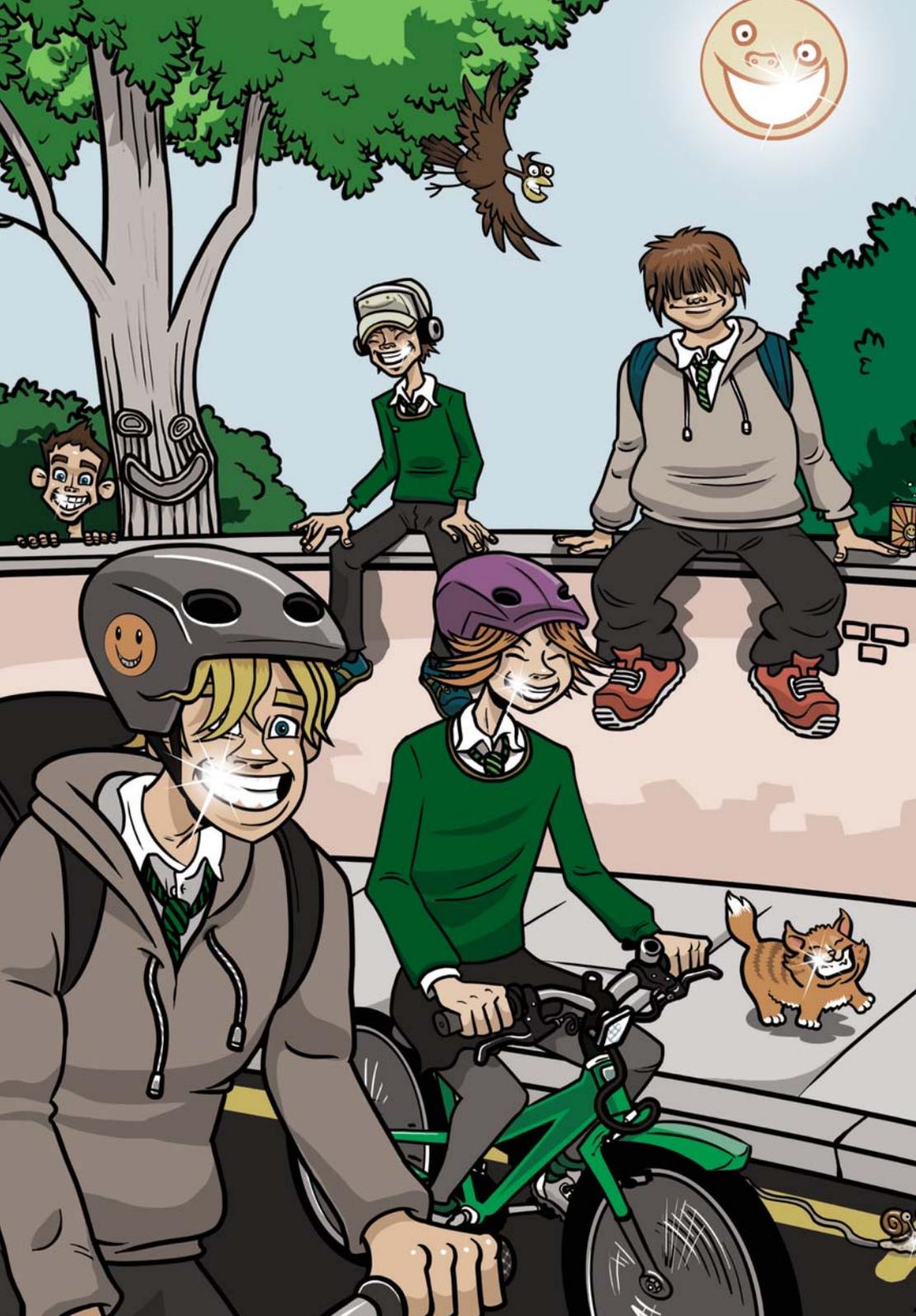


Safe Travel on School Transport Guidelines for Schools, Parents & Learners



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government





Guidelines for Schools, Parents & Learners

Rhondda Cynon Taf Council provides transport for approximately 12,500 learners. Travelling on over 260 mainstream and 300 SEN (Special Education Needs) transport contracts to schools and colleges in and around the county borough, it is believed to be the largest school transport operation in Wales. This service is managed by the School Transport Team within the Council's Integrated Transport Unit (ITU).

This booklet has been produced to advise all who are involved with school transport of their obligations and to ensure the Council is able to provide a safe, efficient and reliable transport service.

Drivers and passenger assistants should understand the needs and establish good relationships with the learners they transport, as well as to provide the liaison with the parents / carers, the operator and the school that the children are attending.

The Council has a statutory responsibility to comply with the requirements of the Learner Travel (Wales) Measure 2008 and to make available information about its policies, as well as the arrangements it puts in place to transport its learners.

The Measure has delivered improvements for learners and enabled the publication of the first ever All-Wales Travel Behaviour Code. This Travel Code seeks to improve the safety of learners on their journey to school and sets out the standards of behaviour required of all learners when travelling to and from school.

Supporting the safety of learners whilst they are using school transport requires the schools, parents and learners to work together in partnership with the transport operators and the School Transport Team. These guidelines set out this relationship.



The Council Commitment

- It is the Council's intention to provide a school transport service that will seek to carry learners safely, comfortably and without unreasonable levels of stress.
- The Council provides school transport advice to members of the public via its website www.rctcbc.gov.uk/schooltransport and during normal office hours by telephone or face to face at one of its One4aLL centres.
- The Council provides transport for mainstream learners to and from their nearest public bus stop. SEN learners are transported to and from their home address.
- The Council is mindful of the impact on learners of lengthy journey times when planning school transport routes. There is also a need to balance such considerations alongside the requirement to manage limited public resources and this will inevitably lead to longer routes as vehicle occupancy levels are maximised.
- The Council will seek to ensure that most journeys will be no more than 45 minutes for primary learners and 60 minutes for secondary learners, with no route lasting more than 75 minutes.

- All drivers and passenger assistants employed to operate school contracts on behalf of the Council are required to have received enhanced clearance through the Criminal Records Bureau (CRB). Once the Council has reviewed, and is satisfied with, the content of the CRB disclosure, the driver and passenger assistant will receive a letter of authorisation to work on behalf of the Council. To validate their identity, ID badges will be issued to all authorised personnel.
- Where the CRB disclosure is not accepted, drivers, passenger assistants and their employing operators will receive a letter stating that they can not be used for school transport. The employing operator is required to confirm that they have received this notification and that they will not use that driver or passenger assistant.
- The Council will terminate any contract where drivers and passenger assistants are found not to have enhanced CRB clearance or have not been authorised by the School Transport Team to work on the Council's school transport.
- The safety and quality of school transport services and routes will be monitored on a regular basis.

- The Council aims to avoid changes in operators, drivers and passenger assistants. However due to the nature of the service provision, some changes will be unavoidable.
- The Council will work in conjunction with all associated parties to resolve any behavioural issues that arise on school transport. All incidents are to be reported to the School Transport Team. A "Report It" facility can be found at www.rctcbc.gov.uk/schooltransport
- The School Transport Team will maintain a log of all reported incidents, investigate each incident in conjunction with the school and other relevant parties, and take further sanctions where appropriate.

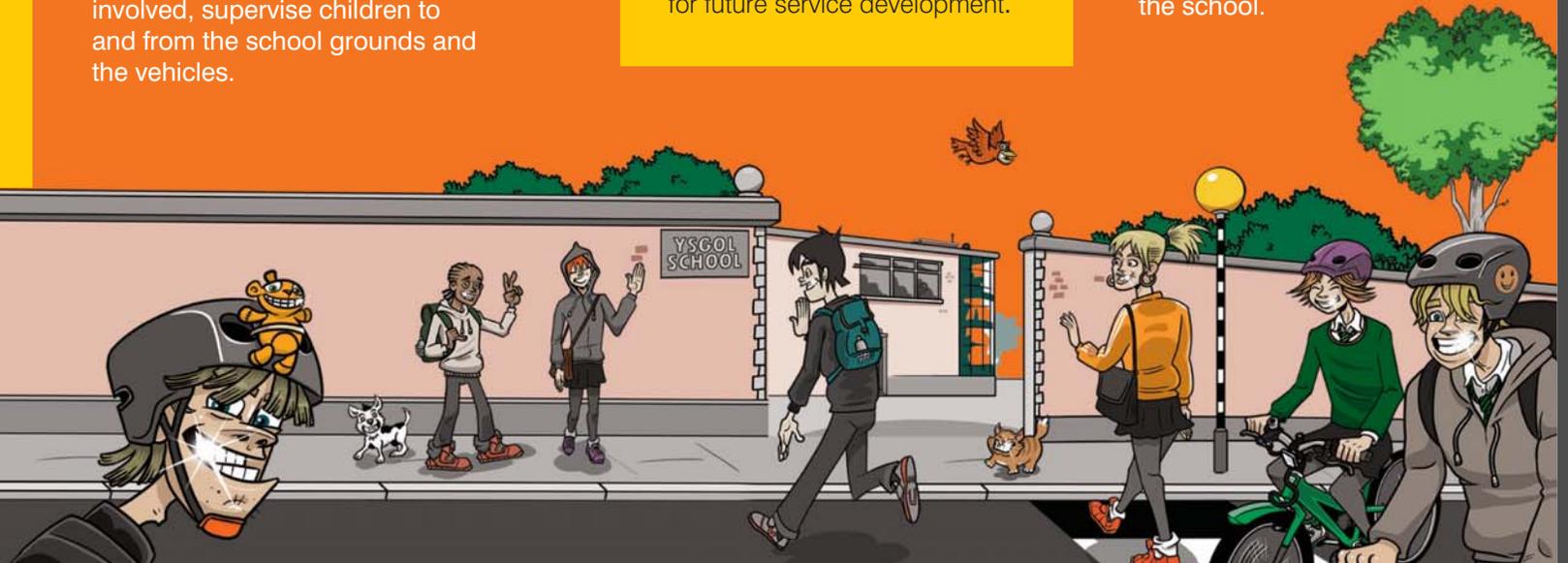


Schools

These guidelines have been prepared to assist schools in carrying out their responsibilities to ensure the provision of a quality school transport service.

Schools are asked to:-

- Advise the School Transport Team if they have additional learners who require school transport and who do not appear on their SIMS database. Permission to travel has to be authorised by the School Transport Team before travel takes place.
- Support the operators in helping to ensure that there are no unauthorised passengers on the vehicles.
- Include the use of school transport and the journey to school in the school curriculum through assemblies and other classroom time.
- Raise awareness within school about the Travel Behaviour Code - www.travelcode.org, enforcing it and ensuring that it is embedded into school behaviour and discipline policies.
- Ensure that learners understand the rules of behaviour and the need for safety on school transport. Incidents of bad behaviour should be reported to the School Transport Team and will be jointly investigated.
- Provide every assistance in identifying those involved in incidents of bad behaviour and liaise with the School Transport Team to determine the appropriate course of action to be taken.
- Ensure that a member of staff is available to supervise learners that are arriving or departing by school transport.
- Where primary school learners are involved, supervise children to and from the school grounds and the vehicles.
- Liaise with the School Transport Team and the operators to provide safe access to and from the school premises, and ensure that private cars do not impede the progress of the school transport.
- Work with parents and learners to encourage the shift from the use of the car for the school run to the greater use of dedicated school transport vehicles, local bus services, walking or cycling.
- Liaise with the School Transport Team as soon as possible regarding any plans to change the school day, in order to determine whether transport can be organised to accommodate the proposed change.
- Work with the School Transport Team to set and maintain standards, reporting any concerns or incidents. A prompt written report will assist in resolving issues quickly and could provide the basis for future service development.
- Should a vehicle fail to arrive at anytime, please inform the School Transport Team immediately, so that the matter can be investigated directly and alternative arrangements made if required. **Please do not contact the bus operator.** Should the problem arise at the time of pick up from the school, please keep the learners together until the replacement vehicle arrives.
- Provide written notification to the School Transport Team of the proposed inset and school closure days at the commencement of the academic year, or 10 school days in advance at the latest. The School Transport Team will advise the operators in advance, thereby avoiding unnecessary expenditure. Failure to provide sufficient notice will incur additional expenditure, which will be re-charged to the school.

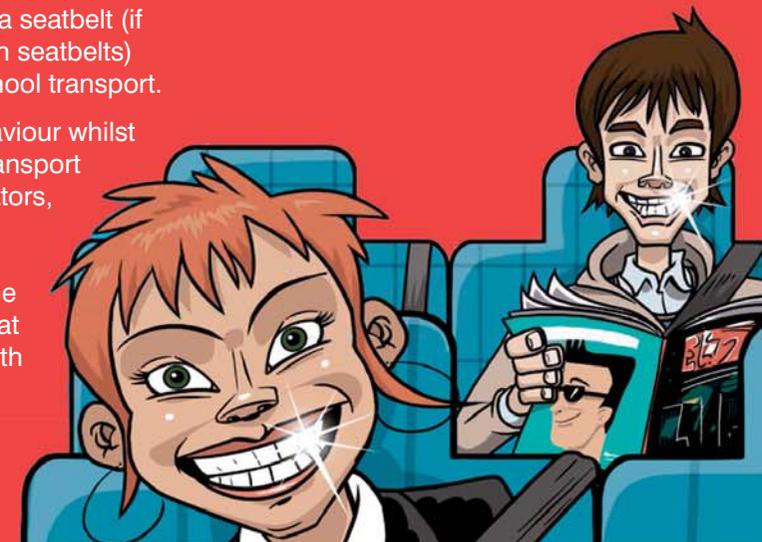


These guidelines have been prepared to assist parents to ensure the safety of their child and others when using the school transport service.

Parents are asked to:-

- Advise the school about any change of address or other circumstances that may affect transport arrangements. The school will then advise the School Transport Team of changes in order to allow the entitlement to free transport to be checked and where appropriate, the necessary arrangements made.
- Provide an emergency contact number, so that you can be advised of any changes to the transport arrangements.
- Ensure that your child does not leave home without a valid bus pass. The Council, in conjunction with the comprehensive schools and the operators, enforces a NO PASS NO TRAVEL policy. This means that any learner trying to board school transport without a valid pass will be refused transport and will need to make their own way to or from school. No exception will be made to this policy. Lost passes can be replaced. There is a charge. The current cost can be found on the Council's website at www.rctcbc.gov.uk/schooltransport You can pay by telephone 01443 425001 or at any of the Council's One4aLL centres. If no action is taken to purchase a replacement pass, the entitlement to transport may be withdrawn.
- In the mornings your child should leave home in plenty of time to get to the bus so that there is no need to rush, particularly if there are roads to be crossed.
- Make sure your child is ready to be picked up at home or at the pick-up point ten minutes before the allocated time. Details of the bus stop pick-up times for the mainstream school transport routes can be found at www.rctcbc.gov.uk/schooltransport. For SEN pick-ups, which are usually from the learner's home address, approximate times can be arranged with your driver.
- Ensure that appropriate supervision arrangements are put in place, and particularly for primary school learners, that your child is taken to and collected from the nominated pick-up points by a responsible adult.
- For SEN pick ups, drivers and passenger assistants are instructed not to wait longer than five minutes after the arranged times. Any delays can have a significant affect on other learners on the same vehicle. For the benefit and well being of other learners, please ensure that your child is ready to leave at the agreed pick-up time. The passenger assistant will walk with your child from the kerb-side outside your home to the vehicle.
- Pick-up points are arranged to balance the need to pick-up children as close to their homes as possible and the need to limit the number of pick-up points to a level which results in reasonable journey times.

- If your child misses the vehicle, for whatever reason, it is your responsibility to ensure your child is able to attend school. No additional transport will be provided.
- Where transport is arranged by taxi, or the pick up is from the learner's home address, please advise the operator as soon as possible if your child is ill or unable to attend school for any reason.
- In the evenings, a child who has to cross the road after getting off the bus should wait until the bus has driven off before attempting to cross so that they can see and be seen by other traffic. If meeting your child, wherever possible, you should wait at the drop off point itself, and not on the other side of the road. For SEN drop-offs, the passenger assistant will walk with your child to the kerb-side outside your home.
- For SEN learners, parents or a responsible adult must be at home to receive your child.
- Ensure that your child understands that they should wear a seatbelt (if the vehicle is fitted with seatbelts) whilst travelling on school transport.
- Encourage good behaviour whilst travelling on school transport and support the operators, drivers, passenger assistants, the School Transport Team and the schools in ensuring that your child complies with the Welsh Assembly Government's Travel Behaviour Code www.travelcode.org.
- Ensure that your child is aware of the need for good behaviour whilst travelling on school transport. If they misbehave on the vehicle, it may result in your child being excluded from home to school transport, in accordance with the Travel Behaviour Code. Parents will then be responsible for the full cost of ensuring that their child is able to attend school.
- Advise the School Transport Team of any concerns you have about the transport provided for your child. A "Report It" facility can be found at www.rctcbc.gov.uk/schooltransport
- For learners with Special Education Needs, please advise the School Transport Team if your child uses any specialist equipment. You will be required to provide this yourself.
- Ensure that medication is clearly labelled, kept securely in the learner's school bag and handed in at school.



MAKE EVERY JOURNEY A GOOD ONE

STICK TO THE TRAVEL CODE.



Learners

These guidelines have been prepared to ensure that learners are provided with a quality school transport service. To ensure the provision of comfortable, safe and stress free travel, learners must behave in a way that does not endanger themselves, other passengers, drivers, passenger assistants or other road users.

It is the Council's intention to provide a passenger transport service that will seek to carry learners safely, comfortably and without unreasonable levels of stress.

Your Responsibility

- Always respect others, including other learners, drivers and the public.
- Always respect vehicles and property.
- Always be polite.
- Never drop litter.
- Always obey the law.

Your Safety

- Always behave well throughout your journey.
- Always follow the driver's instructions when travelling.
- You must not distract drivers.
- Always cross the road safely and sensibly.
- Always travel by a safe route.

Your Rights

- To be safe when travelling.
- To be treated fairly and with respect.
- To tell someone if somebody or something is causing you problems.
- Not to be bullied or picked on.

TELL A TEACHER, PARENT OR DRIVER

ABOUT ANY POOR BEHAVIOUR

OR BULLYING YOU SEE.

SCHOOL BUS TRAVEL CODE

- When at the bus stop, always wait sensibly, off the road.
- Make an agreement with your parents what to do if the bus does not arrive or if you miss it.
- When the bus arrives wait for it to stop. Never push or rush for the door.
- Show your bus pass (if you have been given one) when you get on the bus.
- On a school bus stay in your seat for the whole journey.
- On a public bus find a seat if one is available.
- Never block the aisle with your bag or other belongings.
- Always wear a seatbelt if one is provided.
- You must not distract the driver when he or she is driving.
- Never eat or drink on the bus.
- Never throw anything in or from the bus.
- Never damage or vandalise any part of the bus.
- Never operate the bus doors or exits, except in an emergency.
- Always follow the instructions of the driver or passenger assistant at all times.
- If there is an accident, stay on the bus until you are told to leave. If it is unsafe to stay on the bus then leave via the safest exit.
- Never try and get on or off the bus until it has stopped.
- Always get off the bus sensibly, taking all belongings with you.
- Never cross the road in front of or close behind the bus.



Learner Behaviour

- Your safety is very important. You must behave responsibly and safely when travelling to and from school, and follow the rules in the School Bus Travel Behaviour Code.
- Report any misbehaviour to the driver, passenger assistant, school or the School Transport Team.
- In cases of particularly bad behaviour by the learners, drivers have been instructed if necessary, to stop the bus until order is restored.
- Each case of misbehaviour will be considered on its merit. Any unacceptably disruptive behaviour will be investigated to minimise the risk of such behaviour being repeated.
- Vehicles used for school transport may be fitted with CCTV. The footage is confidential but may be used as evidence in cases of misconduct or misbehaviour.
- Following an investigation, the right to transport may be removed for a specified period, depending on the severity of the incident.
- Any damage to the vehicle caused by a learner could result in the operator seeking to obtain reimbursement to cover the cost of the repairs.

Bus Passes

- Bus passes are issued to all comprehensive school learners who are entitled to travel on school transport. The colour of the bus pass will correspond with the coloured route sign located at the front of the vehicle. Learners will be able to easily identify the bus they should be travelling on. Drivers will be able to easily check that learners are travelling on the correct bus. Learners without the correct colour coded bus pass will not be allowed to board the vehicle.
- Learners are expected to carry their bus pass at all times and show it to the driver each time they board the vehicle. This will ensure that only those learners who are entitled to travel on the bus do so and prevent it from being overloaded.
- The Council, in conjunction with the schools and the operators, enforces a **NO PASS NO TRAVEL** policy. This means that any learner trying to board without a valid pass for that vehicle will be refused transport and will need to make their own way to or from school.
No exception will be made to this policy.
- If you have lost or damaged your pass you will need to purchase a replacement. There is a charge. The current cost can be found on the Council's website - www.rctcbc.gov.uk/schooltransport. You can pay for the replacement pass by telephone **01443 425001** or at any of the Council's One4aLL Centres
- Bus passes are not normally issued to primary school learners. Their transport providers have been issued with a list of those entitled to travel.

Contact Details

This leaflet aims to provide information to schools, parents and learners who use the transport services provided by Rhondda Cynon Taf Council.

The Council's website www.rctcbc.gov.uk/schooltransport contains more information about the points outlined in this leaflet, as well as the answers to a number of "Frequently Asked Questions". Its "Report It" facility enables problems to be reported.

For any further information:

Email:

For primary and comprehensive school transport:
hometoschooltransport@rctcbc.gov.uk

For the transport of learners with Special Education Needs:
communitycaretransport@rctcbc.gov.uk

Telephone:

01443 425001

Writing:

Integrated Transport Unit
School Transport Team
Rhondda Cynon Taf Council
Sardis House, Sardis Road
Pontypridd, CF37 1DU

In Person:

At the Council's One4aLL centres open on Monday to Friday between 8.30am and 5.00pm

Rock Grounds

High Street, Aberdare

Ty Sardis

Sardis Road, Pontypridd

Ty Bronwydd

Bronwydd Avenue, Porth

Treorchy Library

Station Road, Treorchy

Mountain Ash Library

Knight St, Mountain Ash



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