

From: [Foi Enquiries](#)
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: FOI-17-1073 - Child Protection Training
Date: 02 August 2017 13:50:59
Attachments: [Further Information - Right to Review & Appeal.pdf](#)
[FOI-17-1073 - Child Protection Training \(Transport Handbook - Drivers\).pdf](#)

Dear [REDACTED],

Thank you for your information request of 27 July 2017. Aberdeen City Council (ACC) has completed the necessary search for the information requested.

Do school transport drivers receive any form of training/guidance or information relevant to children or child protection?

All Aberdeen City Council Drivers are required to undertake: Child Protection: Getting it Right for Every Child, online interactive training and undertake appropriate training in terms of passenger transport through the MiDAS (Minibus Driver Awareness Scheme) or any other training that the Council deems necessary.

External service providers under contract are encouraged to develop staff training schemes covering issues such as service user care, disability awareness, basic child protection awareness and effective incident reporting. In addition the Council reserves the right to also require the attendance of service provider's employees, agents and sub-contractors for one day per year, at any training event which the Council may convene.

External service providers must also ensure that all employees, agents or sub-contractors have access to induction, supervision and training to the reasonable satisfaction of the Council. A copy of records pertaining to recruitment and selection, induction, supervision and training shall be supplied on request to the Council.

External service provider's employees, agents, and sub-contractors must be made aware by the service provider of any additional support needs and/or specific detailed requirements for individual service users.

Drivers will also be provided with appropriate information and guidance specific to a child's individual needs where required and in line with Data Protection. This may include training in a procedure, where required.

All Drivers are issued with handbooks which detail the expectations of them in the undertaking of School Transport including child protection issues (copy attached).

Drivers are expected to be mindful at all times, that the highest standards of care and consideration with regard to the service users will be required when undertaking the services, failure to do so may result in disciplinary action for Council drivers or sanctions under the terms and conditions of contract for external service providers.

We hope this helps with your request.

Yours sincerely,

Grant Webster

Information Compliance Officer

INFORMATION ABOUT THE HANDLING OF YOUR REQUEST

ACC handled your request for information in accordance with the provisions of the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002. Please refer to the attached PDF for more information about your rights under FOISA.

Information Compliance Team
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Corporate Governance
Aberdeen City Council
3rd Floor North
Business Hub 17
Marischal College
Broad Street
ABERDEEN AB10 1AQ

foienquiries@aberdeencity.gov.uk

Tel 03000 200 292

*03000 numbers are free to call if you have 'free minutes' included in your mobile call plan.
Calls from BT landlines will be charged at the local call rate of 10.24p per minute (the same as 01224s).

www.aberdeencity.gov.uk

Transport Handbook for

Escorts & Drivers

Aberdeen City Council



ABERDEEN
CITY COUNCIL

Public Transport Unit

Aberdeen City Council
Marischal College
Broad Street
Aberdeen
AB10 1AB



ABERDEEN
CITY COUNCIL



This handbook outlines the responsibilities of both escort and driver. Although responsibilities differ, the emphasis is on teamwork and it is vital that both driver and escort understand each others roles in providing transport.

Escorts & Drivers (Vision Statement)

Escorts & Drivers play a vital role in the provision of an efficient and caring service, in a position of trust and care, they are often an important link between the service provision and home. It is therefore important that all employees who participate in the transportation of children are aware that their patience and understanding of the problems facing children and young people maximises the potential towards achieving a good standard of service. Offering a friendly face, a smooth, safe journey, and a lot of patience can make all the difference.

The safety of a child must at all times be paramount and override all other factors.

Escorts & Drivers must always display their approved Public Transport Unit badge or Aberdeen City Council employee badge. If you have lost or damaged your badge then please contact the Public Transport Unit.

General Guidance for Escorts & Drivers

Escorts & Drivers should always treat each other and children with care and respect.

Escorts are responsible for the safety and care of the child from the moment the child is handed over to the escort.

The driver must check the security of the seats in the vehicle before starting and ensure seatbelts are available for every seat.

Whilst children are in a vehicle, and wherever room permits, the escort must sit in the rear of the vehicle.

On dark evenings escorts should wear reflective clothing/armbands when assisting children from the vehicle, particularly whilst working with ramps and tail lifts.

Any problems with behaviour or service such as vehicle condition and timing should be reported to the School/Service immediately so that the Public Transport Unit may investigate.

Escorts & Drivers must NOT:

- Leave the vehicle to collect children from home/services, or take children home/to services, unless otherwise instructed, in which case there must be no other children in the vehicle.
- Offer food such as sweets and snacks. Apart from being inappropriate, there is also the danger of inadvertently causing an allergic reaction to a food substance or additive.

Public Transport Unit

Aberdeen City Council
Marischal College
Broad Street
Aberdeen
AB10 1AB

School Transport team
Between 08:30 – 17:00 : 01224 523760
Email: childrenstransport@aberdeencity.gov.uk

Social Work Transport team
Between 08:30 – 17:00 : 01224 523766
Email: socialworktransport@aberdeencity.gov.uk



- Allow children to consume their own food or drinks while being transported.
- Allow children to be collected from or set down at unauthorised stops.
- Allow the route of the vehicle to be changed without prior permission from the Public Transport Unit.
- Allow any unauthorised person to travel on the vehicle.

Confidentiality & Data Protection

In the course of their duties escorts & drivers may become aware of information of a personal nature relating to their passengers. Personal information can be contained in a number of formats:

- Written information e.g. timesheets, work schedules
- Verbal information e.g. handovers, telephone conversations
- Electronic information e.g. text messages, emails, information recorded/accessed on a database.

Everyone is responsible to ensure that this information is not divulged to others who are not entitled to receive it.

- Be mindful of what you say, to whom, where you say things and how you dispose of information.
- Do not have discussions about information you have seen, or had access to, or the people you are working with, in places where you can be overheard.
- Do not put information about the people you are working with on facebook and other social networking sites or on personal mobiles.
- If you lose information report this to your line manager immediately.
- Information should be kept no longer than necessary, if you don't need to keep the information destroy it safely.

The only exception to this is the passing on of information or concerns relating to the welfare of the child to the appropriate agency (Public Transport Unit, School, Social Services).

Escort Illness

Escorts are line managed by the School/Service and illness should be reported to them directly.

If an escort falls ill and is unable to reach a member of school staff, then a message should be left on the School/Service answer machine giving their name, run and time of call. Then contact the Public Transport Unit to make them aware.



Picking up passengers

Parents/guardians are responsible for bringing the child to the vehicle at the pick-up point.

Escorts will assist children to board the vehicle when necessary.

Transport is not a guaranteed door to door service and some transport may operate where pupils are collected / returned along a predefined route, at a designated pick-up / drop-off point. For rural addresses the pick-up and drop-off point will usually be at the road end or a designated point following a safety assessment.

Entering and exiting the vehicle

If children are entering by steps, make sure the children can see steps clearly and assist by pointing to handholds etc.

Although ultimately the drivers responsibility, if present, escorts should assist the children into a seat and make sure that seat belt is secured.

Any bags or walking aids should be stored away safely before moving off.

Children must not be allowed to leave the vehicle until adequately supervised.

When assisting a child to leave the vehicle via steps, the escort should precede the child and assist the child if necessary.

Children should not be lifted (unless previously agreed), except in emergency circumstances in order to preserve life, e.g. accident or medical emergency.

When travelling home, escorts/drivers should ensure the children are met by parent/guardian at the destination.

Under no circumstances should a child be handed over to any unknown/unidentified person. If in any doubt about the person claiming a child, contact the Public Transport Unit for guidance.

What if a child falls ill?

Guidelines cannot be put into place for all eventualities. As a general rule, however, the following should be adopted:

- In cases of any doubt as to seriousness of illness or injury, an ambulance should be called, unless the vehicle is in relative proximity to a casualty unit, in which case child should be taken directly to casualty unit.
- If the vehicle is closer to service than to home, the child should be taken immediately to service, if the vehicle is closer to child's home than to service, child should be returned home and parent informed.
- Do not transport a child who is obviously ill. The responsibility for the child should stay with either the parent/carer or the service.



Administration of Medication

No medication should be administered to a child unless:

- Escorts have been trained by professional medical staff
- Escorts have been made aware that a child will need medication at the time of travel and have clear instructions about correct dose and are trained to administer the respective medication. Escorts should ensure that pupils are seated in such a way that, should a child require medication to be administered on the vehicle, they can easily be moved and treated in an emergency.

Parent / Guardian is not at destination to receive child

- If there is nobody to receive the child at the time of first arrival, inform the Public Transport Unit and return to the house after all other children have been dropped off.
- In cases where the parent/guardian is still not at home upon returning, contact the Public Transport Unit to seek guidance on where to take the child next.
- If for any reason the Public Transport Unit cannot be contacted then the children should be conveyed back to the service.
- If there are no staff at the service available to take care of the children then they should be conveyed to the nearest social work office /police station.

Child Protection Proceedings

- The escort will receive guidance from School/Service on the risk to the child if this is needed to ensure safety.

If a child discloses information to escort/driver that he/she has been abused or is unhappy about something

- Stay calm and listen to child
- Do not promise to keep secrets
- Reassure the child that they are not to blame
- Remember that it is not your responsibility to investigate further
- Record the disclosure in writing as soon as possible, while details are still fresh in your mind
- Report immediately to the School or Social Worker

Recording is essential. Keep brief factual notes of any injuries or concerns. Record the child's name and date of birth, and who the concern has been discussed with or reported to. Sign and date the record. Record names of anyone else who may have also heard the disclosure.



Child abuse is not only evident in physical injuries but can be manifested in a child's behaviour, particularly in a change in a child's behaviour.

If you work alone or are unsure about who to speak to, contact the Child Protection Unit directly on **01224 306 877**.

What happens if I'm wrong ?

- If you had genuine concerns then you did the right thing in speaking to someone.

A child accuses an escort or driver of inappropriate behaviour

- Report immediately to School (using school incident form) or Public Transport Unit. In such cases it is very important that every detail, however minor it might seem, is reported.

Vehicle Breakdown

As soon as possible following a breakdown the Public Transport Unit must be informed of the following:

- Location
- Contract Number
- Estimated time of arrival for replacement vehicle

The children are the main concern. Reassure them and do everything possible to get them to their destination. The children and escort should stay in the vehicle until a replacement arrives unless it is deemed to be unsafe (see emergency evacuation).

It is the driver's responsibility to contact their operator to request a replacement vehicle. The following information should be passed on:

- Number of people on transport
- Number of people in wheelchairs
- Exact location
- Any identified risks

Ask how long help will be and give this information to children to reassure them.

Accident

- In case of an accident that causes damage to any other person, vehicle, animal, or roadside property, the vehicle must stop.
- The driver must report the accident to the police as soon as possible, within 24 hours.



- Be aware that if the vehicle is involved in an accident, everyone involved is likely to be emotionally upset in addition to any physical injuries they may have.
- Check carefully for any injury amongst passengers. If anyone is injured, take appropriate action and obtain medical assistance through the 999 services. Remember that shock may not be experienced until later. It is important to note that some children with disabilities may have a poor awareness of danger or pain. Even if no-one is injured and all passengers are okay to continue with the journey, the incident must be reported to staff on arrival at school/service so that staff can continue to observe the passengers throughout the day.
- Also depending on their disability they may be unaware of injury. Following a fall or bump, extra care should be taken to ensure that an injury has not been sustained. Contact the Public Transport Unit for advice.
- Do not try to move anyone who may appear to be seriously injured.
- If the accident was minor and once any injury has been dealt with, only if the driver deems the vehicle to be roadworthy, the journey should be continued.
- If the vehicle is not roadworthy the driver will contact the operator and ask for a replacement vehicle.

Emergency Evacuation of Vehicle

In the event of a fire or the threat of a possible fire following an accident, the vehicle should be evacuated immediately. This should be organised as calmly as possible.

It is impossible to give precise instructions to cover all situations. However, the following principles apply:

- The driver must take control of the emergency and give the order for evacuation.
- Children who do not require assistance should get out as quickly as possible using all available exits.
- If any exits are blocked through damage or by an injured passenger, windows of the vehicle should be broken to assist the evacuation.
- Extreme care should be taken with injured passengers. However, in the event of fire, there may be only seconds available and further injury may be unavoidable to prevent loss of life.
- Once the vehicle has been evacuated, the children should be escorted away from the vehicle as quickly as possible and taken to a safe place until assistance arrives.

Drivers

- Drivers should always treat escorts and children with care and respect.



- Never drive a vehicle that you suspect to be unroadworthy or not fulfil the requirements of the contract specification.
- Follow the scheduled route and timetable and report any delays or problems immediately to your control room or the Public Transport Unit.
- Always ensure a safe stopping place is used, ensure that the child exits the near side of the road and does not have to cross the road to get to their home/school.
- No variation in the scheduled route should be made under any circumstances without written permission of the Public Transport Unit.
- Buses should approach each stop slowly and ensure that doors are always secured when in motion.
- Ensure that the vehicle does not carry more than the permitted number of children.
- Prior to commencing your journey, always ensure that a fully stocked first aid kit and fire extinguisher are on board.
- If applicable, ensure that school bus signs are displayed front and rear of the vehicle whilst carrying out school journeys. These signs should be removed when the vehicle is not being used for such work.
- Ensure that escorts are aware of the safety equipment on board and know their role should there be an emergency such as a breakdown.
- Always report discipline or behavioural problems to the school or Public Transport Unit.
- If seatbelts are provided and the young person (irrespective of age) refuses to wear one, the vehicle must not depart until the seatbelt is securely fastened.
- Drivers must display their Public Transport Unit approved driver badge. If you have lost or damaged your badge then please contact your office / manager who will arrange for a replacement. Badges are not transferable, if you change service provider you must return your approved driver badge to your current service provider. A new badge will be issued by your new service provider.
- Driver must not sound their horn as a notification of their arrival outside a pick-up address. It is a road traffic offence to sound your horn when vehicle is stationary, unless in an emergency.

Passenger Safety

- All passengers must wear seatbelts at all times.
- Any escort or driver found to be under the influence of non prescribed drugs or alcohol will face disciplinary action.
- Smoking is not permitted within school grounds or on board the vehicle.



Child Restraints

It is the driver's responsibility to ensure that each child is wearing a seatbelt before departure. Where an escort is provided it is also the escort's responsibility to ensure that seatbelts are worn throughout the journey.

If a seatbelt is not available, the vehicle must not depart.

Children should use a 3 point lap and diagonal belt as a preference and should not use a lap belt only. The belt should always be clear of the face and neck of the child so that it may provide adequate support in an impact.

In many situations a booster seat can help increase the support of a 3 point lap and diagonal belt for small children. The Public Transport Unit in conjunction with the school/service will have assessed whether a child requires a booster or bucket seat prior to transport being arranged.

However, if you think a child requires a booster or bucket seat but does not have one, contact your office or the Public Transport Unit.

When deemed necessary, a pupil may be issued with additional equipment, eg a harness or a seatbelt guard. Fitting/operational instructions will be issued with the harness/guard but if in doubt contact the Public Transport Unit for advice.

Assisting Children with Disabilities

The way we communicate with people who have additional support needs is just as important as the words we use. Remember to speak directly to the person. It can be very frustrating for disabled people when people speak to the person that they are with instead of speaking directly to them.

Do not assume all wheelchair users have the same disability. There are a variety of disabilities that require a person to use a wheelchair. Their needs will be different, if in doubt, ask.

Assist the passenger to board the vehicle, using the passenger lift or ramp in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions. Under no circumstances may a wheelchair user be lifted into or out of a vehicle unless in an emergency situation.

Wheelchair User Restraints

There are many different makes and models of wheelchair on the market, however if the following principles are applied in securing wheelchair users, a comfortable and safe journey can be achieved. Never attempt to operate wheelchair restraints unless you are sure of how to use them. The following information is general advice and should not be used as a substitute for training.



- If the wheelchair user travels in the chair, it must only be secured in a forward facing position. A wheelchair user must NEVER be transported facing sideways.
- Refer to the wheelchair manufacturer's user manual for advice on how to transport each particular type of wheelchair. If in doubt, contact the Public Transport Unit for advice.
- It is recommended that when in transit, all wheelchair accessories such as trays are removed and stored securely.
- When attaching tie down restraints to the wheelchair make sure they are attached to a solid part of the wheelchair frame. Tie down restraints must NEVER be attached to parts such as the spokes of the wheels or footrests.
- On a large majority of wheelchairs, anchor points are clearly marked.
- Ensure the castors are in the parked position, swept forwards, so that the wheelchair is more stable. Ensure that the brakes are applied. This will provide a more comfortable journey for the passenger under normal driving conditions.
- Some wheelchair users also have a posture belt or lap belt built in to their wheelchair. It is important to note that this can be used in addition to but must NEVER be used as a substitute for a 3 point lap and diagonal passenger restraint.
- Remove and stow away any luggage hung on the wheelchair. Luggage hung from the rear of a wheelchair raises the centre of gravity and makes it less stable. Also, in an impact loose luggage may cause injury.

General Guidance for Restraining Passenger and Wheelchair

There are 2 main functions of restraints. The first is to secure the wheelchair to the floor of the vehicle, the second function is to secure the wheelchair user in the chair. A 4 point tie down system should be used in conjunction with a 3 point lap and diagonal belt.

- The vehicle should be parked on as flat a surface as possible.
- Always extend the ramp onto the pavement side of the road or lower the tail lift.
- Push wheelchair user into vehicle and apply wheelchair park brake.
- Point wheelchair front castors forwards.
- Apply front tie-downs to each front corner of the wheelchair, only attach to a strong part of the wheelchair frame.
- Release the wheelchair parking brake and apply the rear tie-downs to each rear corner of the wheelchair, methods of tightening vary depending on manufacturer.
- Apply wheelchair park brake(s).
- Secure the 3 point lap and diagonal belt around wheelchair and wheelchair user.
- Check the wheelchair is secure.