
Report To:	Education & Communities Committee	Date:	21 January 2025
Report By:	Ruth Binks Corporate Director Education, Communities & Organisational Development	Report No:	EDUCOM/01/25/RB
Contact Officer:	Tony McEwan Head of Culture, Communities and Educational Resources	Contact No:	01475 712828
Subject:	Update to School Transport Policy		

1.0 PURPOSE AND SUMMARY

1.1 For Decision For Information/Noting

1.2 The purpose of this report is to seek approval of minor updates to the Policy on the Provision of School Transport.

1.3 This has been updated as required over recent years and when changes have been identified. The main change identified in the update to the policy is the inclusion of free Under 22 bus travel cards which would replace the use of the travel passes on service routes.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 The Education and Communities Committee is asked to approve the updates to the Provision of School Transport Policy.

**Ruth Binks
Corporate Director
Education, Communities & Organisational Development**

3.0 BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

- 3.1 Inverclyde Council's school transport policy aims to assist parents in their responsibility of ensuring that their child attends school and on time by providing free transport in line with that required by legislation. The Council provides transport by working with Strathclyde Partnership for Transport (SPT) in order that it can provide the most effective, safe and economical use of resources through the close monitoring of contracts.
- 3.2 Inverclyde Council's policy on transport to school is more generous than the statutory distance requirements and remains amongst the most generous in Scotland. Subsidised buses and transport grants for secondary pupils living between 1 and 2 miles from a school and in receipt of free school meals are also available. This policy was last revised in 2019.
- 3.3 The current school transport policy is working well and there is a consistent application of the measurement of acceptable walked routes and fewer complaints regarding the policy. Therefore there are no proposals in this report to make any substantial changes to the policy.
- 3.4 Since 2022, The Council has been administering the issuing of free travel passes for Under 22s on behalf of the Scottish Government. While there are no current direct school transport routes available to utilise the free travel passes, if a service route or routes become available it is proposed that pupils use their free travel passes rather than the Council being required to purchase travel cards on their behalf.

4.0 PROPOSALS

- 4.1 The revised policy is attached as Appendix 1 to this report. The specific changes to the policy are highlighted.

5.0 IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The table below shows whether risks and implications apply if the recommendation(s) is(are) agreed:

SUBJECT	YES	NO
Financial		X
Legal/Risk		X
Human Resources		X
Strategic (Partnership Plan/Council Plan)	X	
Equalities, Fairer Scotland Duty & Children/Young People's Rights & Wellbeing	X	
Environmental & Sustainability	X	
Data Protection		X

5.2 Finance

One off Costs

Cost Centre	Budget Heading	Budget Years	Proposed Spend this Report	Virement From	Other Comments
N/A					

Annually Recurring Costs/ (Savings)

Cost Centre	Budget Heading	With Effect from	Annual Net Impact	Virement From (if Applicable)	Other Comments
N/A					

There are no financial implications from this report, but members should note that there is a continuing pressure on the budget for ASN and school transport.

5.3 Legal/Risk

This policy is more generous than the requirements under the Section 42 of the Education (Scotland) Act 1980

5.4 Human Resources

N/A.

5.5 Strategic

This policy fits into the priorities of the Partnership and council plan.

5.6 Equalities, Fairer Scotland Duty & Children/Young People

(a) Equalities

This report has been considered under the Corporate Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA) process with the following outcome:

X	YES – Assessed as relevant and an EqIA is required, a copy of which will be made available on the Council website: https://www.inverclyde.gov.uk/council-and-government/equality-impact-assessments
	NO – This report does not introduce a new policy, function or strategy or recommend a substantive change to an existing policy, function or strategy. Therefore, assessed as not relevant and no EqIA is required.

(b) Fairer Scotland Duty

Has there been active consideration of how this report's recommendations reduce inequalities of outcome?

X	YES – A written statement showing how this report's recommendations reduce inequalities of outcome caused by socio-economic disadvantage has been completed.
	NO – Assessed as not relevant under the Fairer Scotland Duty.

(c) Children and Young People

Has a Children's Rights and Wellbeing Impact Assessment been carried out?

	YES – Assessed as relevant and a CRWIA is required.
X	NO – Assessed as not relevant as this report does not involve a new policy, function or strategy or recommends a substantive change to an existing policy, function or strategy which will have an impact on children's rights.

5.7 Environmental/Sustainability

Although an assessment has not been carried out, appropriate and efficient management of transport contributes towards the overall aim to reduce the carbon footprint of Inverclyde

Has a Strategic Environmental Assessment been carried out?

	YES – assessed as relevant and a Strategic Environmental Assessment is required.
X	NO – This report does not propose or seek approval for a plan, policy, programme, strategy or document which is like to have significant environmental effects, if implemented.

6.0 CONSULTATION

6.1 This policy has been subject to previous consultation.

7.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

7.1 N/A

Overview of Policy Updates		
Policy on the Provision of School Transport		
PAGE	TITLE	PROPOSED CHANGE
Throughout		Use of new policy template
1.2		Addition of phrase 'Internal transport'
1.3		Insertion of specifics of Council policy
1.5		Addition of guidance for 'officers, elected members and parents'
3.2	Policy Content	Use of local bus service and use of Free Under 22s Travel pass rather than bus pass Change from 'local' school to 'catchment school'
3.3	Policy Content	Referral made to use of subsidised bus rather than bus pass.
3.3	Policy Content	Minor change to wording to clarify that escorts will be provided where appropriate
3.5	Policy Content	Change to wording to only refer to additional support needs rather than rural areas for early years
3.8	Policy Content	Change to wording to state that consortium and vocational arrangements are not part of this policy and arrangements are made by schools.
5.5	Policy Content	Previous typo – finished sentence to state that parents who obtain privilege passes by using false information will have their child's pass removed with immediate effect.
6.0		Privilege passes changed to privilege 'seats'
6.4		Specification of normal timescale for issuing of privilege seats Clarification when demand exceeds supply
7.3	Policy Content	Word change from these to specialist Insertion of implications of failure to pay for subsidised transport
10.1	Policy Content	Wording "bus or taxi" removed
App 4, Sec 11		Signposting for complaints

Organisational Development, Human Resources and Performance

Policy on the Provision of School Transport

Version No:

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DOCUMENT CONTROL

Document Responsibility		
Policy Title	Corporate Group	Service
Policy on the Provision of School Transport		Education, Communities and Organisational Development

Change History		
Version	Date	Comments
1	2019	
2	December 2024	

Distribution
Website for all users of school transport. ECMT

Policy Approval			
Name	Action	Date	Communication
Education and Communities Committee		January 2025	

Policy Review		
Updating Frequency	Next Review Date	Responsible Officer
Every 5 years or as required	2029 – or as required	Head of Culture, Communities and Educational Resources

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Inverclyde Council's school transport policy aims to assist parents in their responsibility of ensuring that their child attends school and on time by providing free transport in line with that required by legislation

1.2 BACKGROUND

The Council provides transport by working with Strathclyde Partnership for Transport (SPT) and its own internal transport service in order that it can provide the most effective, safe and economical use of resources through the close monitoring of contracts.

1.3 STRATEGIC CONTEXT

Inverclyde Council's policy on transport to school is more generous than the statutory requirement with enhancements to statutory distances and the provision of transport grants and subsidised buses where appropriate.

1.4 LINKS TO LEGISLATION

Under Section 42 of the Education (Scotland) Act 1980, a local authority must provide free transport or such other arrangements for all primary pupils who live more than 2 miles from their local catchment school and to all pupils over age 8 who live more than 3 miles from their local catchment school. In exceptional circumstances pupils living within these mileage restrictions may be granted temporary access to school transport for example, pupils suffering from ill health, child protection issues or problematic family circumstances.

1.5 AIM

The aim of this policy is to provide clear guidance to officers, elected members and parents on Inverclyde's policy for providing transport to school.

2.0 SCOPE

This policy applies to all children attending schools and early years establishments within and outwith Inverclyde Council for whom the council has a responsibility to provide transport.

3.0 POLICY CONTENT

3.1 Inverclyde Council's policy on free school transport is more generous than that required by statute.

3.2 Free school transport is defined as:

- Through a dedicated contract bus which collects and drops off at a bus stop;
- Where possible through the provision of a local bus service and use of Under 22s travel pass;
- A train/travel pass;
- A taxi or private hire car, minibus or ferry; or
- Inverclyde Council's own transport vehicles.

3.3 The Council will provide free home to school transport where a pupil:

- lives more than 1 mile away from their catchment primary school (by the shortest acceptable walked route);
- lives more than 2 miles away from their catchment secondary school (by the shortest acceptable walked route);
- lives between 1-2 miles from their catchment secondary school and is entitled to clothing grant/free school meal. In this instance this will be provided in the form of a place on a subsidised bus where provided or transport grant;
- has been recommended, on health grounds, by a designated medical officer who deems school transport to be essential to the wellbeing of the pupil (see section on ASN);
- has been assessed to attend a particular school or specialist provision to meet his or her additional support needs. The assessment will be in line with the Council's policy on additional support needs. Transport escorts will be provided on vehicles carrying children with additional support needs where appropriate;
- has to walk a route which is considered by the authority to be an unacceptable walked route, even when accompanied by an adult. This may relate, for example to unlit rural roads or roads without adequate pavements;
- lives in Inverclyde and is placed by the Council in a school or provision outwith Inverclyde;
- cannot be provided with a place at his or her catchment school due to the school reaching its pupil capacity. In this case they will be provided with free transport to an alternative school nominated by the authority (usually the next nearest), if it complies with the criteria for walking distances. This will be provided until such time as a place becomes available at the local catchment school;
- is decanted to another school building as part of the School Estates Strategy.

3.4 In the case of a child who attends a school through a placing request, the authority will **not** provide free transport.

3.5 A pupil attending an early years setting will not normally be provided with free transport except in circumstances where they have additional support needs and have been assessed as requiring transport.

- 3.6 Free transport would normally cover a return journey each school day: to school in the morning and to home at the end of the school day. Some pupils will wish to return home for lunch and in these cases, parents will be required to make their own arrangements.
- 3.7 Arrangements may be made by schools for pupils taking part in activities outwith the course of the normal school day. The costs of additional transport accrued because of extra-curricular provision would not normally be met by the Council.
- 3.8 Where a secondary pupil attends another school as part of the Council's consortium arrangements, the Council will provide transport between the pupil's school and the consortium school. Vocational and consortium arrangements for secondary school pupils are not covered by this policy and arrangements are made by the school.

4.0 MEASUREMENT OF DISTANCE

- 4.1 The Council uses the Geographic Information System (GIS) on an ongoing basis to measure the distance from a pupil's home to their catchment school and vice versa.
- 4.2 The measurement of distance is taken from house gate or pavement heel and then by the shortest acceptable walked route to the school gate (this will be the nearest school gate if a school has more than one entrance).
- 4.3 For pupils who qualify for free school transport, they may be required to walk a reasonable distance from home to the transport pick-up point but this will not exceed 1 mile for primary school pupils or 2 miles for secondary school pupils.

5.0 ACCEPTABLE WALKED ROUTES

- 5.1 The Council identifies acceptable walked routes to and from a pupil's catchment school which helps us measure the distance to and from a pupil's school and their home.
- 5.2 The initial assessment of an acceptable route identifies a route which is maintained and kept open to the public by the Council. This includes roads, footpaths, or other tracks of an acceptable width where public access is permitted.
- 5.3 Inverclyde Council has additional criteria that the route must be lit by public lighting. Therefore, if a route is on a maintained hardstanding pathway and is lit then it is considered to be an acceptable walked route to school. Where the acceptable walked route includes a requirement for the crossing of a road, which does not have a supported crossing, an assessment of traffic flow and visibility is carried out in line with the guidance to ensure pupils have sufficient opportunity to cross the road.
- 5.4 The identification of an acceptable route is undertaken following an assessment which is informed by the guidance on Acceptable Walked Routes to School prepared by Road Safety West of Scotland. If there is no acceptable walked route to the school using the above criteria, the Council will provide free transport.

6.0 PRIVILEGE SEATS

- 6.1 A 'privilege seat' may be available where spare capacity exists in a vehicle and can be allocated without the authority incurring any additional costs.
- 6.2 If spare seats exist on existing dedicated school transport vehicles, a child who does not meet the walking distance criteria may be granted a privilege seat.
- 6.3 If spare seats exist on dedicated transport vehicles, a child attending a school by virtue of a placing request (who would not normally qualify for free transport) may still be granted a privilege seat.
- 6.4 If the applications for privilege seats exceeds the seats available these will be allocated by ballot in September each year, with every applicant having an equal chance of success. The Council will not incur additional costs by contracting a larger vehicle where demand exceeds places available.
- 6.5 Parents who attempt to obtain a privilege seat by providing false information will have the pass removed for their child with immediate effect.

7.0 SUBSIDISED TRANSPORT

- 7.1 There may be rare circumstances where the Council will provide secondary pupils with a subsidised transport service. This could be where there is a lack of public service routes for part of the journey, below the qualifying distances of two miles and only where it is cost effective to do so.
- 7.2 The provision of subsidised transport is kept under review and is dependent on there being sufficient demand for this provision. If there is no demand, the Council reserves the right to withdraw the service.
- 7.3 Where a subsidised transport service is provided, parents will be charged, in advance and at the start of each term, at a cost equivalent to a bus pass on a service route. In instances where a parent fails to pay for their subsidised place, the Council reserves the right to remove the child's place on the bus.
- 7.4 If a parent has more than one child at a school using a subsidised route, the Council will provide a payment plan for parents, should they wish to reserve places on the subsidised route.

8.0 TRANSPORT FOR PUPILS WITH ADDITIONAL SUPPORT NEEDS

- 8.1 Inverclyde Council has a policy of presumption of mainstream education and holds the view that children should be educated at their local school wherever possible. However, the Council will, through the Additional Support Needs (ASN) forum place children in Craigmarloch School, the Garvel Centre or another appropriate base or unit if it is felt their additional support needs can be better met in these settings.

- 8.2 Inverclyde Council recognises that some pupils with additional support needs require assistance with travel due to the nature of their disabilities, whether or not they live within the statutory walking distance of their school. In these cases a decision as to whether transport should be provided is assessed through the ASN forum, taking the following into account:
- **Mobility** – does the child have a physical or medical difficulty that rules out the use of public transport or suitable public transport is not available (e.g., wheelchair users or children who require specialist seating arrangements)?
 - **Sensory Impairment**– Does the child have a sensory impairment that rules out the use of public transport? Would the child be at serious risk of danger if they were not to be transported?
 - **Vulnerability** – Consideration will be given to the age and additional support needs of the child. Are the additional support needs of the child so significant that they would be deemed vulnerable or at serious risk of danger if they were to use public or other transport? In general, this category applies to pupils with severe learning difficulties or severe autism.
 - **Distance** – Would it be unreasonable to expect the child to walk to school or undertake the journey by public transport due to its length and/or complexity?
- 8.3 The Council will provide a dedicated bus service in the first instance, with a transport escort for children who attend specialist settings. This service will collect a pupil from their registered address and take them to school, returning from school to their home at the end of the day.
- 8.4 In certain situations, transport by taxi is considered where it is more financially viable for Inverclyde Council to do so.
- 8.5 Where a pupil attends a school outside Inverclyde, support with travel is only provided where the pupil has been placed in that school by Inverclyde Council. Where a pupil attends a school as a result of a placing request, transport is not normally provided.
- 8.6 Inverclyde Council only considers the provision of transport where it has been demonstrated that the needs of the child warrants this level of involvement.

9.0 TRANSPORT ESCORTS

- 9.1 Where Inverclyde Council has decided that it is necessary to provide transport, it may provide an escort to supervise the pupil's journey.
- 9.2 When determining if an escort should be arranged for a pupil who qualifies for support with home to school transport, Inverclyde Council considers the health and safety risks involved with the journey. Consideration is always be given to the age and needs of the child. For example, if a child suffers from an acute physical disability requiring continuous medical support and attention, an escort would be authorised. Or where the size and composition of a group being transported together are such that an escort is required – for example, groups of pupils of significantly differing ages or difficulties.

10.0 JOURNEYS FOR WHICH TRANSPORT WILL NOT BE PROVIDED

- 10.1 Transport is not provided for hospital, medical, social services or dental appointments before, during and after school. In general, parents are responsible for the collection of their child in the event of illness during the school day. However, it is recognised that there may be difficulties for some parents due to distance or lack of transport; head teachers could facilitate the transport of children in such circumstances.

11.0 GENERAL PROVISIONS

- 11.1 If Inverclyde Council decides that a child is eligible to receive transport, in line with this policy, the mode of transport is determined by Inverclyde Council. Transport is arranged to and from school on a daily basis in accordance with the school's opening hours.
- 11.2 Inverclyde Council will not provide transport outside of these times and, therefore transport to another educational setting outside the school day would be the responsibility of the parent. It is also the case that transport is only provided to and from the pupil's home address as recorded in the school's files.
- 11.3 If required, it is the parent's responsibility to bring his or her child to the vehicle. This also applies for the return journey from school when the parent will need to be available to collect his or her child from the vehicle.
- 11.4 Pupils are expected to behave in an acceptable manner whilst travelling on Council arranged transport. If a pupil's behaviour gives persistent cause for concern (i.e. threatens the health and safety of themselves, other pupils, the driver or escort) and all attempts to modify such behaviour have been resisted, future arrangements for travelling on Council transport will be subject to a written agreement with the parent. The Council reserves the right to withdraw arranged transport, including escort provision, if the behaviour of the pupil jeopardises the safety of the vehicle occupants.
- 11.5 All drivers carry an identity card and are subject to an enhanced disclosure check by Disclosure Scotland.
- 11.6 All transport escorts (including those provided by a contractor) carry an identity card and are subject to an enhanced disclosure check by Disclosure Scotland.

12.0 COMPLAINTS

- 12.1 Parents who have concerns or complaints about any aspect of the provision of mainstream school may contact their child's school by telephone giving the details which will then be recorded and submitted to Strathclyde Partnership for Transport (SPT) using a postcard system. Parents may also complain direct to SPT in writing to reinforce their concerns. SPT will respond directly to parents and advise the school on the outcome of their investigations.

12.2 Complaints received by the Council are passed to SPT and logged, together with the measures taken to resolve the complaint.

12.3 In the case of additional support needs contracts, enquiries and complaints by parents should be directed in the first instance to the school who will liaise with the appropriate Head of Service. Parents may also write directly to the appropriate Head of Service who will respond to them and advise the school on the outcome of his or her investigations.

13.0 REVIEW

13.1 In addition to the continuous monitoring of transport contracts, the Council will review its transport policy on an annual basis, taking into account developments such as: the uptake of subsidised transport; new housing or roads developments; and the maintenance of acceptable walked routes.

14.0 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

14.1 The Head of Culture, Communication and Education Resources will have oversight of this policy.

15.0 IMPLEMENTATION

15.1 There are no training requirements for this policy. The policy reflects the ongoing work of the Education and Communities Committee in managing transport to school and changes to provision of free transport for Under 22s.

15.2 This policy will be placed on the Inverclyde Council website and made available to all parents.

16.0 RISK

16.1 There is no legislative risk to this policy.

17.0 EQUALITIES

17.1 This policy has been subject to previous consultation and engagement with parents and pupils. The update to this policy provides no substantive changes since that engagement.

An EQIA can be accessed on the council website.

APPENDIX 1

1.0 SECURING TRANSPORT CONTRACTS AND PROVIDERS

The Council adopts the following procedures in arranging home to school transport contracts in relation to pupils attending mainstream provision:

- (a) The Council will, in consultation with SPT, draw up the specification for each transport contract and invite tenders from transport operators by a stated date and time in advance of the starting date.
- (b) On receipt of all tenders by the stated cut-off point, the authority will accept in all but the most exceptional circumstances (which will require to be reported to and accepted by committee) the lowest tender.
- (c) The successful contractor will be notified by SPT and, after the appropriate checks have been made and in full discussion with the education authority and SPT, parents will be notified of the detailed arrangements for the transportation of pupils who qualify for free school transport.
- (d) It is expected that SPT would take account of a number of additional factors when advising on the allocations of contracts, including recent performances on contracts, safety and maintenance records, insurance checks and disclosure records.

In the case of children with additional support needs, the above procedures will be followed but the responsibility for drawing up the specification, arranging contracts and communication with parents lies with the education department with no involvement of SPT.

The precise mode of transport will be decided by the successful contractor, in discussion with the education authority and SPT where appropriate, taking all circumstances into account. Transport will be provided by any, or a combination, of the following:

- Dedicated school contract bus. This is a service provided solely for use for pupils.
- Bus pass on local public service bus. This can either be a commercial service or subsidised local service, such as a demand response service, also carrying of the public. It may be possible for parents to purchase privilege seats on such a contract where space is available.
- Train pass on service train
- Taxi or private hired cars, mini-buses and boats
- The Council's own school transport vehicles.

2.0 CONTRACTUAL CONDITIONS

All transport operators who are successful in securing school transport contracts are issued with a set of 'Conditions of Contract' which are legally binding on both the contractor and the authority. These conditions state clearly the contractor's and Inverclyde Council's rights and responsibilities. The main aspects covered include:

- Detailed arrangements for the operation of the contract.
- Administrative and financial arrangements.
- Transport safety.
- Vehicle specifications/modification/manoeuvres.
- Registration documents/insurance policies/MOT certificates.
- Disclosure checks for drivers and escorts.
- Drivers of mainstream small capacity vehicles (taxis/cars) are also subject to disclosure checks.
- Cancellation of contracts (breach of contractual conditions).
- Entitlement to termination of contracts.
- Emergency procedures.
- Accident reporting procedures.
- Personnel on additional support needs vehicle carry vehicle and personnel identification.

Leaflets on school transport provision are available from Education Services and are provided to schools for issue to parents and carers before the start of the school session.

3.0 CONTRACT MONITORING

SPT is responsible for placing primary and secondary school contracts and for their day-to-day operation. SPT actively monitors the performance of mainstream school contracts through the deployment of a team of specialist inspectors.

Meetings should take place regularly involving the Head of Service (transport) and the appropriate SPT staff to discuss the operation and monitoring of school contracts. To assist its monitoring, SPT welcomes the intimation of any issues of concern by schools or by parents.

The Head of Service with responsibility for school transport will meet on a yearly basis with SPT Officers. Education officers also attend liaison meetings with SPT in their Glasgow Office.

Expectations of Contractors

All contractors are expected to:

- a. Meet the contract specification for which they tender in full, including picking up/setting down times, capacity required and being stationary before the close of school if school grounds or turning areas adjacent to school are used;
- b. Comply with conditions of the contract in full.

Failure to Meet Requirements

This is likely to result in the issue of a letter of which, if not challenged or explained satisfactorily within 5 days, will be recorded as a formal warning against the contractor's performance on the contract in question which will result in non-payment for that run/day.

In exceptional circumstances of negligence by the contractor, contracts may be cancelled with due period of notice.

Vehicle Timetable

Tender specifications normally allow a 10-minute time band within which pupils must be picked up or set down with the middle of that band being the preferred time. No action is generally taken against a contractor who operates within 2 or 3 minutes of the 10-minute band. There is therefore considerable leeway within which contractors can operate.

In the case of additional support need contracts, the appropriate Head of Service will be responsible for the monitoring of contracts and for their day-to-day operation. However, it may be possible in a limited number of special circumstances to seek the assistance of the specialist inspectors employed by SPT

APPENDIX 2

CODES OF CONDUCT

1.0 DRIVERS / ESCORTS

a) Mainstream School Transport

All transport operators involved in school contracts must ensure that drivers and attendants are suitably briefed in relation to the safety of passengers in normal operation and in emergency/unforeseen circumstances. All drivers on mainstream contracts should be issued with the appropriate code of conduct. The leaflet 'Code of Conduct for Drivers of School Transport' by SPT is provided to contractors.

b) Additional Support Needs Transport

All operators must ensure that drivers and escorts are suitably briefed in normal operation and in emergency/unforeseen circumstances. However, the authority expects that particular care will be exercised by drivers and escorts on additional support needs contracts. They are also issued with the appropriate code of conduct leaflet from SPT.

2.0 PUPILS

The responsibility of ensuring safe and acceptable behaviour remains with the parents of a pupil travelling on a school transport vehicle. Misbehaviour or action which could put the safety of others at risk may result in the pupil losing the right to free transport.

In circumstances where a child's behaviour is unacceptable, the driver may retain the child's ticket/pass for identification purposes. The incident will then be reported to the driver's supervisor. Details will be sent to the Head Teacher of the school who will invite the parents to an interview for assurance on their child's good conduct prior to the return of the 'free' travel pass. During this period, the parents will be responsible for making their own arrangements for the attendance of their child at school.

In cases of serious misbehaviour, the Head Teacher can still exercise his or her right to have regard to the discipline policy of the school including the facility to implement Revised Standard Circular 2.10.

3.0 VOLUNTEER DRIVERS OF SELF-DRIVE MINIBUSES

Volunteer drivers must adhere to the code of conduct issued by SPT for drivers of vehicles supporting free school transport. It is the responsibility of the driver for the condition of the vehicle and safe transport of their passengers.

Appendix 3

SPT CODE OF CONDUCT for drivers and attendants of school transport

Operators must ensure that drivers and attendants are suitably briefed on the action to take in the circumstances set out below.

Safety during normal operation

1.0 Drivers MUST:

- 1.1 Carry out a pre-service inspection of their vehicle and record same before the vehicle is used to fulfil a contract
- 1.2 Comply with the Highway Code, drive in a courteous manner and adhere to speed limits.
- 1.3 Approach each pick-up and drop-off point slowly and with care keeping the doors closed until the vehicle has come to a complete standstill.
- 1.4 Ensure that doors are properly closed, and that no coats, bags, etc. are caught in the mechanism of the door from inside or outside and that all pupils are seated before moving off. Check the nearside mirror every time before moving.
- 1.5 Pay particular attention to nearside mirrors in case latecomers attempt to board.
- 1.6 Discourage pupils from crossing in front of the vehicle.
- 1.7 Ensure that all pupils are picked up and set down at a suitable and safe place, paying special attention to any hazards, traffic or obstructions.
- 1.8 Ensure that the number of passengers does not exceed the permitted seating capacity of the vehicle.
- 1.9 Ensure that all doors and emergency exits are fully operational and remain free of any obstruction, giving a clear exit in case of emergency.
- 1.10 Endeavour to ensure that pupils remain seated with seatbelts fastened whilst travelling. If pupils do not wear seatbelts, this must be brought to the attention of the head teacher as a matter of urgency.
- 1.11 Ensure that where child proof locks are fitted to a vehicle that the locks are in the "child safe" position throughout the journey.
- 1.12 Immediately advise their supervisor of any difficulties on the route regarding road-works, parking or traffic volumes etc which would cause difficulty in maintaining the timetable.
- 1.13 Fully co-operate at all times with all representatives of SPT, councils, DVSA and Police Scotland.

- 1.14 Avoid physical contact with pupils. Maintain a courteous and professional relationship with pupils avoiding inappropriate language and topics of conversation at all times and never engage in personal telephone, text, email or social media contact with pupils.

2.0 Escorts MUST:

- 2.1 Ensure pupil safety when boarding or alighting and be at or near the entrance/exit at these times.
- 2.2 Assist the driver in ensuring that before moving off, all doors are properly closed and no coats, bags, etc. are caught in the mechanism of the door from inside or outside.
- 2.3 Discourage children from crossing in front of the vehicle.
- 2.4 Assist the driver in ensuring that the number of passengers does not exceed the permitted number.
- 2.5 Ensure that all doors and emergency exits remain free of any obstruction, giving a clear exit in the case of emergency.
- 2.6 Ensure that pupils remain seated with seatbelts fastened whilst travelling.
- 2.7 Monitor both the upper and lower decks throughout the journey.
- 2.8 Not stand beside the driver whilst the vehicle is in motion or obstruct his view through the windscreen.
- 2.9 Not converse with the driver except when it is necessary for the safety of the pupils.
- 2.10 Be aware of the legal responsibilities for the wearing of seatbelts on school transport vehicles which vary depending on the type of vehicle and the age of the pupils. If difficulties are experienced in gaining cooperation from pupils in the wearing of seatbelts then the problem must be reported to the child's head teacher in writing through the management of the company.
- 2.11 Fully co-operate at all times with all representatives of SPT, councils, DVSA and Police Scotland.
- 2.12 Avoid physical contact with pupils. Maintain a courteous and professional relationship with pupils avoiding inappropriate language and topics of conversation at all times and never engage in personal telephone, text, email or social media contact with pupils.

3.0 Seating arrangements and wearing of seat belts in motor cars

- 3.1 Drivers must be aware of the legal and contractual responsibilities for the wearing of seatbelts on school transport vehicles. These responsibilities vary depending on the type of vehicle and the age and height of the pupils. If difficulties are experienced in gaining cooperation from pupils in the wearing of seatbelts then the problem should

be reported to the child's head teacher in writing through the management of the company.

- 3.2 In all cases seatbelts appropriate to the child's size must be used including, if necessary, booster cushions.
- 3.3 On primary school contracts children should not occupy the front seat of the vehicle unless the rear seats are occupied. The eldest child should sit in the front seat wherever practicable.

4.0 Safety in case of breakdown or accident

- 4.1 In case of breakdown or accident resulting in the vehicle being unable to be moved, the driver will normally instruct the pupils on the vehicle to stay on the vehicle. The driver may only leave the vehicle to summon assistance and then, only in the event of the failure of the mobile phone or radio on the vehicle.
- 4.2 Where contracts use motorways, specific instructions may be issued by SPT which MUST be followed.

5.0 Adverse weather and other conditions jeopardising a journey

- 5.1 In such conditions, drivers MUST liaise with Head Teachers to ensure the children are safe.
- 5.2 In periods of snow, ice, flooding or other adverse weather, the driver must use discretion to decide whether a road is passable or not. The driver should endeavour to choose a route which gives the greatest number of children a reasonable opportunity of getting to school safely.
- 5.3 At their discretion drivers may abandon a morning journey. In such an event, the driver will contact the head teacher for further instructions and inform SPT.
- 5.4 On homeward journeys pupils shall only be set down at their normal vehicle set down point. If it is likely that the vehicle will be unable to take the pupils to that point, contingency plans must be made with the head teacher.
- 5.5 In the event that transport becomes stuck because of blocked roads, children shall be instructed to stay on the vehicle until alternative arrangements can be made.

6.0 Misbehaviour by pupils on transport

- 6.1 The driver or escort should warn the pupil about their behaviour and ask them to stop. It may be that this will be sufficient action.
- 6.2 In the case of more serious misbehaviour or repeated misbehaviour, drivers should take all reasonable steps to identify the pupil concerned. The driver may request the assistance of senior pupils on the bus to identify the pupil responsible for the misbehaviour and may ask for and retain the pupil's season ticket or pass as proof

of identity. Having identified the pupil, the driver should report the incident to the head teacher and to their supervisor.

- 6.3 A supervisor receiving a report of misbehaviour must send the details directly to the Head Teacher concerned, together with any ticket or pass taken from the pupil. SPT must also be advised if it is considered that the misbehaviour causes a risk to the safety of passengers.
- 6.4 A driver or escort shall not remove a pupil from a vehicle for misbehaviour. In a severe case of misbehaviour which affects the safety of other passengers on the vehicle or the vehicle itself, the driver should seek assistance from other bus company staff, school staff or Police Scotland by any reasonable means.
- 6.5 As well as behaviour which is disruptive to other passengers, drivers are asked so far as is possible to note any incidents of bullying amongst pupils and to report problems of this kind to the head teacher at the earliest opportunity.
- 6.6 Should a pupil or pupils leave the vehicle in the course of a journey prior to arrival at school, the driver must report this to the head teacher immediately upon arriving at the school.

7.0 Refusal of Transport

- 7.1 Under no circumstances will pupils be refused transport without the express prior permission of the relevant council or SPT.

8.0 Tickets or Passes

- 8.1 Where pupils have been issued with a ticket or pass to show their entitlement to travel on the Contract, a pupil claiming to be travelling to or from school shall not be refused travel where they are unable to produce their pass.
- 8.2 Where a pupil who has been issued with a pass regularly refuses to display a pass on boarding this must be reported to the head teacher.

9.0 Carriage of unauthorised persons

- 9.1 For the avoidance of doubt, the only persons who may board the vehicle are those pupils entitled to travel on the contract. No unauthorised person, including parents of pupils may board the vehicle whilst it is on contract to the council.

10.0 Smoking

- 10.1 As required by legislation, smoking is not permitted on vehicles at any time including by drivers or escorts. Drivers and escorts must ensure that this is enforced. For the avoidance of doubt, the use of electronic or vapour cigarettes is similarly prohibited.

APPENDIX 4

11.0 COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

Section 12 of this policy details how complaints can be made.