

Shropshire Council Behaviour on School Transport Policy

Safe and respectful behaviour on school transport is critical to ensuring the safety and well-being of all passengers and staff. This policy establishes clear expectations and responsibilities for pupils using home-to-school transport, emphasizing safety, mutual respect, and zero tolerance for dangerous or abusive conduct. It aligns with legislation such as the Education and Inspections Act 2006 and fosters cooperation among the Council, schools, parents, and transport staff to maintain a safe, orderly environment on school buses and other transport modes.

Scope and Principles

The policy applies to all pupils using Council-arranged transportation, including mainstream and special educational needs transport. It supplements school behaviour policies and travel conditions, making good conduct a condition for riding the bus. Positive behaviour is encouraged, while unsafe or disrespectful behaviour results in sanctions.

Roles and Responsibilities

Pupils – Expected Behaviour

Pupils must always follow the driver's instructions, use their assigned vehicle and stop, and carry a valid bus pass daily where issued. Boarding and disembarking must be done safely and orderly, with adherence to the Green Cross Code when crossing roads. During the journey, pupils must remain seated, wear seat belts where provided, keep aisles and exits clear, and refrain from distracting the driver. Respectful behaviour towards drivers, assistants, and fellow passengers is mandatory, with bullying and abusive language strictly prohibited. Eating, drinking, smoking, and vandalism are forbidden, and misuse of emergency equipment is a serious offence. If a pupil misses their bus, they should report to school staff and contact parents rather than attempting alternative travel independently. Any concerns or incidents should be reported promptly to parents, schools, or the Council.

Parents/Carers – Responsibilities

Parents and carers play a vital role in reinforcing good behaviour and ensuring safety. They must ensure children travel safely to and from bus stops, supervise young or vulnerable pupils, and have contingency plans for delays or missed buses. Parents should ensure children carry valid bus passes where issued and understand the importance of using designated routes without requesting unscheduled stops or unauthorized riders. They are encouraged to discuss and reinforce the bus conduct rules, support school and Council discipline efforts, and ensure children do not carry prohibited items. Parents are financially



liable for any damage caused by their children and should maintain communication with schools and the Council to address any issues or concerns.

Schools and Council – Responsibilities

Schools treat travel behaviour as an extension of the school environment, communicating transport rules and integrating them into overall behaviour policies. They have authority to discipline pupils for conduct on the journey to and from school and cooperate with the Council in managing incidents. Drivers maintain order through instructions and report incidents, while passenger assistants supervise and support pupils, especially those with special needs. Both schools and the Council promote positive behaviour and maintain open communication with families about behaviour expectations and incidents.

Unacceptable Behaviour and Prohibited Conduct

The policy prohibits aggression, bullying, abusive language, dangerous distractions, refusal to obey safety rules, vandalism, theft, throwing objects, substance use, unreasonable behaviour toward staff, and other illegal or dangerous acts. Such behaviours are considered serious breaches and will lead to disciplinary action. Some behaviour may also require the involvement of the police. Generally a sanction will only be applied after investigation of an incident (however where there is a serious health and safety risk an immediate sanction may be applied).

Examples of the type of behaviour, which will invoke a sanction, are listed below:-

- Bullying/harassment/intimidation (physical and/or verbal)
- Distracting/assaulting the driver
- Failure to follow instruction from the driver
- Standing forward of the driver
- Using the emergency exit
- Drug misuse
- Moving around the vehicle
- Sitting in the stairwell
- Throwing objects inside the vehicle or out of the windows
- Health and safety breaches (including tampering with safety equipment such as emergency exits, CCTV cameras, smoke alarms, fire extinguishers, first aid box)
- Smoking
- Spitting
- Verbal abuse - swearing



- Bringing unsafe objects onto the vehicles (i.e. pen-knives, cigarette lighters)
- Playing personal stereos without headphones
- Assaulting the passenger assistant
- Vandalism/damage to the vehicle (criminal damage will be reported to the Police and parents will be held responsible for any damage caused to the vehicle)

This is not an exhaustive list and each incident will be investigated on its own merit.

Children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities

We recognise that pupils with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) may display a wide range of behaviours as a result of their individual needs, and we understand these situations can sometimes be stressful for families and children. Our team is committed to working collaboratively to support each child's needs and create the safest and most supportive environment possible for every pupil.

We rely on parents/carers keeping us informed about their child's needs, which helps us respond effectively and deescalate scenarios swiftly if required. We also work closely with schools to assist when necessary, and we appreciate their continued partnership in managing individual behaviours.

There may be times when a child or young person's behaviours—including those that are challenging, disruptive, or present a safeguarding concern—make it unsafe for them, fellow passengers, or transport staff to continue travelling on school transport. In such instances, we will discuss alternative options and may offer travel assistance in the form of a Personal Travel Budget (PTB). A PTB is financial support provided to families so they can arrange suitable travel for their child. If this becomes necessary, we will contact you directly to explain the process and support you through the next steps.

Non Entitled Pupils Accessing TSPS

Those pupils who have no entitlement to free school transport but access our Temporary Seats Payment Scheme may be permanently withdrawn from the scheme where there is repeated poor behaviour. Parents will then be required to make their own arrangements.

Consequences and Enforcement

Misbehaviour leads to graduated consequences:

- **On-the-spot corrections:** Drivers or passenger assistants issue verbal warnings for minor issues, expecting immediate compliance.



- **Reports and investigations:** Significant or repeated incidents are reported and investigated, including the use of CCTV footage where available and witness statements.
- **Warnings and parental notification:** First-time or less severe incidents result in warning letters sent to parents, emphasizing the importance of good conduct and potential escalation.
- **School disciplinary actions:** Schools may impose sanctions aligned with their policies, including detentions or exclusions, coordinated with the Council.
- **Temporary suspension of transport:** For dangerous or persistent misbehaviour, transport privileges may be suspended for a defined period (usually starting with one week and increasing incrementally), with parents responsible for alternative arrangements.
- **Permanent withdrawal of transport:** Extreme or repeated misconduct can lead to permanent exclusion from Council-provided transport, requiring families to arrange their own travel. This is a last resort after other measures fail.
- **Support and alternatives:** The Council may offer alternative transport solutions or budgets for eligible pupils during suspensions, focusing on safety and attendance continuity.
- **Reinstatement and behaviour agreements:** Temporary bans may end with review meetings and behaviour contracts; permanent bans may be reconsidered upon evidence of improved behaviour.
- **Restitution and legal action:** Parents are liable for damages caused by their children, and serious offences may involve police action, including criminal charges.
- **Appeals:** Parents can appeal long-term transport exclusions through a formal process, with decisions reviewed by a panel. Appeals should be emailed to schooltransport@shropshire.gov.uk or for children with SEND special.transport.team@shropshire.gov.uk

