be completely on the passenger-lift
- If wheelchair is the extended type, the child must go on backwards so that the feet and not the wheels overhang.

## **Securing of children on the vehicle**

### **Child safety seats**

- Children must be transported in children's safety seats where applicable in accordance with the council policy.

### **Passenger restraints**

- It is the law that passenger restraints are worn at all times throughout a journey. Both driver and escort must ensure that this policy is adhered to. The escort must ensure that all passenger restraints are fastened. Both the escort and driver must wear passenger restraints unless removal is permitted by legislation. All of the above applies at all times.

## **Additional restraints on wheelchairs**

- Children in wheelchairs must have lap and diagonal or full harness safety restraints at all times.
- Lap straps on wheelchairs must not be considered as safety straps.

## **Driver and escort responsibilities**

When securing wheelchairs to the vehicle, drivers and escorts must:

- ensure the brakes on the wheelchair are applied;
- ensure electric wheelchairs are not in gear and the power is switched off;
- secure only to the floor of the vehicle;
- secure by four point restraint straps and/or patent security systems incorporating a seat back and safety belts;
- secure straps to the mainframe of the chair. They must never be secured onto or through the wheels or end pieces of the frame;
- fix straps as tight as possible in order to minimise movement of the chair; and
- inflate tyres adequately to ensure a minimum of movement when wheelchairs are secured. Any difficulties with tyre inflation should be brought to the attention of the Demand Centre.

## **Escort**

- The escort must report to the Demand Centre management any wheelchair that is damaged, making it impossible to be securely fastened or cannot be fastened due to their design.

## **Management of children whilst on the vehicle**

### **Escort**

- The escort must be alert at all times, the safety of the children, whilst on the vehicle, is the escort's responsibility. Many children have disabilities, which make travelling uncomfortable, especially if they are on the vehicle for any length of time. If a child appears in distress the escort will need to use their judgement as to the action that may be appropriate. This may mean asking the driver to stop the vehicle.
- The escort must plan the seating of children on the vehicle in accordance with individual needs and in consultation with school and Demand Centre staff.

**Before departing, the driver must complete a final check to ensure all children are safely strapped in.**

## **Escort arrangements for children unable to go home**

- If entry cannot be gained, for whatever reason, or there is not an adult to receive the child, the Demand Centre should be told. The escort should then follow specific instructions given by the Demand Centre, which will in most cases include continuing the route with the child on board whilst alternative arrangements are made.
- The escort will remain with the child until responsibility for the child is transferred to an authorised person as instructed by the Demand Centre or a known carer arrives.

## **Emergency procedures**

### **Road traffic accident**

- In the event of a road traffic accident, the driver must follow the procedure as detailed in the Quality Management Procedures.
- If the accident is likely to cause any substantial delay to the journey, the driver must inform the Demand Centre who in turn will contact the relevant school and parent or carers

### **Vehicle breakdown**

- In the event of a vehicle breakdown the driver must immediately contact the Demand Centre.
- Information including the fleet number, location of breakdown, nature of breakdown and whether children are on board should be provided at this stage.
- If necessary, children will need to be taken off the vehicle. The Demand Centre can give advice as to who will then make alternative transport arrangements.
- The Demand Centre will inform the school and parents or carers concerned that there may be a delay.

### **Spillages inside the vehicle**

- All vehicles carry an Immediate Response Kit to deal with spillages, for example vomit, urine and so on. The driver must ensure that this kit is maintained and always available.
- The driver deals with the spillage while the escort assists with the child.

## **Unwell child on the vehicle**

- The escort must ask the driver to pull over to the side of the road in order to assess the situation.
- If a child should collapse, an ambulance must be called immediately.
- The escort must stay with the child.
- Some children have regular fits or seizures as part of their condition. The management of these fits must be discussed with the Demand Centre and the parent or carer. The escort is responsible for the safety of a child if they should have a fit during a journey.
- Administration of medication, physical intervention, oxygen, suction and so on are only to be carried out by senior escorts who will be specifically trained in these procedures and have in place the necessary consents to intervene.

## **First aid kit**

- It is the driver's responsibility to ensure that the vehicle holds a first aid kit and that it is fully equipped at all times.

## **All incidents and accidents involving a child or their parent and carer must be reported to the demand centre.**

### **Driver**

- All accidents and incidents occurring on or to the vehicle or caused by a piece of the vehicle's equipment, should be reported to the Demand Centre in accordance with quality management procedures.

### **Escort**

- All accidents, dangerous occurrences, near misses or incidents involving them or the child should be reported to the Demand Centre at the nearest convenient opportunity regardless of whether the incident occurred on or off the vehicle. The Demand Centre will manage the appropriate reporting procedure.