

Code of Conduct for the use of School/College Transport

Carmarthenshire County Council recognises the need for the safety and care of students using home to school transport. The safety of students is a shared responsibility between the students, parents/guardians, the Council and its schools/colleges, and the bus operators. All of these have a very important role to play.

The County Council has produced a "Code of Conduct" for all parties involved. The following section applies to students using school/college transport, and to parents/guardians. A full copy of the code is available from the County Council.

Before the journey

Students:

- Please arrive at the bus stop in good time before the bus is due to depart, preferably at least 5 minutes before the scheduled departure time. Do not hurry to the bus stop as you may overlook road safety and increase the risk of an accident occurring.
- When at the bus stop, queue in an orderly manner, off the road and on a footpath, if one is available. Respect other pupils/students at all times.
- When the bus arrives, please wait for it to stop. Do not push or rush for the door at any time.
- Show your pass or pay your fare to the bus driver. If you have forgotten, lost or damaged your pass please ensure you obtain a replacement pass from the County Council.

Parents/Guardians:

- Please ensure your child leaves home in plenty of time to arrive at the bus stop in good time before the bus is due to depart. Hurrying significantly increases the risk of an accident occurring.
- Please ensure your child knows and travels by the safest route between your home address and the transport pick up and set down points.
- Please make arrangements for young children to be taken and collected by a responsible adult to and from the pick up and collection points as the bus arrives. Remember parents/guardians are responsible for the safety of children from the set down and pick up points.
- Ensure your child waits at the bus stop for a reasonable period if the bus does not arrive on time. It may be delayed for a variety of reasons. Should the bus not arrive please take your child home and arrange to inform the school/college as soon as possible in order that your child can be accounted for.

During the Journey

Students:

- Please find a seat as soon as possible, do not push other passengers and if possible keep the same seat for all journeys. Do not obstruct the aisle with your bag or other belongings, as this will prevent the swift evacuation of the bus in the event of an emergency.
- When seated you are advised to fasten your seat belt, *if they are fitted*.
- Please do not do anything to distract the driver when he or she is driving, except in an emergency. Distractions such as excessive noise or bad behaviour may cause an accident.
- Do not smoke, eat or drink whilst on the bus. Do not drop litter on the vehicle.
- Do not throw anything in or from the bus at anytime. Such action will put the safety of all at severe risk.
- Do not damage, vandalise or tamper with any part of the vehicle at anytime. **Never operate the vehicle doors or exits except in an emergency.** Should students be found guilty of damaging the vehicle they will be held accountable for the full cost of repairs.
- Any pupil who is alleged to have caused damage to a vehicle or have assaulted a fellow a passenger will become the subject of a disciplinary enquiry. During the process of enquiry the student will be suspended from using the transport and if the case is proved will risk being banned from the use of school/college transport.
- Please follow the instructions of the driver or escort (if provided) at all times during your journey particularly in the event of an accident or a breakdown.
- In the event of an accident or breakdown, you should remain on the vehicle until you are instructed to leave.

Should it become unsafe to remain on the vehicle because of smoke or fire or the driver or escort is injured, leave the vehicle via the safest exit in an orderly manner. When off the vehicle assemble at the safest point off the highway if on a motorway move away from the carriageway preferably up the side of a bank but please keep safety in mind at all times. Summon help from a passing motorist or nearest building by sending the most senior student.

Parents/Guardians:

- Please encourage your child to act sensibly on and around school/college transport vehicles. Advise them that they must follow the Council's Code of Conduct for pupils and students and failure to do so could put their enjoyment of the facility at risk. Parents/guardians will also be held responsible for any damage caused by the child.

At the end of the Journey

Students:

- Please wait until the vehicle has stopped before unfastening your seat belt and getting up from your seat.
- Make sure you have all your belongings as you leave the bus.
- Do not rush or push other passengers.
- When leaving the vehicle, take care to ensure your coat or bag is not caught anywhere. Step well away from the bus.
- If you have forgotten something, take care when returning to the bus, do not attempt to board the vehicle before the driver has acknowledged you and has stopped the vehicle. If the vehicle has started to move off, then make alternative arrangements to collect your belongings by telephoning the bus company.
- Should you need to cross the road after you have left the vehicle. allow the bus time to move off well before attempting to cross the road so that you can see and be seen by other traffic. Please remember to use the Green Cross Code.

Parents/Guardians:

- Please ensure there is someone waiting to collect young children before the bus arrives.
- Passengers will only be set down at the designated points unless a change has been agreed and confirmed in writing with the County Council and the driver.
- Please teach and encourage children to use the Green Cross Code and if one is available to use a pedestrian crossing or special school crossing control.

General Behaviour

- Passengers must be considerate of other passengers and behave responsibly at all times, and must not put themselves or other passengers at risk. **Bad behaviour on school/college transport will not be tolerated. The Council, schools/colleges, and the Contractors will work together to identify culprits and take appropriate action. Ultimately, offenders will lose their right to travel, which will cause additional expense for students or parents/guardians.**

Carmarthenshire County Council is now deploying CCTV on school/college buses.

Cameras are deployed on a variety of different routes throughout the County. No video recording will be retained unless an incident is reported, in which case consideration will be given to its use as evidence. **Please ensure passengers are aware of this initiative and that any misdemeanours will be treated very seriously.**

Arrangements for dealing with disruptions at short notice

Changing weather conditions or other unforeseen circumstances may cause schools to close at short notice. Even when schools are able to stay open, transport arrangements will sometimes be disrupted, particularly in rural areas. Operators of school transport vehicles and their drivers have to make judgements about the safety of a route and whether they consider it possible to operate a route at all, or in some circumstances just part of a route. Some buses may not be able to run at all, or sometimes a bus will start collecting pupils in the morning but will have to abandon the run and return the children to their pick-up points. Even when buses have been able to take children to school, the bus home from school may have to leave early due to worsening conditions. **It is therefore essential that parents make sure that there is always somewhere for their children to go during the day if the parents are not at home, and that their children are clear about what to do in such circumstances.**

It is also vital that parents ensure the school has their emergency contact number, and that the school should be advised of any changes to this number so that they can be contacted in the event of a problem.

Parents should also ensure that children are dressed appropriately for the cold weather in case the bus is late or the journey to or from school is slower than usual.

Should a school transport route not operate in the morning due to adverse weather conditions but parents choose to take their children to school themselves, the parents will then be required to make their own arrangements to collect the children at the end of the school day.