

Travelling to school



August 2024

Dear Parent/Carer and Pupils

This booklet provides useful information about the school transport arrangements which are made by the Public Transport Unit (Housing and Communities) on behalf of the Strategic Lead, Education and Learning.

Each school day, in Perth and Kinross, approximately 4,200 pupils are transported to and from school – over 1.6 million journeys a year. We use over 100 transport operators to provide the service, with pupils transported by taxi/private hire vehicle, school bus or on a local bus service.

The Council is responsible for the general safety and welfare of a pupil during the time they are travelling on their school transport and when getting off or on the vehicle at their school.

The bus and taxi/private hire car operators who carry out school transport contracts, must meet detailed Conditions of Contract set by the Council. These conditions cover a wide range of requirements relating to the safe and legal operation of transport.

The driver (and escort when provided) will take all reasonable steps to ensure the security, safety, dignity and comfort of pupils in their care. If an escort is allocated to an additional support needs transport contract, they will be the main point of contact with the pupils and their parents.

If you have any questions about entitlement to school transport please contact the relevant staff in Education and Learning – see contact details on page 10.

We hope you find this booklet useful but if you have any comments or questions about school transport please do not hesitate to contact us.

Thank you.

Public Transport Unit

Email SchoolTransport@pkc.gov.uk

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1 Getting to/from the pick-up point

Parents are responsible for getting their child to the school transport pick-up point in the mornings and for meeting their child from the transport in the afternoons.

In certain instances, parents can be expected to walk/transport their child up to 2 miles (primary) or 3 miles (secondary) in order to reach the pick-up point.

Parents should ensure that their child is at their pick-up point **5 minutes** before the arrival time of the vehicle.

Drivers are not authorised to help children to cross roads – this is the responsibility of parents.

In the case of pupils with additional support needs it is particularly important that the set-down arrangements have been agreed between the transport operator/driver, the escort (when provided) and the pupil's parents.

2 Safety of pupils on school transport

Parents should tell their child to stand well back from the bus stop/pick-up point when the vehicle arrives.

We provide a seat for every child who receives transport. So it is very important that pupils travel on the vehicle to which they have been allocated.

Only Public Transport Unit staff can decide which vehicle a pupil will travel on. Drivers are issued with lists of all the pupils who should travel on their vehicle.

In settlements/areas where there are large numbers of children requiring home to school transport, the children will be allocated to specific vehicles geographically by home address. Only in exceptional circumstances – and agreed by senior staff at the relevant school – will requests for pupils to change vehicles be considered.

It is important that pupils follow the instructions of drivers (or escort when provided). In particular, pupils should remain seated during the journey and they should never try to open the doors of the vehicle.

3 Seat belts

All school transport vehicles in Perth and Kinross are fitted with seat belts.

Please remind your child that they must fasten their seat belt and keep it fastened during the whole journey.

4 Travel passes

Mainstream secondary school pupils, who travel to school by bus or coach, will be issued with a Perth and Kinross Council School Bus Travel Pass.

Travel passes are issued according to the following conditions:

The travel pass allows the pupil to travel to/from school, at normal school times, on the contract(s)/service(s) printed on the front of the pass.

The pass is not transferable.

The pass must be shown to the driver at the start of each journey or on demand to any employee of either the Transport Company or the Public Transport Unit.

The school travel pass must be returned to the school or Public Transport Unit should the pupil leave school or move house before the printed expiry date on the pass.

School Travel Passes are not issued to any primary school pupils travelling or secondary pupils who travel by taxis/private hire cars or on additional support needs transport contracts.

If a travel pass is lost, damaged or stolen, please apply via www.pkc.gov.uk A £5.00 charge will be made for each replacement pass issued. Any replacement pass will be issued via the child's school.

5 Pupil behaviour

Misbehaviour on vehicles can cause a risk to the safety of all passengers travelling and other road users, particularly if the driver's attention is distracted.

In cases of misbehaviour, children will be subject to the normal disciplinary procedures of their school, as approved by Education and Learning. However, parents are ultimately responsible for the behaviour of their child when travelling on the school transport vehicle.

Any misbehaviour by a pupil that is likely to put the safety of themselves and/or others at risk can lead to action by the school which may include the child being taken off their transport. In such cases the parent will be responsible for getting their child to/from school.

Smoking or vaping on any vehicle transporting pupils is strictly forbidden.

In the event of a pupil damaging a vehicle, the contractor will charge parents/guardians for the cost of any repairs.

6 Booster cushions

If a pupil, due to their height, requires to have a booster cushion in a taxi/private hire car, the booster cushion will be provided by the operator. The contractor will ensure that drivers and escorts are fully aware of the correct use of booster cushions. The booster cushion must be used strictly according to the manufacturer's instructions.

7 Wheelchairs, special seats, harnesses and medication

Where pupils have particular mobility requirements, or need specialist equipment, drivers and escorts are briefed accordingly. All equipment will be used strictly according to the manufacturer's requirements or

appropriate legislative provisions. Copies of user instructions can be provided to parents on request.

If a child is required to travel in their wheelchair, their parent must ensure that the wheelchair is of an appropriate design and strength for transport purposes.

Except for wheelchairs, contractors have been advised only to use specialist equipment provided by the Public Transport Unit.

A driver/escort will not administer medication to a pupil unless they have received written instructions, and appropriate training, from an authorised member of the relevant school's staff.

Escorts will however convey medication (which must be in its original packaging with proper labelling) and messages between a pupil's home and their school.

8 Education Transport Code of Conduct

A Code of Conduct is published for operators, drivers and escorts which explains how they should perform their duties, including the procedures that should be followed in emergency situations.

Parents wishing to read the Education Transport Code of Conduct can do so by visiting www.pkc.gov.uk

9 Adverse weather conditions

The driver will use their discretion as to whether a road is passable or not. Parents can help operators by contacting them to update them of any poor weather conditions in their area.

Drivers may also abandon a morning journey and return all pupils, already picked up, to their pick-up points and into the care of a responsible adult. Parents should ensure that arrangements are in place to meet/receive the pupils should this situation occur.

In the event of the journey to school being cancelled by the operator on the grounds of adverse weather conditions, the operator will not

operate the school journey in the afternoon either. For children who receive transport in the afternoon only, operators have been asked to take particular care to ensure that schools and parents are aware that the afternoon journey will not operate.

If the morning journey is cancelled by the operator due to poor weather, but a parent chooses to transport their child into school, then the parent will also be responsible for transporting their home.

It is hoped that parents will participate in any arrangements set up by schools and transport operators to ensure prompt communication of information during periods of poor weather.

10 Delays

In the event that the vehicle is more than 10 minutes late in the morning or afternoon, parents should in the first instance contact the transport operator, or alternatively the school, in order to find out the reason for the delay.

11 Accident or breakdown

In the event of a breakdown, accident, or the transport becoming immobilised, children will be instructed to stay on the vehicle until alternative transport can be organised. If the circumstances are deemed dangerous, the pupils will be guided in an orderly manner by the driver/escort to a place of safety. Children must remain at this site and not attempt to walk to school/home.

Drivers/escorts of school vehicles have access to mobile telephones (or equivalent) so that they can contact their base, the school(s), the Public Transport Unit and parents.

12 Concessionary places

A pupil who is not entitled to free school transport according to Council policy may be allocated a 'concessionary' place on an education transport contract vehicle if a spare seat is available. Please

note the Council has the right to withdraw a concessionary place at very short notice at any point throughout the school year.

An application must be made every year to Education and Learning requesting a concessionary place. Concessionary places are not available on registered local bus services.

In instances where the number of requests for concessionary places exceeds the number of 'spare seats' available on education transport contract vehicles, the concessionary places will be allocated on a priority basis by Education and Learning according to their home to school transport entitlement policy.

Concessionary places will not be allocated until two weeks into the start of the new school year.

13 Monitoring of transport

The Public Transport Unit monitors contractor performance through inspections and close liaison with schools, the Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency, the Council's taxi licensing staff and Police Scotland. We welcome feedback from parents and pupils.

Please do not hesitate to advise promptly of any operational concerns – this allows us to solve problems before they possibly become more serious. You should contact either the appropriate person in the Public Transport Unit (see Section 18 overleaf) or your child's school.

14 CCTV on school transport

The Council will allow and, on specified routes require, the use of closed circuit television and recording systems (CCTV) on buses conveying children to and from schools. The use of CCTV for education transport purposes is strictly governed by a protocol agreed between the Council and relevant bus operator(s). Taxis/private hire cars with CCTV provision must also comply with the same provisions.

15 Changing home address

If a pupil, who receives free school transport, changes home address, the parent/guardian must submit a new transport application form for the new home address. The school should also be advised of the pupil's new home address.

If a pupil changes home address and either no longer requires or is no longer entitled to free school transport, the parent/guardian must notify the school and, if appropriate, return the pupil's travel pass to the school. Failure to return a travel pass to the school may result in a charge being made.

16 Data Protection

The name, date of birth, address and pick up point of each pupil, receiving free school transport, is shared with the transport provider in order to ensure the appropriate child is being uplifted at the correct pick-up point. The pupil's name and date of birth is also printed on their school travel pass to ensure that they are being transported on the correct vehicle.

17 Contact details – Education and Learning

Matters relating to school transport entitlement and sports conveyance timetables should be referred to the undernoted:

Mainstream School Transport Entitlement and Sports Conveyance Timetables

Email FBSSchools@pkc.gov.uk

Additional Support Needs Transport Entitlement

Rachel Balfour – Email RBalfour@pkc.gov.uk

18 Contact details – Public Transport Unit (Housing and Communities)

If you have any queries about, or comments on, education transport operation in Perth and Kinross, please do not hesitate to contact the relevant member of staff below:

Public Transport Team Leader

(Blairgowrie, Coupar Angus, Guildtown, Perth City ASN transport and Carse of Gowrie)

Moray Fraser – Email MJFraser@pkc.gov.uk

Public Transport Team Leader

(Auchterarder, Crieff, Kinross, Bridge of Earn, Perth City mainstream transport, Methven, Scone, Highland Perthshire and Stanley)

Margaret Roy – Email MRoy@pkc.gov.uk

Public Transport Technician

(Auchterarder, Crieff and Kinross)

John Strachan – Email JStrachan@pkc.gov.uk

Public Transport Technician

(Blairgowrie, Coupar Angus, Guildtown and Scone)

To be advised – Email SchoolTransport@pkc.gov.uk

Public Transport Technician

(Bridge of Earn, Perth City mainstream transport and Methven)

Paul Dailey – Email PDailey@pkc.gov.uk

Public Transport Technician

(Highland Perthshire and Stanley)

Becky Hay – Email BHay@pkc.gov.uk

Public Transport Technician

(Perth City ASN Transport and Carse of Gowrie)

Jamie Gordon – Email JGordon@pkc.gov.uk

If you do not have access to email and would like to speak to any member of staff above, please contact the Council's Customer Service Centre on 01738 475000 and they will forward your query on to the Public Transport Unit for handling.

19 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 the Customer Service Centre on 01738 475000.

You can also send us a text message on 07824 498145.

All Council Services can offer a telephone translation facility.

BSL users can contact us via Contact Scotland BSL, the online British Sign Language video relay interpreting service. Find out more on the Contact Scotland BSL website <https://contactscotland-bsl.org>