

St. Catherine's Special School

TRANSPORT POLICY

2017

Aims

This document sets out the School Transport Policy for St Catherine's Special School. This policy has been drawn up in consultation with the Board of Management and Staff of St Catherine's Special School and has been approved and adopted by the Board of Management.

In line with our mission statement, St Catherine's Special School requires the highest standards of care in the bus service provided for our students. The role of the escorts is crucial in facilitating our students whilst they are being transported to and from the school.

Roles and Responsibilities

Students

- to sit in the seat that has been allocated to them by the escort/driver.
- to wear their seat belt throughout the journey.
- not to leave the bus without permission of the escort/driver.
- may use electronic devices e.g. iPod, phone etc. only with agreement of the escort/ driver.
- to be respectful towards the escort, driver and other pupils.

Parents

- to adhere to safety rules and ensure their child abides by the Code of Behaviour.
- to report any concerns initially to the escort, and/or class teacher as necessary.
- to communicate with the driver in the first instance regarding absence, or if alternative arrangements have been made for a variety of reasons.

Escorts

Escorts are expected to supervise students with Special Educational Needs whilst they are being transported from home to school and vice versa. This includes:

- making sure that the students being transported do not distract the driver whilst the vehicle is in motion.
- ensuring the students abide by the Code of Behaviour, following School Response Hierarchy, if concerns arise.
- appropriate physical contact with students to enable comfortable entry and exit from the vehicle.
- not leaving students unsupervised on the vehicle.
- to enable supervision, parents are expected to escort their student to and from the vehicle each day.
- sitting in the back of the vehicle with the students, and not in the front with the driver .

The escort should make sure that all aspects of safety are carried out effectively, including:

- fastening all seat belts where provided.
- making sure that doors are closed securely before the vehicle starts to move.
- securing students into their harnesses if they have been provided.

- informing the driver when all students have been safely seated before the vehicle sets off.
- making sure that the students on arrival at school or home are supervised by a member of school staff/parent. On no account should a student be left unattended on a vehicle.
- making sure that all bags are stored safely.
- making sure that emergency medication and any information from parents is handed to a member of staff and initialed/signed for at the school/home.
- keeping a record of the hand over of emergency medication.
- in an emergency situation, the escort may need to administer emergency medication. Emergency medication training will be provided by the Board of Management. All emergency medication will be clearly labelled with the student's name and with clear written instructions on the administering of the medication.
- attending relevant training as directed by the school/BOM in line with their role as escort.

School Response Hierarchy for Problems/Queries

Please ensure that any problems or queries are directed as follows:

1. Escort will report concern to the class team and the class team will implement an appropriate intervention to improve the situation.
2. Class teacher will report any ongoing issue to the Deputy Principal.
3. The Deputy Principal will talk with the escort and then contact the parent, if required.
4. The Deputy Principal will meet parent/escort and make a referral to PBS, if required.
5. If there are ongoing concerns, the Deputy Principal will inform CIE of these concerns.

In the event of illness the following procedure should be followed by the escort:

- Notify the driver and school as soon as possible so that a relief escort can be contacted
- Provide the appropriate certification for sick leave

Leave of absence

Leave of absence will not be granted except in exceptional circumstances and escorts should make a written request to the school six weeks in advance. Each request will be assessed individually on its own merits in line with Employment Legislation.

The contract between the escort and the school is based on the following:

- The escort has read the job description and familiarised himself/herself with it's requirements.
- The escort has undertaken the necessary training.
- The escort has agreed to the fixed term contract from ___ to ___.

Contractor

- To ensure safe operation of routes, subject to all appropriate guidelines/requirements set out by the Department of Education and Skills with regards to the sanctioning of school transport.
- To communicate with escorts/school/parents if there is a significant problem with school transport caused by absence/mechanical failure/weather incidents etc.

Collection of Students

- When collecting students, please wait outside the home address for approximately 3 minutes.
- If the parent fails to bring the student out to meet the transport the driver must phone the parent.

Drop-off of students

- The driver will return a student to their home address. If a Parent/Guardian is not at home to receive his/her child, the procedure is to continue with the journey taking all other students home. After this is complete, return to the home address with the student.
- If parents/guardians are not at the home address on the second attempt to deliver the student, the driver will contact the parent by phone
- If the parents/guardians cannot be contacted, the driver must phone the Principal and, if directed, return to school with the student.

The School/Board of Management's responsibilities are to:

- employ bus escorts where possible on all sanctioned routes.
- ensure that escorts are subject to all mandatory requirements as outlined by the Department of Education and Skills.
- provide relevant training as applicable to the escort's role.
- commence a yearly audit with regard to staffing of bus routes, and to work with contractors to ascertain procedures in the event of no escort/sub-escort being available for the route.
- review routes annually in consultation with parents/escorts with regard to pupil needs/behaviour to determine if route could operate without escort/sub-escort if the situation arises.
- advertise for bus escorts/sub-bus escorts on a bi-annual basis if required.
- consult with the contractor/s with regard to the availability or otherwise of a bus escort/sub-bus escort.
- to inform parents if there is no escort or sub-bus escort available and to outline alternative arrangements, which may include in the event of escort absence (no sub available), parents making alternative arrangements to transport their child to school.

Related Documents/Policies

Code of Behaviour

Child Protection Policy

Administering Medication Policy

Ratification of Policy

It is recognised that this policy may need to be revised/modified from time to time in light of ongoing evaluation.

This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on 14th November 2017