



Assisted Transport for Children With Special Educational Needs and Disabilities

Driver and Passenger Assistant Handbook



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WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP TO MEET THE NEEDS OF VULNERABLE CHILDREN

- Thank you for your co-operation and hard work in providing transport to vulnerable children and young people. We are very aware of the importance of your role and the complexity of the work you do. If you require any further information, please do not hesitate to seek assistance from London Borough of Sutton (LBS) or Achieving for Children (AfC) transport Teams via your transport company.
- The Special Educational Needs and Disabilities of the pupils travelling in your care include physical, emotional, communication and learning disabilities and, in some cases, behaviour that challenges. Some of the children will have medical conditions and may be prone to seizures during their time on the vehicle. There may also be children in your care who regularly receive special medication or those who may need a paramedic ambulance crew to administer medication to them in an emergency.
- The quality of the transportation to and from school, and other activities, is important for the emotional welfare of the children.
- It is important that all drivers, passenger assistants and other staff show understanding and empathy with the children, their parents/carers and school staff.
- Children must be treated with respect and in a dignified manner appropriate to their age and needs.
- Confidentiality should be maintained at all times.
- The physical and emotional well-being of the children is paramount and must be maintained at all times.
- By providing safe, friendly transport to children you make a difference for the child, their family and their school:
 - Children arrive at school in a calm state, ready to learn and on time
 - Children have a positive experience of the journey to school (e.g. stimulation, opportunities to make friends, engagement with others)
 - Children enjoy their journey to school
 - Children using the service are safe
- The London Borough of Sutton and Achieving for Children (AfC) fully understand that your work can be difficult as well as rewarding and are there to support you at all times in delivering the service.
- If you have any queries, or are unable to carry out your duties in the normal way or manner, contact your transport company who will be able to provide you with additional information or advice with support from either London Borough of Sutton or AfC.

When this document mentions “Children” it refers to children and young people up to the age of 18 years old.

When this document mentions “school” it refers to school, college or other educational setting or facility.

PASSENGERS



Passengers that you are providing transport for are your customer and must be treated as such at all times. Passengers, their parents and carers and staff at school should be treated with politeness and respect and communicated with in a method they can understand.

- Your passengers are first and foremost children who are in your care for the duration of the journey.
- Drivers and Passenger Assistants (PAs) must ensure that children arrive at school in a calm state, ready to learn and on time.
- You should ensure that children have a positive experience of the journey to school, enjoy their journey to school and are safe.
- Drivers and PAs must be well presented, dressed appropriately in suitable clothing at all times, courteous.
- You must be friendly and courteous and aware of the passenger's needs
- Drivers and PAs should engage in conversation but must maintain a professional distance at all times.
- You must arrive promptly and wait patiently at the point of pick up.
- The preferences for the type of music or no music of passengers always take priority over your own preferences and must be age appropriate.
- Only authorised passengers may be carried on the vehicle. Either the Driver or PA on the route will have been given a register and details of pick up points for the route.
- No more passengers should be carried than permitted by the design or licensed capacity of the vehicle.



SAFEGUARDING

Both Driver and PAs have an important role to play in safeguarding vulnerable children. There is a moral responsibility to report any concerns about a child or young person in any context. Both AfC and London Borough of Sutton will support anyone who, in good faith, reports a safeguarding concern. **Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility**

- Both Drivers and PAs must have a current enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) certificate. The certificate must not be more than three (3) years old unless the subject of the certificate subscribes to the DBS Update Service, which allows the Transport Teams to check more recent conduct online. The original certificate, must be presented to the Sutton of AfC Transport Team who will decide if you will be permitted to work on that route.
- If the Driver or PA has been resident in the UK for less than three (3) years they must have a Certificate of Good Conduct for workers from overseas. Where required, you must have relevant visas, residence permits and Home Office documentation which confirms staff rights to work.

- Both Drivers and PAs must have undergone relevant safeguarding training within the last 3 years and know the correct referral procedure to report any safeguarding issue to either London Borough of Sutton or AfC.
- You must treat all information about the passengers you are responsible for and their family circumstances, in the strictest of confidence. Under no circumstances should such information be passed to a person who is not the child's parent/carer, member of the school staff or an appropriate staff member from AfC. You must be prepared to act as a messenger between the schools/units and parents/carers as required.
- Passengers are vulnerable and you must not discuss any personal topics about yourself or others, such conversations can offend or be misinterpreted.
- It is the responsibility of everyone, whatever their role, to ensure that bullying is dealt with appropriately. Bullying can take the form of physical bullying such as hitting, kicking and theft; verbal bullying such as name-calling, constant teasing, sarcasm, comments about disability or threats and gestures; emotional bullying such as tormenting, mobile text messaging, ridiculing, humiliating and ignoring or isolating. If you believe that one of your passengers is being bullied you must report your concern to a member of staff at the school/unit.
- You may be required to install a GPS device provided to you to protect pupils, drivers and passenger assistants from any unfounded safeguarding allegations. The GPS is only required to be activated during the delivery of the route and will not be actively monitored. Data will be downloaded should a safeguarding incident be reported to provide independent verifiable information to any investigation. If a GPS unit is allocated to a route you will be required to use it. If you do not comply with this condition this will be treated as a quality issue and the route may be re-tendered.

DRIVERS



This section lists the major requirements of the contract as they affect **Drivers**, and sets out procedures for dealing with unforeseen circumstances such as accidents or extreme weather conditions whilst carrying out your duties.

- You must hold a valid licence for the type of vehicle you are being asked to drive.
- You must hold a current and valid Private Hire Vehicle Licence, or a current and valid Taxi Licence, or a Driver Certificate of Professional Competence (CPC), according to the vehicle in use.
- If your driver's licence has been endorsed with penalty points, you must tell your employer. If you are self-employed you must tell either the Sutton or AfC Transport Office.
- If you receive any Penalty Charge Notice (PCN) charges whilst driving a vehicle whilst undertaking transport duties (including driving to the first pick up point and returning after the last drop off), you are personally responsible for paying the costs attached to the PCNs whether the vehicle is your own or on hire.
- You must always maintain a courteous and professional relationship with passengers, parents, carers, other drivers and passenger assistants, school and unit staff and other members of the public, as the image you project reflects on AfC and/or LBS.
- You must be able to interact with, respond to and calmly reassure Passengers with special needs in a positive and sensitive manner.

- You must be able to communicate effectively with Parents/Carers and school/unit staff. You must be able to understand your passengers and their Parents/Carers and be understood by them.
- It is essential that you know the route that has been assigned to you.
- When transporting solo passengers you must ensure that the passenger sits in the back seat and not in the front seat next to you, unless advised otherwise.
- It is an offence for the driver to use a mobile phone for any reason whatsoever whilst driving the vehicle. The passenger assistant is responsible for answering or making calls during the journey if this is required. If you need to make or take an emergency call you must pull the vehicle over safely and turn off the engine.
- Personal mobile phones/tablets/watches and personal gadgets should be switched off and no personal call or texts should be made whilst on duty.
- It is compulsory for you to wear your high – visibility waistcoat/jacket at all times whilst on duty outside the vehicle.
- You must not smoke (this includes all E cigarettes and smoking aids) whilst on duty, either in transit or whilst waiting for passengers to board. Sutton and AfC operate a no-smoking policy on all sites including schools, buildings and in company vehicles. Many schools/units operate a perimeter around their gates where they politely request people not to smoke as the fumes can affect the health and well-being of the pupils attending there. Do not smoke in these areas.
- You must not consume food or drinks within the vehicle.
- If you are unable to report for duty, you must immediately inform your transport company to ensure your route can be covered. Make sure you know what times you need to let your transport company know by.
- All drivers must wear a company identity (ID) badge. It is your responsibility to ensure you receive your ID badge before starting your duties. You will need to wear your ID badge at all times whilst on duty and you must show it whenever a request is made by parents, carers, schools/units or the client.
- If you lose your ID Badge, you must inform your employer immediately. You will not be allowed to work on any of the routes until a replacement badge has been issued.
- You must return your ID badge to the employer if you stop working for the company that provides the route.
- If you are driving a minibus or larger vehicle, you must not reverse your vehicle without a banksman to assist with marshalling duties. In confined spaces, always take care to avoid damage to any property, including flower beds and lawns.
- You must co-operate with and be polite to any LBS or AfC staff who may board your vehicle to monitor the operation of the service.
- **Your duties do not end until the last passenger is safely in the care of their parents/carers or the school.**



PASSENGER ASSISTANTS

This section lists the major requirements of the contract as they affect **Passenger Assistants**, and sets out minimum requirements to ensure passengers are safe and enjoy their journey procedures for dealing with any incidents that occur on the journey. PAs play a vital role in creating and maintaining a supportive, safe and fun environment in which children travel.

- You are responsible for the safety and care of your passengers whilst in transit to and from the school/unit. The journey is an important part of the children's day, so it should be made as enjoyable as possible.
- Passenger management in the vehicle is your responsibility, the driver must be allowed to concentrate solely on driving the vehicle.
- You must always maintain a courteous and professional relationship with passengers, parents, carers, other drivers and passenger assistants, school and unit staff and other members of the public, as the image you project reflects on AfC and/or LBS.
- You must be able to interact with, respond to and calmly reassure Passengers with special needs in a positive and sensitive manner.
- You must be able to liaise competently and effectively with Parents/Carers and school/unit staff. You must be able to understand your passengers and their Parents/Carers and be understood by them.
- You must not smoke (this includes all E cigarettes and smoking aids) whilst on duty, either in transit or whilst waiting for passengers to board. Sutton and AfC operate a no-smoking policy on all sites including schools, buildings and in company vehicles. Many schools/units operate a perimeter around their gates where they politely request people not to smoke as the fumes can affect the health and well-being of the pupils attending there. Do not smoke in these areas.
- Personal mobile phones/tablets/watches and personal gadgets should be switched off and no personal call or texts should be made whilst on duty.
- You must not consume food or drinks within the vehicle.
- It is compulsory to wear high – visibility waistcoat/jacket at all times whilst on duty outside the vehicle.
- If you are unable to report for duty, you must immediately inform your transport company to ensure your route can be covered. Make sure you know what times you need to let your transport company know by.
- You must wear a company identity (ID) badge. You will need to wear your ID badge at all times whilst on duty and you must show it whenever a request is made by parents, carers, schools/units or the client.
- If you lose your ID Badge, you must inform your employer immediately. You will not be allowed to work on any of the routes until a replacement badge has been issued.
- You must return your ID badge to the employer if you stop working for the company that provides the route.
- You must make sure you are ready, waiting and on time in the morning and afternoon when your driver arrives at your pick up point to start your route.

- You must co-operate with and be polite to any Sutton or AfC staff who may board your vehicle to monitor the operation of the service.
- All incidents which occur in transit should be recorded on the appropriate **Incident Report Sheet**. The information you record is confidential and must not be disclosed to unauthorised personnel. You must hand any reports into the relevant Transport Office within 24 hours of the incident taking place.
- If a child has sustained an injury due to an incident on board the vehicle, you must call the relevant Transport Office immediately for advice.
- Only authorised passengers may be carried on the vehicle. You will have a register and details of pick up points for the route. On each occasion, you must check the passengers boarding the vehicle are authorised to do so.
- **Your duties do not end until the last passenger is safely in the care of their parents/carers or the school.**



THE VEHICLE

- Your vehicle must be clean internally and externally and the interior must be kept in a tidy state at all times.
- Drivers must complete a daily walk around inspection of their vehicle and complete a daily defect sheet.
- Your vehicle must be road worthy in accordance with the requirements for that type of vehicle laid down by Transport for London.
- The windows of the vehicles must be functional, kept clean and afford the passengers a good view of the outside environment at all times.
- The temperature and ventilation in the vehicle must be at a level which is comfortable for the passengers in all weathers.



KEEPING CHILDREN SAFE ON THE JOURNEY

The safety of passengers in your care is the responsibility of both Drivers and Pas. The children that you provide transport for are vulnerable and you must put their needs first and ensure they arrive at their destination in a clam state.

- You must never knowingly drive an un-roadworthy vehicle on the public highway at any time.
- You must comply with all National Passenger Service Vehicle regulations relating to your conduct and the operation of the vehicle you are driving. You must always carry out a daily walk around check of your vehicle and report any defects to the office immediately so that they can be rectified.

- Either the Driver or PA must have received and understood basic first aid training covering common health conditions. You must carry an in date first aid kit in your vehicle.
- Any vehicle transporting passengers who use a wheelchair shall adhere to WOTRS standards for the appropriate use of securing and restraining wheelchairs in motor vehicles used to transport wheelchairs. Wheelchair tie-down and occupant restraint systems must meet **ISO 10542** requirements.
- Where the vehicle is transporting passengers in an appropriately secured wheelchair, the vehicle should carry belt cutters to free the passenger in case of an emergency.
- UK law states that children must use a child car seat until they're 12 years old or 135cm/4ft 5in tall, whichever comes first. All Vehicles must have the correct child seats for the height of the child they are transporting. Only EU-approved height-based child car seats can be used in the UK. These have a label showing a capital 'E' in a circle and 'R129'. These seats must be secured using ISOFIX if available or at a minimum according to the manufacturer's guidelines. Car seats must be High-backed Booster seats unless agreed by the Sutton or AfC Transport Team. Car seats should be clean, regularly inspected for wear and damage, and replaced as necessary.
- Children who are not using a child seat must use an adult seat belt without exception.
- Vehicles must not enter school grounds unless authorised to do so.
- You must not exceed 5 mph when in any school grounds.
- You must only transport the named individuals you have been instructed to. Under no circumstance should any other person(s) be transported at the same time as the named passengers unless specifically directed to by the Contracting Body.
- Passengers are only allowed to leave the vehicle at the agreed dropping-off point. You must not drop them off at any other location without prior permission from the Sutton or AfC Transport Office.
- If a pupil has keys to access their home address, you must see one of the parents/carers present at the house before you can leave the child at the address unless parents/carers have already provided the Sutton or AfC Transport Office with permission for them to do this. **Please check with the relevant office if you are unsure.**
- Either the Driver or PA should be aware of the procedure if the parent/carer of any passenger are not home when the transport arrives at the passenger's home after school. If parents/carers are not home when you arrive you must follow the relevant Sutton or AfC procedure.
- Under no circumstances must any passenger be lifted or carried physically onto or off a vehicle by the passenger assistant or driver. If a passenger cannot board the vehicle by any means other than being lifted manually, then that passenger is not to travel on that occasion. Only with prior permission from AfC are parents/carers allowed to lift a child onto the vehicle. If any attempt is made by anyone to lift a passenger onto a vehicle, the crew must alert the AfC depot office. **Only in an emergency situation can passengers be lifted on/off a vehicle.**
- If the behaviour of any passenger causes you concern, you must immediately report the matter to the Head Teacher or the unit manager. You must never use physical force or offensive language to manage the situation, as the image you project reflects on AfC or LBS. In all cases you must inform the office of any behavioural difficulties which you have observed by means of an incident report. The incident report must be submitted within 24 hours of the incident taking place.

- If the behaviour of a passenger becomes unmanageable soon after the morning collection and you are still near their home address, you should stop your vehicle and report the incident to the office staff, who may advise you to return the pupil to their home address. If you're more than halfway between the passenger's home and the school, then you should continue to the school or unit and immediately report the incident to the Head Teacher or the school/unit office.
- With regards to continuous behaviour of any passenger which causes you concern, a joint approach between AfC/LBS, parent/carers and the school/unit will be used.

THE JOURNEY



- You must approach each pick up/drop off point slowly and carefully, particularly if groups of passengers are standing together. Passengers may only be allowed to board or alight when the doors of the vehicle are opened adjacent to the kerb.
- If the vehicle runs late by more than ten minutes you must contact the Sutton or AfC Transport Team to inform them so that they can contact the parents/carers and schools/units accordingly.
- The vehicle must run to the scheduled times. If the vehicle is running early it must wait until the scheduled time before departure to the next (or final) destination.
- When collecting pupils, the vehicle must wait three minutes after the scheduled pick-up time, you must ring the Sutton or AfC Transport Team for permission to move on.
- If any parents/carers frequently keep the vehicle waiting or fail to meet the vehicle, this should be reported to the Sutton or AfC Transport Team. If a child is not at the pick up point the office must be informed.
- Where a vehicle collects a passenger from a home address, the parents/carers are responsible for accompanying the passenger to/from the vehicle.
- If there is a passenger assistant, they are responsible for keeping passengers who are already seated in the vehicle under constant supervision.
- The passenger assistant will be expected to help passengers in and out of the vehicle and take all reasonable precautions to ensure their safety before and after they have alighted.
- School staff will be expected to deliver and receive passengers at pick up and drop off.
- The Driver/Passenger Assistant is responsible for ensuring Passengers board and leave the vehicle in an orderly manner.
- From time to time (such as in the case of extreme weather conditions) it may not be possible for you to operate the service normally. In this case you should contact your transport company's office for advice on the running of your route.
- The route must not be altered, particularly in respect of pick-up or drop off locations, or scheduled times without the prior permission of the Sutton or AfC Transport Team.
- If the vehicle arrives at the school/unit before the official starting time, you must keep the passengers on the vehicle under your supervision until a member of staff is ready to receive them.
- If a child is considered to be unwell on arrival at school, you must inform the appropriate school staff, contact your transport company's office and await further instructions. You may be required to return this child to their home address (or to the address of an emergency contact).

- Before leaving the school/unit on the homeward journey, the Driver/Passenger Assistant must make sure all the passengers who were delivered in the morning have been accounted for.



ACCIDENTS AND BREAK DOWNS

If a major accident occurs

- **Do not move** a passenger if he/she is seriously injured **unless there is further risk from fire or accident.**
- Many of the young people we transport may not be able to assess their own injuries effectively, so if you are in any way unsure of their injuries, please do not move them **unless there is further risk from fire or accident**, but do ensure they are comfortable and warm.
- An ambulance must be called in **the event of any accident.**
- Ensure that each passenger is thoroughly checked by ambulance paramedics before a decision is taken to move them.
- If a passer-by offers to assist, do not refuse their assistance, but also do not allow them to have unsupervised contact with the passengers.
- Inform your transport company if an accident has occurred; they will make the necessary arrangements to contact the schools/units and the passengers' parents/carers. Where necessary an alternative vehicle will be provided. **Useful contact numbers are provided at the back of this booklet.**
- In the event of an accident conduct yourself in a professional manner and remember that you are representing LBS or AfC.
- Do not make any comments about whom you think was responsible for the accident to other parties.
- You are required to write an incident report. This incident report is to be sent to your transport company who will be required to submit this to the Sutton or AfC Transport Team within 24 hours of the accident.
- All accidents, no matter how minor, must be reported to your transport company without delay as the accident may have an effect on the child's physical or emotional well-being. Your transport company will inform the Sutton or AfC Transport team.
- You are required to attend first-aid training, followed by a refresher course at least once every three years so that you can provide emergency aid in case of an accident.
- If your vehicle breaks down the driver is responsible for the vehicle.

EVACUATION IN THE CASE OF ACCIDENT



- Where possible, passengers must be made aware of the procedure for the speedy and orderly evacuation of the vehicle in the event of an emergency.
- Move to the centre aisle (where appropriate) and leave the vehicle as quickly as possible, but without running.
- Leave all belongings on the vehicle.
- Assemble as quickly as possible at a point which is a safe distance from the vehicle where there is no danger from traffic or other hazards.
- Remain at this point until directed otherwise by an authorised person.
- The Driver or the Passenger Assistant must phone the transport company as soon as possible to inform them of the situation and await further instructions.



VEHICLE BREAKDOWN

- In the event of a vehicle problem pull the vehicle over safely and turn off the engine if it is safe to do so.
- Ensure that you switch on hazard lights and place a warning triangle if you have one.
- Contact the transport company to advise them of the situation. They will liaise with you to have a replacement vehicle sent.
- Assess the safety of the passengers and if you feel they are at risk by remaining in the vehicle then follow the evacuation procedure below.

MEDICAL EMERGENCIES



- In the event of a medical emergency taking place on board transport the Driver should stop the bus so that they/the Passenger Assistant has an opportunity to calmly assess the situation.
- If there is a Passenger Assistant on the route, they should take on the role of the main carer for the pupil with the medical condition
- It should be clearly agreed between the Driver and Passenger Assistant as to who will telephone to alert the transport company.
- Remember other passengers may be anxious about a medical situation, so it is important that the situation is explained to them using words and phrases they will understand.

- If any of the passengers travelling have epilepsy then the Driver or Passenger Assistant should have training relevant to dealing with seizures and follow recognised medical advice.



STAFF ILLNESS

- In the event that you are taken ill at the wheel you should try to pull the vehicle over safely and turn off the engine. If you are travelling with a Passenger Assistant, they must be aware of how to switch the engine off, so please ensure that you have instructed them in this.
- Contact the transport company to advise them of the situation. They will liaise with your company to have a replacement Driver or Vehicle sent.



PARENT NOT HOME

- In cases where you arrive at the home of the passenger and their parent/carer is not home you must follow the procedure relevant to either AfC or LBS. You should be aware of this procedure before you start the route and have relevant documentation in the vehicle for completion.