



RED HILL SCHOOL TRANSPORT POLICY Roll No: 20311F

Policy Statement

This document sets out the School Transport Policy for Red Hill School.

Scope

This policy has been drawn up in consultation with the Board of Management and Staff of Red Hill School and has been approved and adopted by the Board of Management. The policy applies to all staff/parents/pupils within the school.

Covid -19 Response

Transport personnel should be empowered to decline to transport a child who has obvious symptoms.

Parents need to have a heightened awareness of signs, symptoms or changes in baseline which might suggest illness/Covid 19 infection and where symptoms are present, children should not attend school.

Bus Escorts must ensure they know the symptoms of Covid-19.

Bus Escorts must follow correct protocol for managing a suspected case of Covid-19 on transport.

Confidentiality is paramount in the event that someone becomes unwell and this information should only be disclosed to relevant parties ie parents of sick child, Principal, Bus Escort. HSE protocols and contact tracing will apply.

In line with HSE Contact Tracing Process, the HSE will contact anyone who may have come into contact with a diagnosed Covid-19 case via the contact tracing process. The HSE instructions should be followed and confidentiality is essential at all times.

Should a pupil begin to show symptoms while on the school bus, The Department of Education and Bus Eireann have agreed the following procedures and they should be adhered to

- Where there are no other pupils present, the school bus will return the symptomatic pupil to his or her home, with the Bus Escort contacting the parents to inform them.
- Where other pupils have already boarded the bus, the parents of the symptomatic pupil will be contacted to collect their child at the school.

Bus Escorts phone must be fully charged for work, in working order and contain parent's contact details in their contact list.

Parents must be available to receive their child in this instance in short notice. In the event that a parent is unwilling or unavailable to receive their child parents must have an immediate alternative for collection. (Covid Collection Form)

Parents should supply their child with a hygiene pack for use on the bus. This should include tissues to use on the bus. Hand sanitiser should only be used by children who are independent in its use and are not at risk of ingesting it.

Supplies of hand sanitiser, tissues, gloves and wipes should be supplied on board the vehicle for staff and children to use as needed.

Pupils should sanitise hands before boarding the bus.

Pupils should observe respiratory etiquette at all times while waiting for and on-board transport services.

Pupils with SEN are not required to wear face coverings; however, physical distancing should try to be maintained where possible. Pupils will sit in pre-assigned seating next to a sibling or child from their class group (same child at all times).

Pupils should disembark in a controlled way from the bus, one at a time. Principal/ Deputy Principal and Secretary facilitate this by calling buses according to allocated number given. Staff then come in a very orderly manner to collect pupils, ensuring physical distancing between staff and pupil cohort.

Bus Escorts must complete a Return to Work Questionnaire if out for any length of time.

Bus Escorts must complete form to confirm completion of online training.

Checklist for PPE was issued to each Bus Escort.

Bus Escorts will be kept up to date on Public Health Advice issued by the HSE and Gov.ie.

Bus Escorts will implement cleaning in line with the DES guidelines.

Bus Escorts were issued a contact tracing log, which is filled in daily.

Bus Escorts must not wait in the lobby or reception area to reduce contact tracing.

Bus Escorts may handover any behavioural records or parent messages to relevant staff from each room as they collect children from the bus.

Daily contact tracing logs will be maintained by the Bus Escort.

Bus Escorts are provided by the Board of Management using grant assistance from the Department of Education & Skills to assist and supervise pupils using school transport. The following guidelines apply:

1. To avoid delays in the morning children should be ready in good time and waiting to board. Escorts wait in the vehicle and will not enter the home. It is the parent's responsibility to get the pupil to enter the transport. **Parents need to have their child ready for transport at the appointed time.**
2. **If a child is not presented for transport within 5 minutes of the arrival of the transport at the pick-up point or home then the transport will leave.** Delays to other pupils on the route can be upsetting and cause all the children to be late for school.. If a pupil is upset prior to leaving home and poses a risk to the escort and driver in the confined space of the vehicle, they are within their rights under the Health and Safety guidelines of the school to decline to transport him/her until they have calmed down. The parents may need to bring the child to school themselves on such an occasion.
3. The transport will not return to the pupil's home for forgotten items to avoid delaying other pupils. It is the responsibility of the parent to bring forgotten items to the school for the pupil if they are required that day. **Parents are requested to follow the Covid-19 School Response Plan guidelines in this regard.**
4. If children are not travelling for any reason, escorts and drivers appreciate being informed in advance if possible to avoid delays.
5. The school must be provided with named persons to whom children may be handed over in the evenings. The school will not release pupils to travel unaccompanied with third parties unless the family have provided written permission for same in advance of the date.
6. Escorts are **not** permitted to drop pupils off at empty houses or to houses other than the location specified for the transportation of the child
7. Any items in the possession of a pupil which may be regarded as a hazard to themselves or others will be removed.
8. Pupils are expected to wear the seatbelts provided. Some pupils may require a harness **or safety device** to ensure that they remain seated. If this is necessary, the principal will arrange for same in consultation with parents.
9. Consuming food/sweets or drinks on the bus **is not permitted** as the children should not be in a moving vehicle while eating or drinking and it may cause other pupils to get upset and disruptive.
10. Persistent disruptive or challenging behaviours which might potentially affect the safety of others will result in that pupil's removal from the service until the situation can be resolved.
11. If a child is agitated or upset before leaving the home, parents should consider bringing the child to school themselves later when he/she has calmed down rather than contributing to an incident on the bus that might result in removal from the service. If a child is upset or disruptive in school, rather than put him/her on transport in an agitated state, the principal or class teacher will request the parent to come to the school to collect the child.
12. The escorts will place the booster seats on the bus each afternoon in advance of the pupils entering the bus to go home.

13. The driver and escort should not converse or discuss the pupils or school in a negative manner within their hearing. Many of our pupils have higher levels of receptive language than expressive language and although they may not communicate verbally, they may comprehend what is being said by others. **If there is a concern regarding a pupil or a home situation it should immediately be brought to the Principal.**

RELIEF ESCORTS

Every effort is made to ensure that escorts travel on each vehicle in order to assist the pupils and safeguard their individual safety. In general this system works very satisfactorily but there are rare occasions that the escort is not available to travel on the route and at short notice it can be difficult or impossible to arrange a substitute escort. This situation is unavoidable as there are multiple routes coming to the school and it is not possible to identify relief personnel Garda vetted and suitably experienced willing to be available in each starting location on the slight chance that the escort might be ill during the year. Therefore, there will be occasions where we simply cannot arrange for a substitute escort.

The Board of Management are concerned that in the absence of the escort the safety of pupils may be somewhat compromised. The Board does not wish to inconvenience parents unduly but considerate of Health and Safety implications for our students in the absence of a bus escort/sub bus escort, transport will be unavailable on that day. Every effort will be made to communicate such an occurrence to parents at the earliest possible opportunity

MORNINGS

It is parents'/guardians' responsibility to ensure that the transport provided each morning is suitable for their child.

1. In order to comply with legislation, all pupils should be provided with a child booster seat by their family if it is required due to their age and physical size.
2. In the event of an escort being unavailable, the escort concerned will make every effort in advance to contact and inform parents via text that there will be no escort on the route that morning.
3. If the escort is absent, parents need to find an alternative means of bringing their child to school and must be collected by parents/guardians at the appropriate finish time for their child.
4. Where a bus service requires two bus escorts, and one is absent and a substitute escort cannot be provided, the parents of children with a high supervision requirement will be contacted and requested to organise alternative transport to school on that day. This arrangement will have been agreed with relevant parents at the start of the school year.
5. It is important to remember that parents inform child-minders or other guardians who might have responsibility for children in the mornings of these guidelines

EVENINGS

It is more unusual that vehicles are without relief escorts in the evenings but in the event of such an occurrence the following will apply:

1. ***Parents/guardians will be requested to collect their child at 2.50p.m. at the close of the school day. (1.50p.m. for the junior classes)***

NEW ENROLMENTS

Following formal acceptance of an offer of enrolment by letter from parents, the principal applies for transport via the Special Educational Needs Officer (SENO). This application is then processed by the National Council for Special Education (NCSE).

Code of Behaviour while on School Transport

The aim of this policy is to enhance the safety of all users of the school transport to and from school. Safety is the responsibility of all who avail of the services (parents, pupils, contractors, escorts, school) and commitment to safety is a condition of use of these services.

Children using school transport must:

1. Sit in the seat that has been allocated to them by the escort.
2. Wear their seat belt throughout the journey.
3. Not leave the bus without permission of the escort.
4. All electronic devices e.g. iPod, phone etc. must only be used with agreement of the escort. Use of devices are subject to Red Hill School's Code of Conduct & **implementation of Individual Behaviour Support Plans**
5. Be respectful towards the escort, driver and other pupils. Bad language must not be used.

Escorts/Driver will bring to the attention of the school any concerns they have for safety on the bus arising from breaching the code of conduct.

School Response Hierarchy

1. Class teacher will talk to child about behaviour.
2. Deputy Principal will talk to child about behaviour.
3. Deputy Principal will contact parent.
4. Principal will meet parent/escort and pupil.
5. If there are ongoing concerns Principal will write to Transport Department to inform of these concerns.

Roles and Responsibilities

Pupils

- To adhere to safety rules and abide by Code of Conduct

Parents

- **To comply with the Covid-19 School Response Plan and not send children displaying symptoms of Covid-19 to school.**
- To adhere to safety rules and ensure their child abides by the Code of Conduct.
- To report any concerns initially to the escort, and or class teacher as necessary.
- To make alternative arrangements as necessary to transport their child to school in the absence of a Bus Escort.
- To communicate with bus escorts in the first instance regarding pupil absence, or if alternative arrangements have been made for a variety of reasons.
- To communicate changes of contact details to school. Bus Escort and Bus Driver.

Escort

- To comply with the Covid-19 School Response Plan in relation to their role as Bus Escort.
- To adhere to safety rules and ensure pupil abides by Code of Conduct, to follow School Response Hierarchy if concerns arise.
- To attend relevant training as directed by the school/BOM in line with their role as escort.
- To communicate with parents in the first instance if there is a problem/delay with school transport caused by absence/mechanical failure/weather incidents etc.
- To ensure they carry up to date contact details of student's parents.
- To ensure bus driver has their current contact details.
- To identify sub cover

Contractor

- To ensure safe operation of routes, subject to all appropriate guidelines/requirements set out by the Department of Education and Skills with regard to the sanctioning of school transport, **including all relevant Covid-19 Protocols for their sector.**
- To communicate with escorts/school in the first instance if there is a problem with school transport caused by absence/mechanical failure/weather incidents etc.
- If providing alternative transport option in case of need to ensure that the driver is familiar with the route, knows the pupils to be collected, and can confirm these details with the school before pupils go on the bus.

Bus Driver

- In the event of an emergency situation a bus driver may contact the bus inspector and/or parents of the service users.

School/BOM

- To employ bus escorts where possible on all sanctioned routes.
- To ensure that escorts are subject to all mandatory requirements as outlined by the Department of Education and Skills in working with children.
- To provide relevant training as applicable to the escort role.
- To commence a yearly audit with regard to staffing of bus routes, and to work with contractors to ascertain procedures in the event of no escort/sub-escort being available for the route.
- To review routes annually in regard to pupil needs/behaviour to determine if route could operate without a second escort if the situation arises.
- To advertise for bus escorts/sub-bus escorts as required.
- Where there is no escort/sub-bus escort to inform parents of same and outline alternative arrangements, which may include in the event of escort absence (no sub available), parents will need to make alternative arrangements to transport their child to school.

Related Documents/Policies: Enrolment Policy, **Behaviour Management Protocols of Red Hill School**, Child Protection Policy & Statement, Critical Incident-Behaviour Policy, Administering Medicine Policy, Individual Pupil Risk Assessment, Incident Reports.



JOB DESCRIPTION BUS ESCORTS:

Red Hill School

1. To complete any and all training requirements as identified by the Board of Management and/or the Department of Education & Skills. This includes all trainings and protocols detailed in the Covid 19 School Response Plan.
2. To supervise children travelling on bus/taxi from time of the first pick up and last drop off.
3. To receive any prescribed medication from the parent and give it to the school staff. Also to ensure the same medication is brought back home to the family in the evening.
4. To be responsible for the safety of the children when opening and closing doors prior to stopping and moving off.
5. To assist children to board and alight safely from bus/taxi.
6. To receive the children from a responsible **familiar person** in the morning.
7. To hand the children over to a responsible **familiar person** in the evening.
8. To ensure that all children are seated with appropriate seat belts, harnesses and social distancing etc.
9. To have a contact number for each parent/driver.
10. To maintain a good working relationship with driver and with families.
11. To observe confidentiality in all aspects of work. Failure to observe confidentiality is considered a serious breach of discipline and will be dealt with through our Disciplinary Procedures, up to and including termination of contract.
12. Be aware of the particular disabilities/medical conditions of each child and be briefed by the Principal/Deputy Principal on how to deal with them i.e. epilepsy, nut allergy etc. And to complete additional training as appropriate.
13. To take up a position in the bus/taxi where maximum view of children is achieved giving consideration to practicalities and safety.
14. Unless under exceptional circumstances, the Escort should never leave the bus.
15. To bring in the booster seats into the school building and replace them on the bus in the evening ready for the children to embark.
16. To perform any other relevant duties which may be assigned by the Principal.
17. To report all concerns to the Principal/Class Teacher/H&S Post Holder.
18. To complete an Incident form in relation to a situation where the safety of a child, other children, the escort or driver is compromised. The principal should be given a copy of this report as soon as possible following the incident.
19. The escort should inform the parent of a serious incident occurring on the bus/taxi. It is best practice not to discuss this in the presence of the child. The escort can follow up with a phone call from school the following day. Parents should be informed of this practice.
20. Members of the multi-disciplinary team will be consulted in an effort to help deal with the problem. This will be co-ordinated by the principal. The child may, in exceptional reoccurring

circumstances have to be excluded from transport until a plan to eliminate risks can be identified.

21. Substitute Cover: In the event of you being unable to work in the morning please arrange with a relief escort if available to fill in for you. If you are unable to find relief please advise the school secretary & parents on your route that an escort will not travel on their child's service and that the route cannot run without the escort. Please ensure that the School Principal or Secretary is informed if a relief escort covers for you to ensure payment arrangements are made.
22. Health & Safety: As an employee of the school you are responsible for your own, your colleagues' and the children's health and safety. Therefore, you are obliged to comply with the School's Health and Safety Policies.

Policy Approval

This policy has been reviewed and accepted by the school Board of Management

Chairperson of BOM

Date

Policy Review

It is acknowledged and accepted by all parties that this policy may be revised/modified annually or more frequently as required in light of on-going evaluation of statutory requirements or situations that arise during the school year.