

Notes of Guidance for students and parents/guardians entitled to school and social care transport



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These notes of guidance provide general information on all transport services that Essex County Council provides to schools and social care establishments and therefore not all conditions mentioned may apply to your individual circumstances. In particular, references to passes only apply to mainstream secondary school transport and references to Passenger Assistants only apply to the contracts where they have been provided i.e. some transport to primary/infant schools and where students have certain special needs.

Should you need any further information please contact us using the details on the back cover of this booklet.

Essex County Council wants the journey to school/social care establishment to be as safe and pleasant an experience as possible and we consistently promote this ethos with drivers and Passenger Assistants.

The role of the student and parent/guardian is important too. Following these simple rules will assist with keeping all those on board the vehicle and other road users as safe as possible.

When can a student travel?

- Parents/Guardians are responsible for ensuring that an application has been made to Essex County Council for their child to be provided with transport. Students will not be able to travel until Essex County Council has sent their written confirmation of the transport arrangements.

How should students get to and from the pick up point / drop off point?

- Parents/Guardians are responsible for the safety and behaviour of their children and therefore must ensure that students know how to get to and from the vehicle safely and in time for the arrival of the vehicle.
- Students should wait for the vehicle sensibly without inconveniencing local residents or businesses.
- They must ensure that they are familiar with a safe procedure for getting to and from the designated pick up/drop off point and ask their parent/guardian for advice should there be any concerns. Students should aim to be at the stop 5 minutes before the scheduled departure time of the vehicle shown on the timetable.

What should students do when the vehicle arrives?

- Secondary school/college students travelling on a bus or coach must make sure that they have their pass before leaving home. When the vehicle arrives they need to have the pass ready and show it to the driver when boarding the vehicle.
- When on board the vehicle students should immediately find a seat. Where seat belts are provided they must be worn.
- Put bags under the seat as they will be safer there and will not obstruct the walkway.

What should you do if you have been sent a bus pass but you have lost it / it is damaged / you don't need it anymore?

- Remember, the driver is not allowed to let students travel without a pass, so always carry it with you.
- Please make sure that alternative travel arrangements are available if a student is unable to board the vehicle. We appreciate that there may not be anyone at home so to cover this eventuality parents/guardians should make sure their child is aware of who they should contact in the event they are refused access to the bus or for any other emergency.

- If a pass is lost or damaged it will need to be replaced. You need to contact the operator to order a permanent replacement pass. A fee may be charged. The operator may advise you to contact the school to arrange a temporary ticket in the interim.
- If a pass is no longer needed it should be returned to the operator.

What should students do if the vehicle is late?

- In the event of the transport running late, students should wait at the pick up point for 30 minutes before making alternative transport arrangements for getting into school.
- For emergency purposes, students and parents/guardians should ensure that they have the telephone number of the operator that performs the contract. This information is shown on the initial letter sent from this office.
- In the event of an emergency, such as a breakdown, the driver will judge whether it is better for the student to stay on board or leave the vehicle. Students should always follow the instructions given by the driver and should not leave the vehicle without the permission of the driver.
- If any student leaves the vehicle against the driver's advice, they do so at their own risk.

What are students allowed to do on the vehicle and what happens if students are disruptive?

- Parents/guardians are responsible for the students' safety and behaviour before they get on the vehicle, during the journey and after they leave the vehicle. They will be informed if students harass or bully others, fight, are offensive, cause vandalism or throw objects. If students cause damage to the vehicle or other property the cost of repairing the damage will be charged to parents/guardians. Remember students will lose their right to use the school transport if they misbehave and parents/guardians may have to pay for alternative transport.
- We want students to enjoy their journey to school. However, parents/guardians should encourage their child to refrain from distracting the driver as this could put passengers and other road users at risk.

- Not all vehicles have seatbelts fitted. Therefore, for the health and safety of all passengers, please impress upon your child the importance of remaining seated throughout the journey.
- We aim to encourage good behaviour. If there are any concerns regarding the behaviour of other students, please report them.
- The consumption of food or drink is not allowed in the vehicle unless specifically authorised. If there is litter it should be disposed of in a responsible manner by the student.
- Smoking is not allowed on any vehicle.
- Students should never try to operate doors on buses/coaches unless it is an emergency.
- Do not get up from a seat until the vehicle has stopped moving and remember to take personal belongings with you.
- Should there be any concerns about the transport or equipment which is provided, please contact Essex County Council.

If your child's contract runs with an Essex County Council Passenger Assistant, what are the Passenger Assistant's duties and how can you work with them to make the journey as safe and enjoyable as possible?

- If a Passenger Assistant is provided on the vehicle they will work together with the driver and aim to provide an enjoyable and safe journey to and from school.
- Parents/guardians have a duty to ensure that a responsible person takes and collects their child to and from the pick up/drop off point at the times stated on the timetable provided by this office or the operator. The Passenger Assistant's duties are confined to on board the vehicle. They do not include any responsibility to accompany the student to/from the vehicle unless special arrangements have been agreed.
- If someone is to replace the usual person who receives your child at the end of the day, please inform the driver/Passenger Assistant beforehand.
- If there is need to make a change during the day, inform the school at once. If a nominated adult is not available to take care of the student the driver may take him/her, for their own safety, to a local police station or social services establishment.
- Once the vehicle arrives the student should find a seat immediately. Where seat belts are provided they must be worn.

- If a student has a problem on a particular day please make the Passenger Assistant aware, but students should not be sent to school if they are not well enough to travel.
- Any medication to be taken during the school day can be handed to the Passenger Assistant for safe keeping on the journey, but do not ask or expect the Passenger assistant to administer medication (unless written permission has been provided by Essex County Council).
- The driver and Passenger Assistant will avoid leaving the vehicle when any student is still on board. Unless otherwise specifically instructed, the Passenger Assistant's duties are restricted to the supervision of the students on the vehicle. They should not walk children home or be expected to escort children across roads.
- Passenger Assistants should have an Essex County Council identification badge which shows their name and the name of the company they work for.
- If the student's address changes, Essex County Council should be informed as soon as possible to avoid unnecessary delay to the provision of new transport arrangements. The driver and/or Passenger Assistant are not permitted to change pick up points or route unless instructed to do so by Essex County Council.
- Any bus pass that is no longer required must be returned to the operator for cancellation.

For further information please contact the Passenger Transport Co-ordination Centre.

This booklet is issued by
Essex County Council
Passenger Transport Co-ordination Centre

You can contact us in the following ways

By telephone:
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By email:
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By post:
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Visit our website:
www.essex.gov.uk/publictransport

The information in this document can be translated or made available in alternative formats on request.

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