

School Transport

A Guide for Parents and Pupils



**COMHAIRLE NAN
EILEAN SIAR**



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INTRODUCTION

Every school day over 4,000 pupils attend 41 schools in the Western Isles. Whilst the statutory walking distances are 2 miles for pupils under 8 years old and 3 miles for older pupils, the Comhairle has a very generous policy requiring no pupils to walk more than one mile in the course of their journey to school. The result of this policy is that over 70% of all pupils travel free to and from school on transport provided by the Comhairle, compared to under 25% of pupils in another rural authority.

This booklet is published to provide pupils, parents and guardians, teachers and transport operators with useful information and advice when using school transport. The Comhairle attaches a high priority to pupils' safety travelling to and from school daily and it is hoped this booklet will assist in achieving this aim.

Every effort has been made to make this booklet easy to read and informative, so that the advice given will be implemented by all those involved in promoting road safety. Although the booklet is aimed at parents, all those assuming responsibility for pupils travelling to or from school are urged to read these safety messages and set a good example by following the guidelines themselves when accompanying pupils.

This booklet has our fullest support and I commend it to all pupils, parents and all others involved in school transport.

Murdo Macleod
Director of Education


Murdo A Murray
Director of Technical Services


1 CARE, WELFARE AND BEHAVIOUR OF PUPILS ON SCHOOL TRANSPORT

- a) The transport operator is responsible for taking reasonable care of the children on the bus. This includes the safe operation of the vehicle on the road, making sure that children board and alight safely, and reporting significant misbehaviour to the school. A bus driver has legal authority to remove from a bus any passenger over the age of 16, excluding any pupils being taken to or from school, whose behaviour is causing danger or nuisance to other passengers. School pupils en route to or from school, or other children under 16 will not be removed from the vehicle, but in the event that the behaviour of a child causes the driver to have concern for the safety of that child, the other passengers or himself he may pull over to the side of the road and call the police.
- b) The Comhairle has a common law duty of care for the safety of pupils throughout the school day including the time spent on school transport where the transport is provided by or on behalf of the Comhairle. On behalf of the Comhairle the school is responsible for taking such disciplinary measures as may be necessary to maintain acceptable behaviour on school transport. The school has the right to suspend or withdraw a child's free transport if necessary in order to maintain discipline.
- c) As in other incidents of unacceptable behaviour the school may involve the parents at an early stage in any disciplinary measures which are considered necessary. If a school suspends a child's free transport then parents will require to make their own school travel arrangements at their own expense.

2 GETTING TO/FROM PICK-UP POINTS

Parents are responsible for getting their children safely from home to the transport pick-up point in the morning, and back to home in the afternoon from the transport drop-off point. Young children should be accompanied until parents are confident that they can manage safely without supervision. Parents are also responsible for the supervision of their children as necessary at the pick-up point.

 Pupils should leave home in good time so that there is no need to rush. Remember that transport runs to a timetable and will not wait for pupils who are not there on time.


 Use the pavement if there is one. Where there is no pavement, walk facing on-coming traffic or on single track roads stay close to the right verge and remember traffic may come from behind.








NEVER PLAY GAMES ON
OR NEAR THE KERB





 Wear something bright/reflective in the dark or bad weather so that motorists can see you.


 Dress warmly in case there is an unexpected wait.


 Wait for the bus where you can be clearly seen and on the same side of the road as the door of the bus.


 Pupils should stand well clear of the edge of the road whilst waiting for the bus, especially as the bus arrives. Pupils must not push and shove to get on to the bus first as jostling with other pupils is dangerous and can cause accidents.

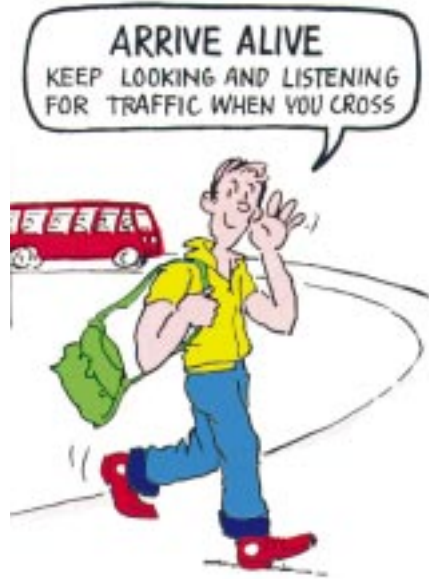
 Pupils must not cross the road in front of or behind the bus. After leaving the bus, wait clear of the vehicle until it has moved well away and then cross the road using the green cross code.

 Let other passengers off the bus before boarding.

 If a bus pass has been issued have it ready to show the driver.

 Pupils should use the bus to which they have been allocated - a bus driver is entitled to refuse to take pupils who are not allocated to their vehicle.

 Pupils should never run alongside the bus whilst it is moving.





If the bus does not come within 15 minutes of the scheduled time it may be assumed that it is not coming due to road conditions or a breakdown. Parents should be aware that in the event of bad weather or transport breakdown pupils will require to return home or make their own way safely to another home.



Parents must also ensure that their children can


return home safely from the drop-off point in the afternoon. Parents who meet children at the drop-off point should give the driver a clear handsignal to indicate that they want the vehicle to stop. Parents should wait on the same side of the road as the door of the bus so that the child is not tempted to run across the road after leaving the bus to meet them.


LOOK AND LISTEN AGAIN
WHEN THERE'S NO TRAFFIC
NEAR ... WALK STRAIGHT
ACROSS THE ROAD





3 TRAVELLING ON THE BUS


Once a pupil has boarded the bus the Comhairle assumes responsibility for his/her safety. Pupils should follow the under-noted behaviour code:-


 When boarding or leaving the bus do so in an orderly manner, without running or pushing.


 Follow the driver's instructions.

 Treat the driver and other passengers with respect.

 Take a seat, and fasten the seat belt if there is one.


 Stay in your seat and do not keep changing seats during the journey.


 Do not climb on seats or lean out of the windows.


 Do not travel on the platform adjacent to the driver, talk to the driver or otherwise distract him/her while the bus is moving.





DON'T DISTRACT THE
DRIVER - YOU COULD CAUSE AN ACCIDENT


 Never leave the bus until it has completely stopped.


 Do not shout or play music loudly on the bus


 Never throw anything within or out of the bus.


 Keep all school bags and other belongings clear of the passageway.

 Do not play with the emergency doors, windows or the bells.

 Smoking is prohibited on all school and public buses for the health of all bus users.

 Give your name and address or bus pass to the bus driver if requested so to do.


 When travelling between a bus and the school building, or when leaving school and waiting to board the bus, pupils are required to follow instructions given by any member of school staff. Remember to wait clear of the kerb as vehicles approach.


 Pupils who disregard any of these requirements will be considered to be breaking school rules and will be dealt with accordingly. In the event of vandalism to the bus the transport operator is also entitled to expect financial compensation from the pupil concerned or their parents, and could report the matter to the police.




4 DISCIPLINE

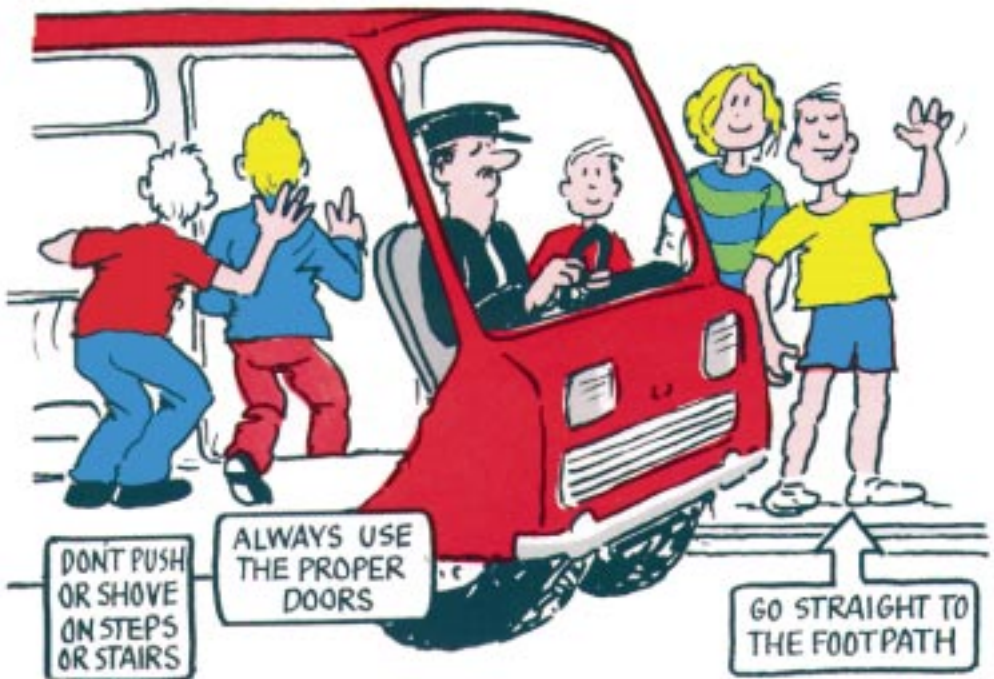
Guidelines issued to the drivers emphasise their prime responsibility towards the safety of the vehicle on the road, but also ask for their cooperation in identifying and reporting significant misbehaviour. A driver may:


 Instruct pupils how to behave.

 Ask for a name and address, and withdraw a bus pass as proof of identity.

 Report serious or repeated misbehaviour to a school for further disciplinary action.


 Contact or drive to a police station for police assistance.




 Schools are responsible for taking disciplinary action with regard to behaviour of children on transport in exactly the same way as if the misbehaviour occurred in school. Guidance on the appropriate disciplinary steps for schools to take has been issued to all schools by the Director of Education. The advice suggests that the school may use a progressive range of normal sanctions such as punishment exer-



cises, detention or the withdrawal of school privileges. A school may involve parents where disciplinary sanctions have been applied. If misbehaviour is very serious or persists after a warning the school may also recommend the suspension of free transport for a period of time. If free school transport has been withdrawn parents will become responsible for making travel arrangements themselves to ensure that the pupil continues to attend (unless the pupil has also been excluded from school).

 Schools will take a firm line with misbehaviour in or around school.

 Parents are responsible for the conduct and behaviour of their children in school, on school transport and in the street. It is hoped that parents will support disciplinary measures taken by the school.

5 SUPERVISION

On the bus the driver is an adult presence in case of emergency. Where one transport route is scheduled to connect with another, drivers are instructed to wait for the connection so that pupils are not left unsupervised at the connection point.

Where required in the interests of safety, the school will provide appropriate supervision of pupils between the bus and school buildings.



**FOLLOW THE GREEN
CROSS CODE WHEN
CROSSING ROADS**

Any pupil who is concerned about any aspect of the operation of the school bus that they use should let the school know about the problem



Schools must ensure that problems of unreliability, breakdowns, poor timekeeping and unsatisfactory vehicles are reported promptly to the Technical Services Department, Transport Office so that each operator's performance can be monitored and corrective action taken where necessary. Parents are also encouraged to report any such problems directly to this office.

6 WINTER EMERGENCIES AND BREAKDOWNS

The ultimate responsibility for the safety of children walking to and from pick-up/drop off points rests with parents. Parents must decide whether or not children can make their way to meet transport in bad weather such as low temperatures. If parents feel that their child should not walk home alone in bad weather from the drop-off point it will be their responsibility to meet him/her.

Parents must ensure that their children are warmly dressed in case the journey to/from school is very slow or even halted in bad weather. The 15 minute


waiting rule need not apply in severely cold weather.


In bad weather conditions the transport operator is the sole judge of whether to commence or complete a bus journey, giving priority to the safety of any pupils on the bus.


In the event of a breakdown, or if a school bus should be unable to proceed because of road conditions, the transport operator is responsible for making arrangements for passengers to be rescued. The driver will remain with the pupils on the vehicle until assistance arrives unless it is necessary to evacuate the vehicle for safety reasons.

If the bus is unable to proceed for any reason **FOR THEIR SAFETY PUPILS MUST:-**



 follow instructions given by the driver.

 Stay on the bus unless instructed to leave it.

 Never attempt to walk home (or to school) - the bus operator will arrange for rescue as necessary.

Should the school transport on any route not operate in the morning because of adverse weather conditions, but a parent nevertheless decides to take their child to school themselves, then they will be expected to make their own arrangements to collect the child either at the end of the school day or at the time of early closure. Where a road is too hazardous for school transport in the morning the transport operator is under no obligation to attempt the afternoon run.

If a school decides it is prudent to close early because of severe weather every attempt will be made to inform parents. However this may not always be possible especially in the case of larger schools. The school will advise parents of their proce-



dures in the event of an emergency closure. Drivers are required to seek the safest route and may therefore leave the normal route in order to stay on major roads or to avoid specific hazards. However they are instructed that they may only set-down children at the normal set-down points. If it is not possible to get pupils back to their correct destinations, they may be returned to their school and handed into the care of school staff for their safety.



In bad weather the Comhairle's emergency contact number, Faire 01851 701702, will be advised as early as practically possible of any school closures, transport cancellations etc. Local radio stations will also be informed to maximize the publicity.

Contacts

For matters relating to school transport please contact:

Transport Office
Technical Services Department
Council Offices
Sandwick Road
Stornoway
HS1 2BW
Tel 01851 703773

David Smart	Transport Officer	01851 709592
Jim Morrison	Transport Assistant	01851 709319
Margaret Macleod	Transport Assistant	01851 709496

Complaints

Complaint about the behaviour of school pupils using school transport including bullying, should in the first instance be directed to the Headteacher of the school for attention.

Any complaint concerning the condition of school transport or the operation of the service must be reported promptly so that facts can be determined and the identity of any vehicle and/or driver concerned can be established. Such complaints should be forwarded to the Transport Office on the above address.

School and Stage bus service operators are selected, for all contracts, by competitive tender amongst any suitable licensed bus operator who wishes to bid for work. Failure to report problems with bus services, when they occur, will mean that such shortcomings are not addressed promptly, and can also result in unsatisfactory operators continuing to receive further bus contracts because the shortcoming with their current services are unknown to the Comhairle.