

Education Transport

# *Code of Conduct Escorts*



**PERTH &  
KINROSS  
COUNCIL**

***August  
2011***

# 1 Introduction

This Code of Conduct has been written to help escorts undertake their education transport duties to the highest practicable standards. For many scholars the journey to and from school/college is a large part of their overall day - thus it is important that their journeys are a safe, reliable and comfortable experience.

In addition to sending individual copies to every escort involved, copies of this booklet are provided to all contractors.

**Please make the time to read this booklet.** To assist you in using the booklet we have provided a detailed index on the topics covered.

Schools and Perth College play a very significant and positive role in ensuring that education transport throughout Perth and Kinross operates efficiently. The booklet is also aimed at providing Headteachers and their staff with guidance on the general procedures that they should be following to help contractors carry out their transport responsibilities.

This booklet refers to a whole range of matters that impact on the safe operation of education transport. As a result the text is sometimes quite technical in nature. Should you have any queries at all, please do not hesitate to telephone a member of staff in the Public Transport Unit, or contact me:

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Public Transport Manager  
The Environment Service  
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The Atrium  
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We are also keen to receive comments and suggestions on how we can improve this booklet.

**Andrew Warrington**  
*Public Transport Manager*

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### 3 General

Escorts should be fully aware of their responsibilities as detailed in the relevant sections of this Code of Conduct, including the correct use of all specialist equipment, such as harnesses, child seats, wheelchairs, passenger lifts and ramps and wheelchair/passenger restraints.

### 4 Pre Journey Checks

Escorts should ensure they have full operational details of the contract they are to travel on - including current scholar list, timetable/duty board and route map (if appropriate).

Ensure that there is a mobile telephone (or equivalent) in the contract vehicle and that you are aware of the procedures to be followed in the case of a breakdown or other emergency. As a minimum you should have telephone numbers for your operational base, the school(s)/college(s) served, parent(s)/guardian(s) of the scholars being conveyed and the Public Transport Unit.

### 5 Scholar Lists

Scholar lists provide information on the transport requirements of the specific scholars.

The vast majority of additional support needs scholars are conveyed directly from/to their home.

Most scholars will be making a return journey each schoolday. Where a scholar's travel arrangements differ from the norm, or they have special requirements, an appropriate letter code will appear in the category column. The most common ones will be:

*A - the scholar will travel in the mornings (am) only.*

*P - the scholar will travel in the afternoons (pm) only.*

*Z - scholars with additional support needs travelling on a mainstream contract.*

*W - the scholar must travel in a wheelchair.*

*V - the scholar uses a wheelchair/buggy, but can transfer to a seat.*

*B - the scholar requires a booster cushion.*

*N - the scholar requires a moulded seat.*

*Q - the scholar requires a special safety harness.*

Details of other code letters which appear in the category column are shown at the bottom of the scholar lists.

Updated scholar lists will be issued as required - out of date lists should then be destroyed securely, bearing in mind that information on scholars is confidential.

The scholar lists show those scholars who have been authorised to make use of each contract. Scholars who are not named on a contract list **should not** be conveyed on the contract vehicle.

All scholars detailed on the list should be contacted at least one week prior to the start of the academic year to confirm the transport arrangements for the first morning of the new session. See also section 10.

Some scholars may be required to be conveyed on a concessionary basis and they are identified by the code letter 'C' in the category column. Contract routes **must not** be altered to accommodate concessions.

**The Public Transport Unit will make all decisions regarding which scholars will be conveyed on each contract, including concessions.**

Teachers or school/college personnel should not be conveyed on contract vehicles without authority having been given by the Public Transport Unit.

On the homebound journey do not agree to requests from scholars/parents for unauthorised scholars to have an 'unofficial' lift to a friend's home.

On additional support needs transport contracts where an escort is allocated, details about the escort(s) are also shown on the scholar list.

If a scholar list contains information suspected to be inaccurate, this should be notified to the Public Transport Unit for checking and reissuing as appropriate.

## 6 Travel Passes

Travel passes are not issued to scholars travelling on additional support needs transport contracts.

## 7 Operation of a Journey - General

An escort allocated to an additional support needs transport contract must be uplifted prior to any scholars (who require their attendance) boarding the contract vehicle and must remain on the vehicle until all these scholars have completed their journeys.

Escorts will **ensure that the vehicle used has sufficient seating capacity to provide one seat for each scholar carried and themselves.**

Escorts will ensure the security, safety, dignity and comfort of scholars in their care. Whilst it is primarily the responsibility of the escort to deal with the scholars and their parents, the driver and escort shall always co-operate with each other.

In the case of scholars with additional support needs, it is very important that the operator and escort have agreed appropriate set-down/pick-up arrangements at the designated locations, with each scholar's parent/guardian and the appropriate school(s)/college(s).

## 8 Safety During the Operation of a Journey

Unless instructed to the contrary by the Public Transport Unit, the escort should sit in the rear of the vehicle where they can best supervise the scholars in their care.

Escorts will observe the following:

- *ensure that scholars are picked up and set down at a suitable and safe place, with particular attention paid to any hazards, traffic or obstruction;*
- *whilst the parent/guardian of each scholar is responsible for accompanying the scholar between their home and the vehicle, the escort and driver are specifically responsible for helping each scholar in boarding and alighting from the vehicle. Physical assistance should be given if requested by the scholar or his/her parent/guardian;*

- *ensure all doors are properly fastened after a scholar enters or leaves the vehicle and that scholars do not touch the handles of the doors;*
- *ensure that all scholars are properly seated and restrained before moving off;*
- *ensure that scholars remain properly seated while the vehicle is in motion;*
- *as far as is practicable, no scholar will be permitted to leave his/her seat until the driver/escort has opened the door and given permission to alight;*
- *ensure that scholars are comfortable throughout their journey;*
- *scholars should **never** travel on the lap of an adult or another pupil;*
- *ensure that all doors and emergency exits remain free of any obstruction, giving a clear exit in the case of an emergency;*
- *ensure they are familiar with emergency evacuation procedures for the vehicle in use;*
- *ensure they are familiar with the location and use of the first aid kit and fire extinguisher(s) carried on the vehicle.*

If a scholar is not ready to join the conveyance when a contract vehicle arrives at the usual pick-up time, the vehicle should wait for up to five minutes. If, however, this happens on more than one occasion, the Public Transport Unit should be notified so that, with a view to preventing similar occurrences, the parent/guardian can be contacted.

If on the contract's return journey there is no one at home to receive a scholar, for safety reasons the escort must not leave the scholar alone or with a neighbour, unless specific approval for the latter has been previously given by either the parent/guardian, the school, or the Public Transport Unit. If no such arrangement exists, the escort should immediately notify the Public Transport Unit of the situation, and the contract vehicle will then proceed with the remainder of the route. After the last point on the route has been served, the contract vehicle will return to the scholar's home and, if there is still no one to receive him/her, the Public Transport Unit should again be contacted for instruction on the appropriate course of action.

## 9 Seat Belts

Escorts should assist drivers in checking that all seat belts are in correct working order.

Escorts must ensure that scholars wear the seat belts provided, irrespective of the age of the scholar, unless the Council have specified that an alternative restraint system should be used, eg disabled persons harness.

Escorts with any queries about the suitability of the seat belts for a specific scholar should contact the Public Transport Unit.

## 10 Communication with the Scholars

The escort and driver must be particularly sensitive when communicating with the scholars who may have a wide range of additional support needs. Some may have physical, mental or emotional difficulties; some may have speech or hearing impairments; some may have several different disabilities, and such difficulties and disabilities may affect their behaviour and/or ability to understand instructions.

Prior to starting a new contract, escorts should meet the scholars who are to be conveyed and their parent(s)/guardian(s). More than one visit may be required. Ensure that you are provided with the contact telephone number(s) of each parent/guardian.

For scholars who suffer fits or have other specific medical conditions, please ask to be briefed by the child's parent/guardian, or their school, about what you should do in an emergency.

On no account should an escort or driver administer medication to a scholar unless they have received written instructions, and appropriate training, from an authorised member of the school staff. If a child is likely to need emergency medication, the contractor shall have in place arrangements agreed by the parent/guardian and school on how to manage the situation which may include taking the child to a nearby hospital/medical centre.

An escort may be required to convey medication (which must be in its original packaging with proper labelling) and messages between a scholar's home and his/her school - ensuring that they are passed directly to an authorised member of staff and/or the parent/guardian.

## 11 Confidentiality

General information about the range of disabilities catered for by a particular school is available from the Public Transport Unit. As much information as possible about individual scholars and their needs will be provided to operators. It must be appreciated, however, that the Council has to respect the confidentiality of available information and therefore it may not always be possible to supply operators with all the information they request.

In the course of their duties, drivers and escorts may occasionally gain awareness of highly confidential personal details pertaining to the scholars on the route, but under no circumstances should this be discussed with anyone other than a parent/guardian, staff at either the school/college or a Council Officer from the Public Transport Unit. In particular, care must be taken never to discuss any personal situation within the hearing of scholars.

## 12 Misbehaviour by Scholars Whilst on the Transport

Problems of challenging behaviour are best dealt with in a calm, non-confrontational way.

In the first instance the escort should warn the scholar(s) about their behaviour and ask them to stop misbehaving. Often this will be sufficient action.

In cases of more serious or repeated misbehaviour, the escort should take all reasonable steps to identify properly the scholar(s) concerned. Having identified the scholar(s), the escort should report the incident directly to the appropriate school/college and to their employer.

A contractor/operator receiving a report of misbehaviour should send the details to the appropriate school/college with a copy to the Public Transport Unit, as soon as practicable to ensure that prompt remedial action is taken.

**The escort should not eject a scholar from a vehicle for misbehaviour.** In a severe case of misbehaviour which affects the safety of the vehicle and/or other passengers, the driver/escort will seek assistance from school staff or the police.

## **13 Safety in the Event of a Breakdown or an Accident**

In the event of a vehicle breakdown or accident, the driver/escort will telephone for assistance or ask another road user to convey a message. At no time should the scholars remaining in the vehicle be left unattended. Drivers/escorts will endeavour to notify school(s)/college(s)/parents accordingly. If the circumstances are deemed to be dangerous, the scholars should be guided in an orderly manner to a place of safety and supervised accordingly until alternative transport arrangements can be organised.

If an accident occurs, involving either a vehicle whilst undertaking a journey for the Council or a passenger on any such vehicle, your employer and the Public Transport Unit must be contacted immediately (by telephone), regarding the incident. If any party involved in the accident suffers an injury (however minor), the incident must be reported to the police as soon as is reasonably practicable, and in any case within 24 hours.

In the event the transport becomes immobilised, scholars shall be instructed to stay on the vehicle until rescue can be organised. If the circumstances are deemed dangerous, the scholars should be guided in an orderly manner to a place of safety and supervised accordingly until alternative transport arrangements can be organised.

## **14 Adverse Weather Conditions**

In adverse weather conditions, the operator and the escort should liaise with parents and the school(s)/college(s) served regarding the operation and routing of the contract vehicle to ensure the safety of the scholars. Operators should fully participate in any arrangements set up by schools/colleges to ensure prompt transmission of information to parents/pupils during periods of adverse weather.

The driver must use his/her discretion to decide whether a road is passable or not.

At their discretion drivers may abandon a morning journey and return all scholars, already picked up, to their homes and into the care of a responsible adult. The driver must advise their employer and the school(s)/college(s).

If schools/colleges decide to close early, operators will be expected to respond to requests for transport as soon as is practicable after notice of the closure is given. Likewise, operators may also request that homeward

journeys operate earlier than usual if weather conditions are deteriorating. Operators should liaise directly with the staff of the school(s)/college(s) concerned on the issue of early closures.

In the event of the journey to school/college being cancelled by the operator on the grounds of adverse weather conditions, the operator will not be responsible for conveying scholars home in the afternoon. However, if the morning journey fails to operate for any other reason, the operator remains responsible for operating the return journey, provided that it is part of the normal contract.

If in adverse weather conditions, on the homeward journey, the vehicle is unable to take scholars with additional support needs to the normal set-down point, it is very important that the escort/operator has agreed appropriate set-down arrangements with each scholar's parent/guardian and the appropriate school(s)/college(s). If this is not the case then the scholar(s) should be returned to their school(s)/college(s) and placed in the care of responsible staff; or be provided with shelter at the operator's own premises.

In the event that transport becomes stuck because of blocked roads, scholars shall be instructed to stay on the vehicle until rescue can be organised. If the circumstances are deemed to be dangerous, the scholars should be guided in an orderly manner to a place of safety, and supervised accordingly.

## **15 Vetting**

All escorts must have undergone an appropriate check with Disclosure Scotland and be duly authorised by their employer and/or the Public Transport Unit, prior to commencing their duties.

Escorts travelling on additional support needs transport contracts may be required to prove their identity and provide written confirmation of their Protecting Vulnerable Groups membership number to staff from the Public Transport Unit.

## **16 Booster Cushions**

If a scholar, due to their height, requires to have a booster cushion in a taxi/private hire car, the booster cushion will be provided by the Public Transport Unit. The contractor must ensure that drivers and escorts are fully

conversant with the correct use of booster cushions. The booster cushion must be used strictly according to the manufacturer's instructions.

## 17 Conveyance of Wheelchairs

Escorts must ensure that they are fully conversant with the correct use of wheelchairs, passenger lifts and ramps and restraint equipment for both wheelchairs and passengers.

Any vehicle which is wheelchair accessible, must be equipped with sufficient wheelchair restraints, and fully functional, lap and diagonal or full harness wheelchair passenger restraints, to accommodate the situation when the vehicle is conveying its permitted legal maximum number of people in wheelchairs.

Wheelchairs must have their brakes applied, any power unit switched off and be restrained before travel. All passengers travelling in wheelchairs must be provided with a suitable passenger restraint anchored to the vehicle. Passengers must never be carried in wheelchairs facing sideways.

Instructions on the correct use of wheelchair restraints etc should be available adjacent to the wheelchair spaces.

In addition, storage space should be available in the vehicle for items such as folded wheelchairs or walking frames, together with suitable restraint equipment. Similarly a secure, low level, storage facility shall be provided for spare wheelchair and passengers restraint equipment. Spare equipment must not be left lying on the vehicle floor.

If a vehicle is capable of carrying two or more passengers in their wheelchairs, irrespective as to whether the vehicle is licensed as a public service vehicle, the Council requires the escort/driver to ensure that the operational practices adopted comply, in full, with the Department for Transport's Code of Practice "The Safety of Passengers in Wheelchairs on Buses" (VSE 87/1 as updated), the Medical Devices Agency Device Bulletin MDA DB 2001(03) "Guidance on the Safe Transportation of Wheelchairs" and DpTAC's "Accessibility Specification for Small Buses" and the Medical Devices Agency Device Bulletin MDA DB 2003(03) "Guidance on the Safe Use of Wheelchairs and Vehicle-Mounted Passenger Lifts".

If the wheelchair accessible vehicle to be utilised is a purpose built taxi, the operational practices to be adopted by the escort/driver should comply with

any formal advice issued by the Department for Transport and the vehicle manufacturer.

Escorts can obtain copies of all the relevant documentation (VSE 87/1 etc) and other training materials, including videos, from the Public Transport Unit.

## 18 Use of Specialist Equipment

Escorts must ensure that they are fully conversant with the correct use of specialist equipment, such as harnesses and child seats.

Certain scholars with additional support needs, whilst not requiring to travel in a wheelchair, will need to make use of specific types of restraint systems or specialist seating. Such equipment will be supplied by the Council, and contractors will fit these as required.

All equipment must be maintained in good condition, securely anchored, and be fitted and used strictly in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions. Copies of these instructions should be made available to the escort by the contractor.

All equipment supplied to the contractor will remain the property of the Council and should be used for specified transport of the nominated scholar. It must be returned or replaced at the end of the contract period or when the pupil leaves school or no longer requires the equipment.

When conveying scholars in special seats escorts must adhere to the general principles highlighted in Medical Devices Directive Report MDD/92/07 "Safety Guidelines for Transporting Children in Special Seats" or equivalent.

Please note that specialist seating or restraint systems supplied directly by the parents/guardians or schools should not be used unless authorised by the Public Transport Unit.

Escorts with any queries about the use of specialist equipment, or its suitability for a specific child, should contact the Public Transport Unit.

Escorts can also obtain copies of all the relevant documentation and other training materials, including videos, from the Public Transport Unit.

## 19 Smoking

Smoking by any person on a school/college contract vehicle is forbidden. Escorts should endeavour to ensure that this is enforced.

Drivers and escorts must never smoke on the vehicle during the operation of the contract, including when travelling to the first pick-up point in either the morning or the afternoon. **They must also never stand outside their vehicle and smoke whilst waiting for the scholars to board at schools/colleges.**

No smoking notices must be displayed on the vehicle where they are visible to passengers.

## 20 Early Closure - Christmas/Summer Terms

On the last day of term prior to the Christmas holidays, and on the last day of the Summer term, it is customary for all Council managed schools in Perth and Kinross to close at lunchtime. All scholars should be uplifted within thirty minutes of the early school closure time. Operators should liaise directly with the school(s) about lunchtime closures and the transport arrangements which will be necessary to convey the scholars home.

## 21 Education Transport Surveys

Throughout the academic year Public Transport Unit staff will undertake periodic surveys on school/college transport routes. The surveys will be used to gain detailed information on the number of scholars travelling, routes and pick-up points. In-situ surveys will also be carried out at schools/colleges.

## 22 Term Dates

Full details of school term dates including single day holidays of the relevant school(s) will be circulated to escorts by the Public Transport Unit.

Information on term dates and single day holidays for schools outwith Perth and Kinross, and Perth College, will also be circulated to relevant escorts by the Public Transport Unit.

## 23 Information for Parents and Scholars

Scholars, parents and their respective responsibilities have not been forgotten.

An information booklet “Travelling to School” has been sent to each pupil (and their parents/guardians) who is conveyed to/from school.

Equally all Perth College students, who are conveyed to/from college, are issued with an information booklet “Travelling to College”.

Copies of the information booklets are also sent to contractors for their information and should be read by all drivers and escorts in conjunction with this booklet.

## 24 Contact Details - Public Transport Unit (The Environment Service)

The Public Transport Unit is split into several teams including one with specific responsibility for Additional Needs Transport.

### Additional Support Needs Transport, Childcare and Community Care

#### **Public Transport Officer**

Moray Fraser  
Tel 01738 477370  
Email [mjfraser@pkc.gov.uk](mailto:mjfraser@pkc.gov.uk)

#### **Public Transport Technician**

*(Perth City Schools and Perth College  
Additional Support Needs Students)*

Jamie Gordon  
Tel 01738 477382  
Email [jgordon@pkc.gov.uk](mailto:jgordon@pkc.gov.uk)

#### **Public Transport Technician**

*(Schools Outwith Perth City)*

John Strachan  
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Email [jstrachan@pkc.gov.uk](mailto:jstrachan@pkc.gov.uk)

#### **Fax**

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#### **Textphone**

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## 25 Translation and Communication in Other Formats

If you or someone you know would like a copy of this document in another language or format, (on occasion only a summary of the document will be provided in translation), this can be arranged by contacting Margaret Roy on 01738 477372

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الاسم: Margaret Roy

رقم هاتف للاتصال المباشر: 01738 477372

اگر آپ کو یا آپ کے کسی جاننے والے کو اس دستاویز کی نقل دوسری زبان یا فارمیٹ (بعض دفعہ اس دستاویز کے خلاصہ کا ترجمہ فراہم کیا جائے گا) میں درکار ہے تو اس کا بندوبست سروس ڈیولپمنٹ Margaret Roy سے فون نمبر 01738 477372 پر رابطہ کر کے کیا جاسکتا ہے۔

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Margaret Roy 01738 477372

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