



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, parents 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.

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.
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 review of same in consultation with parents and the Occupational Therapist supporting that child. Parents will be requested to sign a consent form

- regarding any safety devices being utilised, this includes any temporary measures to support the student's continued access to transport while waiting for OT review.
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 that are suitably experienced and 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 and parents/guardians complete a school transport application form and apply for transport via the Special Educational Needs Officer (SENO). This application is then processed by the National Council for Special Education (NCSE) and the transport section of the Department of Education. The school will be formally advised of sanction and the Transport Inspector with Bus Eireann will also be notified. The sourcing of bus contractors is entirely under the remit of Bus Eireann.

Weather warnings: Advisory text messages will be issued to parents as per the advice of the Department of Education and the National Emergency Co-ordination Group in the event of weather warnings.

School Transport will not run if there is a RED weather warning in place during the hours of school transportation.

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 adhere to safety rules and ensure their child abides by the Code of Conduct.
- Individual Protocols for those children on individual transport should be authored in consultation with parents and signatures achieved for the protocol. The multi-disciplinary team may be invited to contribute to this protocol.
- 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.
- Parents must advise the school at the earliest opportunity of an impending change of address, as this will require another application to be submitted to the Transport Section of the Department of Education via the SENO (NCSE)

Escort

- To adhere to safety rules and ensure pupil abides by Code of Conduct, to follow School Response Hierarchy if concerns arise.
- To adhere to agreed individual protocols as described above.
- To advise parent and school if there is a change in behaviour of a student on the bus
- 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 contact bus driver in the event of the bus escort and/or sub not being available to attend
- To identify sub cover.

- In the unusual event of all passengers needing to disembark a bus service en route, bus escorts should contact the following as appropriate:
 - Emergency Services by dialing 999 or 112.
 - school for additional assistance.
 - The parents of the student using the service.

The use of the “Walk-a-dile Safety Web (pic below) should be implemented to help support our younger children on the roadside.



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.
- 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, 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. The safety procedures of the bus company should be followed.

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 review the staffing of bus routes, as required. Any changes to resourcing routes would need input from Multi-Disciplinary Team.
- To advertise for bus escorts/sub-bus escorts as required.
- To regularly review individual protocols.
- 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.

PLEASE NOTE ALL SAFETY PRECAUTIONS DESCRIBED IN THIS POLICY EXTEND TO STUDENT AND STAFF USE OF THE RED HILL SCHOOL BUS DURING THE SCHOOL DAY.

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, Social Outings Policy & Procedures.



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.
2. To implement all safety precautions described in the Transport Policy
3. To supervise children travelling on bus/taxi from time of the first pick up and last drop off.
4. To receive any prescribed medication from the parent and give it to the school staff. To ensure the same medication is brought back home to the family in the evening.
5. To be responsible for the safety of the children when opening and closing doors prior to stopping and moving off.
6. To assist children to board and alight safely from bus/taxi.
7. To receive the children from a responsible **familiar person** in the morning.
8. To hand the children over to a responsible **familiar person** in the evening.
9. To ensure that all children are seated with appropriate seat belts, harnesses as per agreement with parents, school and relevant occupational therapist.
10. To have a contact number for each parent/driver.
11. To maintain a good working relationship with driver and with families.
12. 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.
13. 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.
14. To take up a position in the bus/taxi where maximum view of children is achieved giving consideration to practicalities and safety.
15. Unless under exceptional circumstances, the Escort should never leave the bus.
16. 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.
17. To perform any other relevant duties which may be assigned by the Principal.
18. To report all concerns to the Principal/Class Teacher/H&S Post Holder.
19. 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.
20. 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.
21. 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.

22. 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 driver 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 are informed if a relief escort covers for you to ensure payment arrangements are made.
23. 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 Val Real 

Date15/09/2020.....

Policy Review

DATE: 21/11/2023

Chairperson BOM


MR. Val Real

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.