



Northumberland
County Council

SAFETY FIRST

DRIVERS' CODE OF CONDUCT - HANDBOOK

PLEASE KEEP THIS BOOKLET IN YOUR VEHICLE AT ALL TIMES

CALL THE PASSENGER TRANSPORT TEAM ON 01670 624 839



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WELCOME

As part of the Northumberland County Council Transport Services for children and vulnerable adults, you are playing a valuable part in transporting 10,000 passengers safely to and from school and centres daily.

Please take the time to read this booklet to ensure that all our passengers get great service every day.

This Code of Conduct provides a guide to the best professional practice to help you achieve that aim. How you do this will make a real difference to the passengers' day.

HAVE A SAFE JOURNEY



Follow these simple rules and every journey will end with the safe delivery of the passengers

- | | | | |
|--|---|--|--|
| | Do - Have a valid driving licence | | Don't - Smoke/use e-cigarettes |
| | Do - Have a valid DBS check at least once every three years | | Don't - Request or accept any social networking contact from passengers |
| | Do - Wear your Approved Driver Badge (DBS) and/or Taxi Licensing Badge where it can be seen | | Don't - Take photographs of passengers |
| | Do - Be smart and tidy in appearance and behave courteously and professionally to all passengers | | Don't - Give/accept gifts, telephone numbers or email addresses from passengers |
| | Do - Drive in a consistent manner at all times, avoid sharp braking, fast cornering, harsh acceleration and speeding | | Don't - Use any insensitive or offensive language, including swearing |
| | Do - Report any inappropriate behaviour on transport immediately to the Passenger Transport Team | It is a legal requirement that you comply with these rules, failure to do so could result in disciplinary action. | |

BREAKDOWNS OR ACCIDENTS

KEEP CALM - HAVE A SAFE TRIP

01

Keep all passengers inside the vehicle if it is safe to do so

02

Ensure there are no injuries to any passengers. If a passenger is injured call the Emergency Services immediately

03

If you are injured, appoint someone else to contact the emergency services, and the Council's Passenger Transport Team

04

Call the Council's Passenger Transport Team immediately and take advice on whether or not to continue the journey

05

Do not allow a passenger to make their own way home or to school



06

Passengers may be upset and want to contact their parent/carer. Make a mobile phone available to passengers if possible, but remember your phone will need to be free for incoming calls from schools/day centres/emergency services, etc.

07

Make available the up-to-date loading list - this may need to be given to emergency services

08

At the earliest opportunity complete a written statement of the event as it unfolded. While everything is fresh in your mind record dates, times, locations and persons involved.

09

When you get back to base complete all the necessary paperwork



SAFEGUARDING



Everyone has a personal responsibility for ensuring the safety of children, young people and vulnerable adults.

Your employer will have a policy telling you how to act, and what the signs of harm and neglect are. It is important that you have read and understand what is expected of you, and to report anything you are suspicious of - no matter how small.

If you are worried about a passenger, you should tell your manager or a responsible adult at the establishment or the Passenger Transport Unit. If you are immediately concerned, contact the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH): 01670 536400.

NOBODY AT HOME

01 If parents or carers are not at home, immediately contact the school transport team for further advice

02 Every effort will be made to contact the family, but if this fails then the child must be reassured and kept on board the vehicle

03 Continue with the school transport service of other children on board the vehicle

04 Once all other children are dropped off you should make another attempt to return the child home. If there is still not responsible adult at home you must seek further advice from the Passenger Transport Team or the child's school

05 Contact the **(MASH) (01670 536400)** for further advice and your I.C.E contact at school/day centre. The child may need to be taken to the nearest social services office or police station

(For children age nine and under)

SEVERE WEATHER

In the case of severe weather the Head Teacher must make the decision whether to close a school early due to adverse weather conditions.

WHAT SHOULD YOU DO?

Contact the relevant school and the Passenger Transport Unit immediately if it is felt that the weather is deteriorating and the transport must operate earlier or will be unable to operate.

Liaise with Feeder Transport Providers and all schools that share transport (ideally all schools will close at the same time) to reduce the impact on school transport. Contact the Passenger Transport Unit for further advice if necessary.

Ensure you have an 'I.C.E.' (In Case of Emergency) contact number for schools, or an identified member of staff, in case students cannot be transported home due to adverse weather conditions.



Passengers must not get off your vehicle at an alternative stop unless permission is given by their parent/guardian or their school.

Liaise with the school to identify an alternative arrangement for dropping students off if it is not feasible to operate the route in part or full. For example students might be returned to school or other place of safety such as a Police Station or Social Services establishment.



BEHAVIOUR OF PASSENGERS/ PASSENGER ILLNESS



Challenging behaviour can be difficult to deal with, but it is important that you remain calm and professional at all times.

- However strongly provoked do not allow yourself to be drawn into an argument with a passenger
- Report all (this can be verbal, physical, or vandalism) to the establishment the service user attends (school/day centre etc), as well as your own operating centre and the Council's Passenger Transport Team
- You should not touch any passenger, even if they are out of control, unless there is a serious risk of harm to themselves or others
- If a passenger is causing disruption or posing a risk to other road users pull the vehicle off the road until the situation is alleviated
- In extreme cases you may have to call the establishment they attend school/day centre as well as the Council's Passenger Transport Team or Police. It may be necessary to drive directly to a Police Station
- You must not eject a passenger from the vehicle. If the passenger becomes unmanageable, park the vehicle and ring for assistance
- Record the date, time, brief description, witnesses and names of any passengers misbehaving whenever possible. In the case of vandalism, take photos of the damaged area
- On occasion you may be challenged by a confrontational parent/adult, do not get drawn into an argument. Refer them to the Council's Passenger Transport Team or your operating centre
- Complete all paperwork when back at base



Northumberland County Council will not tolerate the misbehaviour of passengers. A procedure is in place to deal with problematic passengers depending upon the severity of the behaviour. This varies from a warning letter to their parents/carers to permanent exclusion from all NCC contracted transport.

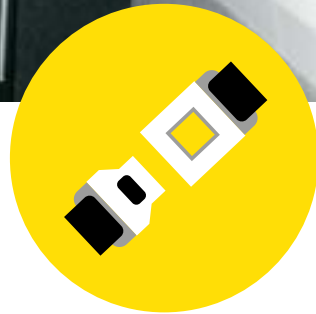
IF A PASSENGER BECOMES ILL:

- Gauge the severity of the illness and contact the parent/carer, or the school/day centre for advice and act accordingly
- In more severe cases, contact the Emergency Services immediately
- On arrival at home or school/day centre, you must escort the passenger into the premises and report the matter to a responsible person





WHEELCHAIRS AND SPECIALIST TRANSPORT



- You must ensure you know how to operate any specialist equipment required of you, including ramps and passenger lifts
- For any vehicle which is wheelchair accessible, you must ensure there are sufficient wheelchair restraints, and fully functional lap and diagonal or full harness wheelchair passenger restraints
- Wheelchairs must have their parking brakes applied, any power unit switched off and be restrained before travel
- 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
- Storage space should be available for items such as folded wheelchairs or walking frames, together with suitable restraint equipment. Please do not leave spare equipment loose or lying on the vehicle floor
- Any specific equipment needed by a passenger will be supplied by the council. Do not use any seating or restraint system supplied by parents/guardians unless authorised by the Passenger Transport Unit
- All equipment must be maintained in good condition, securely anchored, and be fitted and used strictly in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions

CHECKLIST BEFORE YOU BEGIN A JOURNEY



- ✓ Undertake a **daily safety check** of your vehicle to make sure it is fit for service and in a good clean condition. You must have working seat belts, a first aid kit, a fire extinguisher and a functional emergency door - depending on vehicle type
- ✓ Always have a copy of the **current loading list** for the pupils or vulnerable adults travelling on the route
- ✓ Sign the vehicle defect book or check sheet after each walk round check, identifying the date and time to confirm the check has been carried out satisfactorily
- ✓ Make sure you have a **working mobile phone**, fully charged, with your key contact numbers in case of emergencies. Do not use a mobile phone when driving, whether hands free or not - either stop if it is urgent or wait until the end of the run to return a call
- ✓ Check that the **Geneva Signs** and **Route Number** are displayed. Your route number must be clearly visible from outside the vehicle. Your company's fleet name should be prominently displayed
- ✓ **Do not leave the vehicle** unattended with passengers boarding or already on board
- ✓ Ensure that you are familiar with the **route and timetable**. Problems maintaining a timetable should be reported immediately to your operating base and the Council's Passenger Transport Team
- ✓ **Always follow the route and timetable provided:** no requests from parents/carers/service users for changes to the route must be enacted without prior approval from the Passenger Transport Team

ADVICE DURING THE JOURNEY



CHECK PASSES DAILY

Use your discretion if a pupil claims they have lost their bus pass.



IF THEY ARE ON THE LOADING LIST FOLLOW THESE GUIDELINES:

✓ Advise the student they must get a replacement within two weeks

✓ Take their name and inform your operating centre the same day. They will contact the Council's Passenger Transport Team. You will then be advised if the student is not allowed to travel

✓ Allow up to two weeks for a replacement bus pass to come through

IF A PUPIL IS NOT ON THE LOADING LIST, FOLLOW THESE GUIDELINES:

✓ Take their name and inform your operating centre the same day. They will contact the Council's Passenger Transport Team. You will then be advised if the student is not allowed to travel



GENERAL INFORMATION:

✓ Do not stop on route or allow passengers to leave the vehicle until they reach the destination identified on the loading list, except in case of emergency

✓ If providing feeder transport for school children do not leave pupils unaccompanied or at the roadside. If the connecting feeder transport does not arrive within five minutes of allocated time contact the Council's Passenger's Transport Team

✓ Give instruction to passengers to fasten their seatbelts and walk up the vehicle (where appropriate). En route advise new pick-ups of this instruction

✓ Do not set off until the doors are closed and all service users are seated and wearing seat belts

✓ No standing

✓ Never allow a vehicle to be overloaded with passengers

✓ Do not park or stop your vehicle and leave the engine running if waiting for longer than five minutes at schools or in built up areas



Northumberland County Council

NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY COUNCIL

Passenger Transport Unit:

01670 624839

(office hours)

0345 6006400

(outside of office hours)

POLICE

General Issues:

101

Emergencies:

999

MULTI AGENCY SAFEGUARDING HUB

(MASH):

01670 536400

(this covers all
safeguarding issues
for children and adults)

YOUR SCHOOL/DAY CENTRE CONTACT:

I.C.E (IN CASE OF EMERGENCY CONTACT NUMBER)

**FOR MORE INFORMATION VISIT WWW.NORTHUMBERLAND.GOV.UK
AND SEARCH SCHOOL TRANSPORT**

CALL THE PASSENGER TRANSPORT TEAM ON 01670 624 839