

Dundee City Council Education Department

CODE OF PRACTICE

HOME TO SCHOOL TRANSPORT FOR CHILDREN WITH ADDITIONAL SUPPORT NEEDS



Revised January 2025

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1 INTRODUCTION

This Code of Practice has been produced by Dundee City Council to provide Contractors, ASN Travel Assistants, Parents/Carers and School Staff with summary information about the provision of special educational transport and their own responsibilities and duties.

This document is not a legally enforceable document but is a guide to best practice with the aim being to ensure that children and young people, along with Drivers and ASN Travel Assistants travel to and from home to school in safety and comfort. The Code of Practice is issued to:

- Parents/Carers of all Dundee City Council pupils who travel on special education transport
- all Dundee City Council schools, and all schools attended by Dundee resident pupils who travel on special education transport
- all Contractors, for subsequent issue to all Drivers and ASN Travel Assistants of special education transport contracts

If you have any queries regarding the contents or operational aspects of this Code of Practice, please contact:

2 SCHOOL TRANSPORT TEAM (ASN)

Education Staff: [Janette Kerr](#), Education Support Officer – ASN
01382 433984

ASN Travel Team: [Gill Ward](#), ASN Travel Team Leader
07947 351823

[Angela Fairweather](#), ASN Travel Coordinator
01382 433848 or 07585 998909

City Development: [Mark Devine](#), Transport Officer
01382 433831

[Moyra Buick](#), Assistant Transport Officer
01382 433592

Fleet Services: [Debbie Gordon](#), Fleet Officer
01382 432781

3 EDUCATION DEPARTMENT RESPONSIBILITIES

Determining the criteria, review and approval of transport for pupils with Additional Support Needs (ASN)

Considering whether ASN Travel Assistants are required to accompany pupils on transport

Cascading relevant travel information to the ASN Travel Team eg changes in pupil circumstances (including change of address), special equipment (wheelchairs, harnesses etc)

Arranging any specialist training requirements for ASN Travel Assistants e.g. epilepsy awareness training, Emergency Paediatric First Aid.

4 ASN TRAVEL TEAM RESPONSIBILITIES

First point of contact should any issues arise for Parents/Carers, School Staff, ASN Travel Assistants, Drivers, Fleet Services, Contractors etc

On receipt of authorisation for travel assistance from Education Staff, the ASN Travel Team liaise with Transport Officers to arrange and ensure appropriate contracts are in place for pupils with additional support needs

Supervision of all ASN Travel Assistants

Arrange training for associated staff where specific requirements or legislation affects working with children with additional support needs

With advice from Health Professionals, assist in determining individual requirements for special equipment for ASN pupils eg suction equipment, oxygen cylinders and ensuring staff are appropriately trained

Carry out Protecting Vulnerable Groups (PVG) Memberships for appropriate staff to ensure they are suitable to work with children and young people

Along with Transport Officers, determine routes, types of vehicles, picking up and setting down arrangements

Initiate emergency procedures during vehicle breakdown, adverse weather conditions etc to ensure the safe return of pupils to an appropriate safe place

Contract maintenance: allocating new routes, arranging changes to routes, negotiating price adjustments, in collaboration with Transport Officers

Investigate all complaints relating to the ASN Travel Assistance operations

4.1 ASN Travel Assistants Roles and Responsibilities

Staff may be required to know highly personal information about a child or may be involved in sensitive conversations with or about the children and young people they travel with daily. Absolute discretion must be observed, always maintaining a professional attitude. Confidentiality and respect are of the utmost importance.

1. Should be of good character and medically able to carry out their duties
2. Wear personal identification badges issued by the local authority
3. Required to attend all relevant training such as First Aid, Child Protection, Epilepsy Awareness – anything which assists them understand and manage the needs of children and young people with additional support needs in carrying out their duties
4. Responsible for the direct supervision of pupils on board – always remaining within the immediate vicinity of the vehicle when passengers are on board
5. Where possible, ASN Travel Assistants (and Drivers) should attempt to meet Parents/Carers and pupils before the first day of travel assistance commences
6. Try to position themselves where they have a good view of, and immediate access to, all passengers on board
7. Must ensure that all passengers are properly seated and fastened appropriately into their seatbelt or harness
8. Will observe Drivers securing wheelchair passengers appropriately and safely before allowing journeys to continue – as per training and guidance
9. Be aware of any Risk Assessments, Care Plans or Medical Protocols for passengers – provided by the Educational Department / NHS via the ASN Travel Team.
10. **Medication is only permitted to be transported with pupils if they are prescribed, and staff have been appropriately trained:** ASN Travel Assistants will ensure it is stored safely out of reach of children for the duration of the journey and handed to school staff/Parents/Carers on arrival at school/home. Medication must be placed by the parent in an appropriate locked medicine bag obtainable from the School Nurse or the Social Work Department.
11. Record any medical or serious incidents that occur during journeys – noting the time, place and details and sharing with ASN Travel Team and other appropriate staff (including parents/carers)

12. Any incidents or heightened behaviour on board should be recorded and reported as soon as practicable – no incident is too small. School staff and Parents/Carers should also be advised
13. Incidents of violence (verbal or physical) or of serious or repeated behaviour should be reported to the ASN Travel Team immediately; any appropriate action will be taken including for example, temporary suspension of travel assistance
14. ASN Travel Assistants should ensure the safe transit of any passenger belongings or specialised equipment
15. Any passenger absconding from the vehicle should be immediately reported to the School, the Police and to the ASN Travel Team
16. Assist passengers to alight from the vehicle prior to handing responsibility over to the nominated responsible adult ie school staff or parents/carers etc. **On no account should a passenger be left alone or with an unauthorised person**
17. Any complaints should be escalated to the ASN Travel Team who will follow the appropriate disciplinary or complaints procedure protocols.

5 CITY DEVELOPMENT RESPONSIBILITIES

First point of contact for Contractors: arrange and ensure appropriate Contracts are in place for pupils with additional support needs and any mainstream pupils who require travel assistance

All contract negotiations including pricing and tender notifications, monitoring and liaising with Dundee City Procurement Teams to ensure best value

Review suitability of transportation routes, vehicles and staff to ensure the safety of all passengers on board

Planning routes to ensure the most cost-effective use of budgets in terms of miles/fuel consumption, time and pupils on board vehicles

Update Contractors of any pending strike action by Dundee City Council which may affect transport requirements

Advise Contractors of any planned or unplanned changes to transport requirements on any given day ie adverse weather conditions, unexpected school closures etc

5.1 Transport Staff Responsibilities:

1. Develop and maintain working relationships with all Contractors, acting as liaison with other Council Departments
2. Liaise with Contractors in any complaint matters, seeking mutually agreeable resolution with all parties
3. Monitoring and processing of all Parental Contract payments
4. Recording any change of circumstance for passengers including switching routes if appropriate and updating Contractors of change
5. Check that our contractors are carrying out the necessary Protecting Vulnerable Groups (PVG) Memberships checks for all of their staff who are undertaking regulated work to make sure their employees are suitable to work with children and young people

6 DCC FLEET SERVICES RESPONSIBILITIES

Line Management of all Drivers including recruitment and retention, training, any disciplinary matters

Ensure that all vehicles are maintained regularly and are safe for transportation ensuring any repairs are undertaken as quickly as possible

Allocation of Drivers to established routes to try and maintain continuity for those travelling on board, and for whom consistency is a key factor

6.1 Driver Roles and Responsibilities:

1. Drivers are in overall control of the vehicle and the main responsibility for safety. Where a passenger assistant is employed on a vehicle, they are responsible for the welfare and control of passengers.
2. Drivers are required to wear appropriate organisational workwear/uniform as standard – preferably with a personal identification badge and photograph issued by the local authority.
3. Drivers should be made aware of the special needs of individual passengers provided by the Council, schools and care establishments that they serve. Drivers must follow this advice on medical and behavioural matters concerning passengers.
4. Drivers must never try to deal with a misbehaving child whilst the vehicle is moving. Where the Driver needs to intervene, they should stop the vehicle, deal with the issue and then drive on. Children should be dropped off at the usual point. Any incidents or heightened behaviour must be reported to The Fleet Officer/ASN Travel Team immediately or at the earliest opportunity.

5. Drivers must ensure that any incidents of violence (verbal or physical) or of serious or repeated behaviour is reported to the Fleet Officer/ASN Travel Team immediately.
6. Where a vehicle has no ASN Travel Assistant and a child absconds, the Driver must inform the School, Fleet Officer/ASN Travel Team and police immediately.
7. Drivers must ensure passengers are not left unattended in the vehicle at any time except where assistance is being given to a passenger in boarding or alighting from the vehicle. The Driver must not at any time leave the vehicle completely unattended with passengers on board. If a Driver has cause to leave the vehicle with the ASN Travel Assistants in charge, the ignition keys must be removed.
8. If a parent/carer is not at home when the Driver arrives, the passenger should remain in the vehicle. The Driver should wait 5 minutes and then should continue their route and return to the home address with the child. If the parent/carer is still not at home the Driver should contact the Fleet Officer/ASN Travel Team who will advise of the next steps. A note must be left for the parent/guardian and should explain what has been done.
9. Drivers will contact Parents/Carers before the first morning on which transport is to start to introduce themselves, and ASN Travel Assistants if appropriate, and discuss practical details.
10. It is the Driver's legal responsibility to ensure the vehicle they are driving is in a roadworthy condition before taking it out on the road. Drivers must not drive a vehicle if they know it is not roadworthy in any way.
11. Drivers must ensure passengers in wheelchairs are correctly secured in the vehicle in accordance with the 'Code of Practice on the Safety of Passengers in Wheelchairs on Buses' (VSE 87/1).
12. The Driver should ensure that all passengers' belongings and equipment are safely stored and clear of walkways and exits.
13. Before moving off, Drivers should ensure that doors are properly closed and that no coats, bags or other obstructions are caught in the mechanism of the door (inside or outside). Drivers should observe mirrors in case latecomers attempt to board. Particular attention should be paid to the nearside mirror.
14. Drivers should try to avoid reversing manoeuvres where possible. If not, when reversing, Drivers should ensure that everyone is well clear of the vehicle.

15. In the event of an Accident, Breakdown or Emergency the Driver should ensure, so far as possible, that immediate help is summoned and that the passengers are not left unattended. The Fleet Officer/ASN Travel Team should be made aware of the circumstances at the earliest opportunity to ensure the safe and expeditious completion of the passenger's journey.
16. Smoking by any person on a school/college contract/service vehicle is legally forbidden. Drivers and ASN Travel Assistants (where provided) must ensure that this is enforced. Drivers and ASN Travel Assistants must never smoke or vape in the vehicle at any time. This includes standing outside the vehicle and smoke/vape whilst waiting for the passengers to board.
17. All vehicles will be fitted with a first aid kit and a fire extinguisher. These will be fitted in an easily accessible position in accordance with the Road Vehicles (Constructions and Use) Regulations 1996 and BS5423. The contents of both the first aid box and the extinguisher(s) are to be checked at appropriate intervals and replenished as necessary.
18. All vehicles used in the performance of the service will be licensed in all respects, insured, equipped, and maintained in a thoroughly safe and roadworthy condition in accordance with Department of Transport regulations, manufacturers' recommendations, and the requirements of the local authority.
19. All drivers are trained and are competent to safely use the controls, equipment and other features of the vehicle. This includes the entrance door, the passenger lift and its controls, the seat belt and wheelchair restraint systems and the emergency exit. Vehicles fitted with rear child proof locks must ensure they are working and in the locked position

7 CONTRACTORS (EXTERNAL)

Contractors should ensure that Drivers are appropriately licensed. Contractors will be required to give the names of Drivers/Passenger Assistants to the Transport Officer prior to contract starting and where necessary await an enhanced Disclosure Scotland check being successfully completed before using them on a school contract.

Passengers will be transported between designated pick-up points at home and school unless alternative arrangements have been agreed with the Transport Officer. Each passenger should be passed over to a responsible person at the home/school.

Passengers should not be transferred from one vehicle to another *en route* except where such an arrangement has been specified and agreed with the Transport Officer or in the event of a breakdown or other emergency. If any

child transfers to another vehicle *en route*, then the vehicles should meet on the same side of the road so that the child can transfer without crossing the road. No child will be left standing unsupervised whilst waiting for another vehicle to arrive.

The Contractor will ensure that passengers are taken directly to the intended destination (home or school) and under no circumstances must the Contractor deviate from the specified service or undertake other work whilst engaged upon an Additional Support Needs contract.

All passengers must be provided with their own individual seat on the vehicle. The Contractor may not 'double up' and place two children on an adult seat or three children on two adult seats etc. The Contractor will also ensure that the vehicle does not carry more passengers that it is licensed for.

The Contractor will ensure that all Passenger Assistants are trained to an appropriate standard as specified by the Education Department/ASN Travel Team. Where practicable this should be achieved within three months of the contract start date. Training may be provided by the Education Department, ASN Travel Team or NHS Tayside in certain circumstances, for individual pupil needs.

Passenger Assistants must attend mandatory training at least 3 times per year, scheduled by the ASN Travel Team. Should any Passenger Assistant fail to demonstrate a satisfactory level of competence on any Council-provided training scheme, the Contractor will be required to provide an alternative Passenger Assistant within five working days.

Whenever possible the Contractor should assign regular staff, i.e. Drivers and Passenger Assistants, to specific routes in to avoid undue distress to passengers.

In the event of a vehicle breakdown/hazardous weather conditions, all reasonable precautions should be taken to ensure the well-being of passengers. Under no circumstances must passengers be left alone and, where possible, they should remain in the vehicle. If it is deemed unsafe to do so, they should be assisted to a place of safety. The Driver should alert the Transport Officer immediately of any such occurrence. The utmost care should be taken to minimise distress/discomfort in the event of a breakdown. In cold weather, it is advisable that blankets should be carried on the vehicle and used if necessary.

During winter months, when the weather may be particularly bad and roads hazardous, Contractors should decide whether to operate their vehicle(s). Any decision should be made with the safety of passengers in mind. Contractors should alert the Transport Officer as soon as possible of a decision not to operate.

The Contractor will report any problems regarding routing/operational matters, such as access problems, seating, harnessing, etc. as soon as practicable to the Transport Officer.

Should passengers require urgent medical assistance, they should be made as comfortable as possible and taken to the nearest point where help will be available. This could be either back to school, to the passenger's home base or to the nearest medical centre (whichever is closest). If necessary, the other passengers should remain on board until the sick passenger is delivered to an appropriate responsible person. If other passengers are delayed because of the emergency, contact should be made with the Transport Officer and home base/school as soon as possible with an explanation of the reason for the delay.

Contractors will be supplied with appropriate information relating to the additional support needs of pupils to enable them to provide safe transport and appropriate support. Where necessary a protocol may be prepared by Health Professionals, and this will be copied to Parents/Carers as part of the contractual agreement.

8 THE VEHICLE

1. All vehicles will meet the requirements contained in the terms and conditions of the contract.
2. DCC Fleet Services and Contractors will ensure that all vehicles used in the performance of the service are licensed in all respects, insured, equipped, and maintained in a thoroughly safe and roadworthy condition in accordance with Department of Transport regulations, manufacturers' recommendations, and the requirements of the Council.
3. DCC Fleet Services and Contractors will provide the Transport Officer with information on the types of vehicles to be operated on the contract.
4. When the DCC Fleet Services and Contractors considers it necessary to replace or temporarily substitute a vehicle due to service requirements, renewal, etc. they will ensure that the replacement vehicle is of an equivalent (or better) standard as far as age, size, quality, and accessibility are concerned.
5. The vehicles used will be kept clean to a high standard inside and out. They will be comfortable, properly heated, and ventilated: vehicles must have the capacity to maintain a reasonable internal temperature consistent with the needs of passengers.
6. All Hackney Carriage vehicles, private hire vehicles and private cars used in the performance of the contract must be fitted with seat belts on all seats. It is the responsibility of the Driver to ensure that seat belts are worn by passengers, in accordance with the Council's conditions of contract. **These**

regulations also apply to children travelling in the rear seats of minibuses.

7. All vehicles transporting passengers in wheelchairs/buggies will be fitted with the appropriate tracking system on which to fix appropriate wheelchair restraints. A seat belt restraint should always be used in conjunction with the wheelchair restraints. **These will be utilised at all times.**
8. All vehicles transporting passengers in wheelchairs will be fitted with a mechanical tail lift or gradient ramps (which should not exceed 1 in 12).
9. All vehicles will be fitted with a first aid kit and a fire extinguisher. These will be fitted in an easily accessible position in accordance with the Road Vehicles (Constructions and Use) Regulations 1996 and BS5423. The contents of both the first aid box and the extinguisher(s) are to be checked at appropriate intervals and replenished as necessary. The location of the equipment should be clearly signed and be accessible without the need for keys.
10. All vehicles operated with a capacity more than eight passenger seats will preferably have a bottom step a maximum of 325 millimetres above the ground, at the rear of the vehicle and to other main exits.
11. The roof height of vehicles which carry more than two wheelchairs should be such as to enable ASN Travel Assistants, Passenger Assistants and Drivers to stand upright when manoeuvring passengers to and from seats and wheelchairs (1.8m minimum).
12. All seats will be fitted with appropriate seat belts in accordance with the conditions of contract.

9 SCHOOL STAFF

Any messages received from Parents/Carers concerning transport arrangements, absences, changes to the responsible adults meeting passengers etc should always be shared with the vehicle staff transporting pupils.

School Staff are expected to pass appropriate on the day information to ASN Travel Assistants and/or Passenger Assistants for them to be able to undertake their duties and responsibilities more effectively, including any short term medical or heightened behavioural issues.

Excluding exceptional circumstances, every effort will be made to provide 10 working days' notice for any substantial changes.

School Staff should always:

1. Contact the ASN Travel Team or Transport Officer should a vehicle fail to arrive

2. Ensure that all passengers have visited the toilet prior to boarding the vehicle
3. School Staff are expected to accompany passengers to and from the vehicle to be able to receive the young person from or handing to ASN Travel Assistants, Passenger Assistants or Driver on board or waiting at the door of the vehicle
4. Dissatisfaction with any aspect of ASN or Mainstream Travel Assistance should be immediately reported to the School Transport Team (ASN)

10 PARENTS / CARERS

Parents/Carers have a responsibility to ensure that their child/young person attends school, including providing appropriate travel arrangements. Dundee City Council may provide travel assistance if the child/young person meets the eligible criteria or has additional support needs that prevent them from travelling accompanied as necessary.

Travel Assistance must be applied for every school year and can be reviewed at any time.

Parents/Carers should immediately inform the ASN Travel Team of any changes to transport requirements, such as a change of address, a change of wheelchair specification etc. As much advance notice should be given, and if possible, a minimum of ten working days. Failure to do so may result in the short-term loss of travel assistance as amendments can be complex and take time to initiate.

Parents/Carers are also responsible for:

1. Waiting at the designated pick-up point at the agreed time, handing over their child/young person to the ASN Travel Assistant, Passenger Assistant or Driver for them to escort on board.
2. Advising of any short-term absences or alternative transport arrangements which means their child will NOT be travelling on dedicated transport. ASN Travel Assistants, Passenger Assistants and/or Drivers should be notified of the return date to ensure pickup and drop off resumes
3. Notify ASN Travel Assistants, Passenger Assistants and/or Drivers at morning pick-up if there are any difficulties with their child/young person **on that day.**
4. If challenging behaviour continues, transport may be temporarily suspended for the safety for all passengers travelling. Further discussions with Parents/Carers, ASN Travel Team, Contractors, Transport Officers and Schools will agree the safest way forward. **Until the situation has**

been resolved, it is the responsibility of the Parent/Carer responsibility to transport their child to school.

5. Make sure the passenger has visited the toilet prior to boarding the vehicle.
6. **Medication is only permitted to be transported with pupils if they are prescribed, and staff have been appropriately trained.** Parents/Carers must ensure that any medication needed by their child at school is given to the ASN Travel Assistant/Passenger Assistant together with any written instructions for the Head Teacher. Medication must be placed in an appropriate locked medicine bag, obtainable from the School Nurse or the Social Work Department. **Medication must not be placed in a child's schoolbag.**
7. Passenger's personal possessions should be contained in a named bag wherever possible. Any messages/instructions/updates for school staff should be in writing where possible
8. No food or drink should be consumed on board during the journey as this can affect other passengers' who may have allergies or has the potential to lead to choking incidents
9. Parents/Carers should meet their child/young person at the normal stopping place **at the agreed time**

If no-one is at the designated drop-off for passengers, Drivers can only wait five minutes before continuing their journey. If Parents/Carers cannot be reached by telephone, the Driver will be advised to take the child back to their home school to await collection by a responsible adult.

10. Parents/Carers must advise ASN Travel Assistants, Passenger Assistants or Drivers when an **alternative responsible adult** will meet their child/young person from school at the end of the day. This information should also be shared with the school to avoid any confusion.
11. If a child is to be returned to a place other than the normal stopping place, Parents/Carers will be responsible for making their own alternative transport arrangements. The Transport Officer and School should be notified of this change in writing that morning.
12. Should Parents/Carers have any cause for concern about travel operations they should contact the ASN Travel Team or Transport Officer as soon as possible.

11 EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

Should a passenger require urgent medical assistance whilst being transported, he/she will be made as comfortable as possible and taken to the nearest point where help will be available.

This could be either back to the school, to the passenger's home base or to the nearest available medical centre (whichever is closest).

If necessary, the other passengers will remain on board until the sick passenger is delivered to an appropriate responsible person.

If other passengers are delayed because of the emergency, contact will be made with the home base as soon as possible with an explanation of the reason for the delay.

Parents/Carers will be advised by either the Driver, the ASN Travel Assistant, or School Staff about any medical or serious incident which involves their child on the bus on the day that the incident occurs.

12 RESPITE CARE: involving *Social Work Department or Health Trust*

Dundee City Council Education Department provides transport from home to school for pupils who are placed in special provision out with their catchment area.

There is no eligibility criteria to transport to destinations other than home.

The School Transport Team (ASN) will contact Contractors on behalf of the Social Work Department to ascertain the feasibility and cost of extending home school transport contracts to include respite arrangements.

13 USEFUL CONTRACTOR / DEPARTMENT CONTACT INFORMATION

School Transport Team (ASN)	01382 433848 or 07585 998 909
Transport Officer	01382 433592 or 07795 487094
Fleet Services	01382 432781
City Cabs	01382 450450
Scot Blue Ltd	01382 549075
Tele Taxis	01382 825825