

READ SCHOOL SCHOOL TRANSPORT SAFEGUARDING POLICY

This policy has been created to support and promote the safe and sustainable home-to-school transportation of pupils, as well as school-organised travel, and to highlight good practice and provide equal opportunities for all pupils. This policy should be adhered to by all staff members, pupils, parents, and volunteers. The School Transport Safeguarding Policy should be read in conjunction with other Read School policies. This policy ensures staff, pupils and contractors are free from any potential risks and enables vulnerable persons who may be at risk to be identified.

Read School:

- Is committed to ensuring the safety and well-being of pupils;
- Ensures transport services are provided by duly trained and accredited persons;
- Ensures vehicles used to convey pupils are safe and correctly maintained.
- Recognises that additional support may be required for the transport of pupils with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND);
- Enforces pupil behaviour expectations via the pupil bus service agreement;
- Protects students from harm and has a duty to report matters of concern that could relate to the safety and/or welfare of children and vulnerable persons to the DSL and if necessary to the relevant authorities.

1. Legal Framework

It is the intention of this policy to comply with the statutory requirements of the Education Act 1996 updated by the Education and Inspections Act 2006. The policy set out in this document became applicable to children of primary school age on or after 1 September 2007 and to secondary school age pupils on or after 1 September 2008. In supporting the guidelines outlined in the policy, Read School works in partnership with licensing authorities and contractors to maintain safeguarding standards and achieve the best possible outcomes in delivering transport services for vulnerable young people

1.1 This policy has due regard to legislation and guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- Road Traffic Act 1988 (as amended)
- Motor Vehicles (Driving Licences) Regulations 1999 (as amended)
- Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974
- Equality Act 2010
- DfE (2014) 'Home to school travel and transport guidance'

1.2 This policy will be implemented in conjunction with the following School policies, documents and procedures:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Policy
- First Aid Policy
- Behavioural Policy
- Transport Policy
- Educational Visits and School Trips Policy
- Pupil Accident Log
- Staff Code of Conduct

2. The Disclosure and Barring Service

The Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) provides access to criminal record information through its disclosure service for England and Wales. The DBS also maintains the lists of individuals barred from working in regulated activity with children or adults. The DBS makes independent barring decisions about people who have harmed, or where they are considered to pose a risk of harm to a child or vulnerable person within the workplace. The DBS enables organisations in the public, private and voluntary sectors to make safer employment decisions by identifying candidates who may be unsuitable for certain work, especially that which involves vulnerable groups including children. Licensing authorities are entitled to request an enhanced criminal record certificate with check of the barred lists from the DBS for all driver licence holders or applicants.

The School ensures that the required safeguarding and suitability checks on the drivers of vehicles providing dedicated home to school transport have been undertaken. This role is considered to be regulated activity, which means some people are barred from doing it. Therefore, where transportation is being organised by the School, we ensure the relevant checks have been done.

DBS checks are completed by the Head's PA at the start of employment and Staff Disqualification Declaration is completed annually with copies retained in staff files.

Where an external contractor is being used, copies of driver DBS are maintained by the Bursar.

3. Safeguarding Awareness

The School should consider the role that bus drivers can play in spotting and reporting the abuse, exploitation, or neglect of children and vulnerable people. All Read School bus drivers are required to undertake safeguarding training on an annual basis, as directed by the DSL. Completion of all safeguarding training is logged on the School's Safeguarding training register.

These programmes have been developed to help drivers:

- Provide a safe and suitable service to passengers of all ages;
- Recognise what makes a person vulnerable; and
- Understand how to respond, including how to report safeguarding concerns and where to get advice.

4. Driver Training

The School ensures that drivers of vehicles providing dedicated home-to-school transport have undertaken appropriate training and that this is kept up to date.

This training should include (but is not restricted to):

- Annual retraining on the School Transport Safeguarding Policy (with driver sign off)
- The handling of emergency situations, including when to contact the emergency services.
- Training in recognising, supporting, and managing children with different types of disabilities and behaviour that may be associated with such disabilities.

Drivers (or any person) should be aware of what to do if they believe a child or vulnerable person is at risk of harm. If the risk is immediate they should contact the police otherwise they should:

- Follow the School's safeguarding procedures, the first step of which is to contact the DSL within the School.
- Call Crime Stoppers on 0800 555 111

5. Late Collection

Staff and parents/carers must work together to ensure pupils are safe. It is made clear in the Read School Bus Service Agreement that the School should be notified immediately should it become apparent that the person collecting will be late or not present at the transport destination address.

In the event of late collection or a responsible person not available, the pupil / mini bus driver will make the situation known to a member of staff and be supervised. Following this, we will attempt to contact the parents at the phone numbers provided to the School. If this is unsuccessful, we will attempt to contact the emergency contacts.

The School will keep a record of incidents where parents are late/unavailable for no explained or good reason, or where there are repeated incidents.

If a parent/carer wishes for their child to be collected by another party who does not have parental responsibility, whether this is a regular occurrence or a single occurrence, this must be put in writing.

In an emergency, verbal consent may be given for an agreed person to take their child home / or taken to an alternative known address. A password may be requested to be used by both parties to ensure the identity of the person.

6. Non-collection

In the event a student is not collected by an authorised adult or available for handover from transportation and no contact has been established within forty-five minutes to one hour of the usual collection time, the School will follow child protection procedures and the DSL will be informed. The child will be brought back to School and will await parent collection in the Boarding House. If a child is not collected the Police will be informed and a safeguarding referral to Children's Services may be made.

Under no circumstances will staff go to look for the parent or take the child home with them.

A letter will be sent to the parents notifying them of the existing arrangements in place and inviting them to discuss any changes that need to be made. It is important that the School and parents/carers do everything possible to avoid a recurrence of the situation.

7. Late Departure

The School and its staff owe a duty of care to its students and parents to ensure that our home to school transport runs to a regular timetable.

In the event that for any reason our transport is late, at the earliest opportunity the driver must contact the Bursar or Head to advise why the transport is late and give an indication of how far behind the agreed timetable they are running.

Following this, we will attempt to contact parents on the phone numbers provided to the School to advise them of the situation. If this is unsuccessful, we will attempt to contact the emergency contacts.

8. Breakdown of Mini Buses

In the event that, for any reason a mini bus suffers mechanical or other fault such that it is incapable of being driven, the Bursar or Head should be made aware of this immediately.

We will then need to arrange alternative transport provision by contacting the list of approved third party transport companies to see if anyone has availability. Once alternative transport has been arranged, we must contact the affected parents on the phone numbers provided to the School to advise that a third-party transport company will be operating the route, check that the parents are happy with that before the bus leaves the School site and, if required, make alternative arrangements with the parents from them to collect their children if they so wish.

Students on the bus should be told that they will be taken, and the driver should escort all students to the Boarding House. Under no circumstances should a student be left unattended on or asked to wait anywhere other than the Boarding House. This will be considered a serious breach of the School's safeguarding policies and may lead to disciplinary action being taken.

9. Mini Bus Registers

All drivers will be provided with a register of expected passengers for that day's transportation. The Bursar is responsible for preparing these registers and should also notify drivers of any changes that may occur throughout the day (i.e. a student has left school early due to illness, or an additional student has been booked on to the bus).

All drivers must check before leaving a destination that all expected passengers are present and mark the register accordingly.

An additional register of all bus passengers is taken by the Bursar or a designated member of staff prior to departure. The alternative designated members of staff include the Deputy Head, Head and DSL.

Home to school journeys

In the event that an expected passenger is not at the scheduled home stop, the driver should first contact the Bursar to double-check that a pickup is expected. Up-to-date copies of home-to-school transportation lists are kept on the School Shared Drive.

If pick up has been booked, the driver should then contact the parents on the phone number provided to the School to establish if pick up is still required.

In the event of parents contacting either the Bursar or driver to advise that a pupil who had booked for that day's transport but now will not be using it, due to illness or any other reason, that fact must be communicated to the other person and the absence should be noted on the register.

Homeward journeys

For homeward journeys, all drivers must ensure that they have all expected passengers recorded on their register before they leave the School site. An additional register will be taken by the Bursar or other SLT member (Deputy Head or Head) to confirm that all pupils are safely on the bus.

If an expected passenger is missing, we will then try to locate the pupil and ensure that they get to the bus. In such instances, the driver should not leave the School site without the express permission of either the Bursar or other SLT member.

If the bus is therefore late in departing the School, parents should then be contacted on the phone numbers provided to the School to advise of the delay and the expected arrival time.

In the event that, when completing the register, a driver establishes that they have a pupil on their bus that they were not expecting, the driver should contact the Bursar to seek confirmation that this expected. If not, then we should contact the pupil's parents to seek permission that they are happy for their child to use the transport.

If the pupil concerned is not confirmed as being booked on the transport, then the Bursar should escort the pupil to the Boarding House where they must wait until alternative transport arrangements have been made.

Under no circumstances should a driver leave the School site without first confirming that additional students have been booked on to that journey and given express permission by the Bursar to depart.

On occasion, boarding students are allowed to use the School's transport services to attend out of School activities. If a driver is unsure that this has been allowed, they should contact the Bursar. The Bursar may need to consult a member of staff from the Boarding House in order to confirm that this travel has been approved.

Under no circumstances should a boarding student be given priority to transport over a pupil who has pre-booked a seat. If this arises, then the boarding pupil should be asked to return to the Boarding House.

10. Vehicle & Pupil Safety

Mini buses and coaches used to take children to and from school are public service vehicles. This means they are subject to specific legislation on safety standards.

Pupil safety and welfare is of paramount importance to the School and the School must satisfy itself that the vehicles used are appropriate for the types of journeys planned. Great care is taken in the maintenance and upkeep of the school minibuses and a rigorous preventative maintenance schedule is followed.

Seat Belt wearing

All pupils are required to wear a seat belt throughout the journey and are not permitted to un-belt before the destination is reached. It is recognised that passengers over the age of 14 years in smaller minibuses are legally responsible for wearing a seat belt while under the age of 14 years, it is the legal responsibility of the driver.

The Bursar and Deputy Head ensure that all pupils using the school bus service have signed the School's Behaviour Code of Conduct which emphasises the need for all pupils to feel safe and secure while travelling on a school bus. This includes following driver instructions, behaving properly at all times, wearing a seatbelt and treating fellow passengers with respect and consideration.

In the event of an incident where a seatbelt is not worn, this is investigated by the Deputy Head and treated as a behaviour infraction. Persistent offenders will be sanctioned and the pupil's place on the school bus may be withdrawn.

To support the driver in the safe monitoring of seat belt wearing while the bus is in motion, **cameras are installed on the school buses**. Parents will be advised via the Home to School Transport Agreement that CCTV cameras are installed on the buses and details of data storage are covered in the School's CCTV Policy.

11. Driver Selection

The utmost care is taken in selecting our drivers who understand the School's requirements and who have proven reliability.

Bus drivers must be able to converse orally and in writing in English to a standard that would be reasonably expected of a person undertaking a role as a passenger carrier vehicle (PCV). This includes the ability:

- To clearly understand guidance and instructions;
- To support vulnerable persons;
- To act on the instruction of officials e.g. emergency service personnel;
- To produce written reports e.g. accident or incident reports;
- Present evidence to e.g. public inquiries or courts.

All school bus drivers must meet the DVLA section 88 criteria and meet the medical standards of fitness to drive.

12. Identity Badges

All drivers and passenger assistants must wear their Read School issued identity badge visibly on their person at all times during the operation of contracted transport.

All staff must have been enhanced DBS cleared and have successfully completed safeguarding training before an appointment is made and a school ID badge. Badges will remain the property of the School and must be returned at any time upon request to the School.

Review of the Policy

The safe carriage of pupils initiated by Read School is of paramount importance. The policy is consistent with current legislative requirement, best practice, and is formally reviewed every year. However, it will be the subject of continuous evaluation and, if necessary, formally reviewed at any time. At the time of review, all relevant stakeholders will be advised.

Ruth Ainley (Head)
Scott Hunter (Bursar)

Reviewed: August 2025
Next Review: August 2026