



St. Patrick's Junior School

TENNIS COURT LANE, SKERRIES, CO. DUBLIN

K34 D799

Principal: Máire Ní Chróinín

Deputy Principal: Gráinne Connolly

Roll Number: 16333Q

RCN: 20118839

School Transport Policy

Introduction:

St. Patrick's JNS is a junior mainstream primary school with an autism specific special class catering for children of junior primary school age. Some of the children in our autism specific class avail of school transport provided by the Department of Education and Youth. Bus Éireann are responsible for providing this service and subcontract each route out to private transport providers. These children require the support of a bus escort when travelling to and from the school.

This policy should be read in line with terms and conditions of the role of bus escort as determined by the Dept of Education and Youth (DEY). This policy should also be read in conjunction with all relevant school policies, including

- Child Safeguarding Statement
- Parent Teacher Communication Policy

All relevant school policies are available on the school website, www.stps.ie

Rationale:

It was necessary to devise a policy for school transport to:

- Ensure safe and smooth transition on journeys to and from school
- Clarify duties and responsibilities of all involved in relation to same.

Aims:

- To ensure the safety of all on the bus.
- To enhance the journey for all.
- To create and maintain an atmosphere of respect, calmness and order for all.
- To ensure that each individual is aware of his/her responsibilities.
- To establish a system and support structure.

General Guidelines:

Please note:

- All stakeholders (parents, drivers, bus escorts) are entitled to be dealt with and spoken to with respect by all other stakeholders.
- All references in this document to "bus" relate to any and all vehicles engaged to provide school transport.
- School buses must call to collect every student every day unless explicitly told not to by parents/bus escort.
- There should be no eating or drinking on the bus. Where a child is dysregulated getting on the bus they should be provided with a non-food toy or fidget to help them regulate.
- If the driver becomes unavailable the route will be cancelled for that day.
- Where a bus escort gives prior notice of an absence, the school will make every effort to find a substitute bus escort. If a substitute bus escort cannot be found, transport on that route will have to be cancelled for the duration of the absence. It is not possible for the school to provide substitute bus escorts at short notice.



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- The scheduling and sequencing of bus runs and pick up points are subject to change and consequently any arrangements for picking up and setting down bus escorts are subject to change as well.
- School begins in St. Patrick's JNS, Skerries at 8.50 am and finishes at 1.30 pm for Junior & Senior Infants and 2.30 pm for 1st and 2nd class. However, school transport start and finish times may vary according to the needs of individual pupils.
- If a child changes address or pick up and drop off addresses differ, this change must be registered with the NCSE and the DEY by completing and submitting a change of address form (available from the school). Please note this form may take up to six weeks to process.
- If a parent/previously nominated responsible person is not present for drop off the driver will wait two minutes. If the relevant person is still not present, the bus escort will phone them. If the parent/responsible person is not immediately available the driver will continue with the route and bring the child back at the end of the route. If on the second attempt to drop the child off the relevant person is still not available, the bus escort will contact Túsla/Gardaí as appropriate.

Responsibilities of school management

- To employ bus escorts as sanctioned by the Department of Education and Youth
- To submit to the DEY/NCSE as appropriate all school transport applications, change of address forms etc.
- To liaise with NCSE, Bus Éireann, Department officials as necessary for the smooth running of the service
- To ensure compliance with Child Protection Procedures
- To ensure accurate payment of bus escorts and substitute bus escorts

Responsibilities of the Driver

- To drive safely and comply with road traffic and all other relevant legislation at all times.
- To inform the bus escort if the bus or driver is or will be unavailable for the route and for how long they will be unavailable.
- To inform the school of any issues which arise during the route
- To communicate with bus escort to arrange meeting times, routes and drop offs
- To communicate with bus contractor for information on assigned pupils and route details
- To close all doors safely prior to starting the route.

Responsibilities of the parents

- Any person who is nominated by the parents as a person responsible for dropping off/picking up children for school transport is required to fulfil the responsibilities of the parents as set out in this policy.
- To follow the guidance provided in this policy and in general by the school/driver in relation to school transport
- To provide any booster seats, child seats or harness which the child needs for health and safety in the taxi.
- To be present and ready on time for pick up and drop off to ensure the timely running of the bus route. Please note, A driver with only one child in the bus / taxi on a particular

route may also be covering a different route before or afterwards, which also needs to operate on time.

- To contact the Bus Escort if their child will not be availing of transport on a particular day.
- At drop off, to bring the child to the bus, sit them into the bus and secure their seat belts.
 - Exceptions are made to this requirement where a parent is temporarily or permanently unable to bend, stretch or take a child's weight. However, in these cases the parent must still bring the child to the door of the bus on pick up and confirm that the bus escort has fastened the child's seat belt appropriately.
- At pick up, to come to the door of the bus, remove their child's seat belts and bring the child and any booster seats, school bag etc., out of the bus.
 - Exceptions are made to this requirement where a parent is temporarily or permanently unable to bend, stretch or take a child's weight. However, in these cases the parent must still come to the door of the bus on pick up and be ready to receive the child and their belongings as soon as the bus escort has opened their seat belt and helped them out of the bus.

Responsibilities of the Bus escort

- The Bus escort is required to join the bus at the school before the run starts. However, where no extra cost is involved and with the agreement of both parties, the bus escort may be picked up along the route of the bus, or at an agreed convenient location.
- The Bus escort must always be on the bus before the first student boards the bus.
- The Bus escort is responsible for maintaining good order and a happy atmosphere on the bus.
- The Bus escort will keep a list of all students with all relevant contact numbers and this will be available on each bus.
- Should there be an urgent need to stop the bus, the bus escort should advise the driver, who will stop at the nearest safe place.
- Bus escorts are required to work each day the school is open.
- The Bus escort is responsible for alerting the parents and the school if the bus route is unavailable on any given morning/afternoon.
- If there is a long delay during the run the bus escort will contact the school (mornings) or the parents (afternoons).
- If a pupil is not attending school, the parent should contact the bus escort to make them aware of this. The Bus escort then communicates this to the bus driver.
- The bus escort ensures the safety of students when doors are being opened and closed prior to stopping and moving off.
- The bus escort ensures that all students are safely seated with appropriate seat belts, straps and/or harnesses where provided.
- The bus escort ensures that each student is received by a staff member at school in the morning and by a responsible person at the set down point in the afternoon.
- The bus escort follows the school's School Transport Policy.
- Before beginning to work with any new child, the bus escort will familiarise themselves with the care needs (and medical needs, where relevant) of the child.
- The bus escort will be aware of particular needs of students on the bus and how to deal with same e.g. some students with autism may need to sit on the same seat each day; a child might need a particular fidget toy for regulation.

- The Bus escort's seat on the bus should be such as to facilitate maximum supervision of all students. Unless there are exceptional circumstances the Bus escort should not move away from the vicinity of the bus while working the route.
- Where relevant, the bus escort should take responsibility for any medication going from home to school and school to home e.g. give medication to relevant person; ensure that medication is clearly marked with student's name. Medication should not be left where it could be accessed by other students.
- The bus escort must ensure personal belongings are not misplaced, e.g. in some cases students' belongings may need to be handed to school staff.
- The bus escort will observe confidentiality in all aspects of work.
- The bus escort will be aware of and use positive behaviour strategies
- The bus escort will report any concerns about the physical state of the bus to the Bus Driver.
- The bus escort will report all concerns to the Principal.
- The bus escort will perform any other duties relevant to the position of bus escort which may be assigned by the Principal from time to time.

This policy will be reviewed in three years from the date of approval, or earlier if a change to the school transport scheme or school situation requires it.

Signed: V-Rev. Fr. Melvyn Mullins Date: 22/09/25
 Very Rev. Fr. Melvyn Mullins,
 Chairperson Board of Management