**Bunscoil na Toirbhirte**

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**Policy for Taxi Escort**

This policy should be read in line with terms and conditions of the role as determined by the Dept of Education and Skills (DES)

**Introductory Statement:**

All references in this document to “taxi” relate to taxies and all other vehicles engaged to provide school transport.

**Rationale:**

It was necessary to devise a policy to:

• Ensure safe and smooth transition on journeys to and from school

• Clarify duties and responsibilities

**Aims:**

1. To ensure the safety of all on the taxi.

2. To enhance the journey for all.

3. To create and maintain an atmosphere of respect, calmness and order for all.

4. To ensure that each individual is aware of his/her responsibilities.

5. To establish a system and support structure.

**Guidelines**

The Escort is required to join the taxi either at the initial starting point of the taxi or from the pick-up point of the first student, whichever is the most convenient or alternatively at an agreed point with the taxi operator. However, where no extra cost is involved, the escort may be picked up along the route of the taxi, provided that he or she is on the taxi at the pickup point of the first student. The scheduling and sequencing of taxi runs and pick up points are subject to change and consequently any arrangements for picking up and setting down escorts are subject to change as well. Payment starts from the first pick up until arrival at the last school and vice versa.

• School taxies must call to collect every student every day unless explicitly told not to by parents/school.

• The taxi driver and the escort work together at all times. The driver has ultimate responsibility to ensure the safety of all on the taxi.

• A list of all students with relevant contact numbers should be available on each taxi.

• School begins in Bunscoil na Toirbhirte at 9am and finishes at 1:40pm for Junior/Senior infants and 2:40pm from 1st to 6th class.

• Should there be an urgent need to stop the taxi, the escort should advise the driver, who will stop at the nearest safe place.

• Escorts are required to work each day the school is open.

• The Escort is expected to attend training which will be provided from time to time.

• On occasion when the school taxi does not operate the taxi driver is responsible for contacting the Escort, to make the Escort aware of the situation. Subsequently the Escort should make contact with the parents and the school. This would also be the situation if there is a long delay enroute.

• Where a student does not come to school in the morning, the parent should make contact with the Escort to make them aware of their plans for the evening service. The Escort can then communicate this to the taxi driver.

• If the school taxi for any reason did not operate in the morning, there will be a service in the afternoon (weather permitting).

• A change of address of a child requires 6 weeks advance notice at least.

**Responsibilities**

**The Driver:**

* safe transport of those on board the bus/ taxi, informing the school for any dangers due to behaviour or for other reasons
* wheels wheelchairs/ buggies up the ramp and secures them safely
* Safe delivery home: if a parent/ guardian is not at home to receive the child in the afternoon, the driver is obliged to leave the child at the nearest Garda Station.

**The Escort**

* To maintain good order and a happy atmosphere on the taxi.
* Ensure that he/she is on the taxi at time of first pick-up and last set down.
* Opening and closing doors of the taxi.
* Safety of students when opening and closing doors prior to stop and move off.
* Assist students to board and alight safely from the school taxi.
* Ensure that all students wear their seat belts.
* Ensure that all students are seated with appropriate straps and harnesses where provided.
* Ensures that each student is received by a staff member at the taxi.
* Ensures that each student is received by a responsible person, where necessary, at the set down point. If in doubt, please consult the Principal.
* Is a model of good, respectful behaviour.
* Follows the school’s Child Protection Policy

**The Parents/Guardians**

* brings the child to the taxi each morning. **Please note that, for safety and insurance reasons, both driver and escort are not allowed to leave the bus to knock on your door or to deliver your child to the door of your home**
* collects the child from the taxi each evening
* Receives the child at the home in the afternoon.
* informs the escort/ driver in advance if their child will not be attending school so the bus does not make a wasted journey
* Informs the escort/ driver in advance if their child will not be returning home on the bus, i.e. when a child is collected from school.

**Duties of an Escort**

* Before beginning to work with any new child, familiarise self with medical needs as well as care needs of the child.
* Be aware of particular needs of students on the taxi and be briefed by the Principal on how to deal with same e.g. some students with autism may need to sit on the same seat each day.
* Supervision of all students travelling on taxi. This means that when there are students on the taxi the escort should remain at the taxi to receive a student from parent/staff member. **Unless there are exceptional circumstances the Escort should not move away from the vicinity of the taxi while students, under their care, remain on board.**
* The Escort’s position on the taxi should be such as to facilitate maximum supervision of all students.
* Maintain a good working relationship with the driver of the taxi
* Act as liaison between Principals and parents when requested.
* Where relevant, 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 in bags where it could be accessed by other students.
* Act as a liaison as required for conveyance of messages and letters between home and school and vice versa. Escort must ensure personal belongings are not misplaced, e.g. in some cases students’ belongings may need to be handed to school staff.
* Observe confidentiality in all aspects of work.
* Be aware and use positive behaviour strategies.
* Report any concerns about the taxi to the Taxi Driver.
* Report all concerns to the Principal.
* Be aware of and use positive behaviour strategies.
* Perform any other duties relevant to the position of escort which may be assigned by the Principal from time to time.
* Informing the Driver when all pupils have been safely seated before the vehicle sets off.
* Making sure that doors are closed and if possible locked before the vehicle starts to move.
* Making sure that the pupils on arrival at school are handed over to a member of school staff .On no account should a child be left unattended in a vehicle
* When collecting pupils from school you must ensure that they are escorted to the vehicle after the staff have handed over pupil(s) to your care, once in the vehicle with a pupil(s) you should remain there to receive any other pupils that are to be taken home.
* On the return journey it is imperative that pupils are only taken to their home address unless escorts have been instructed otherwise by the Services for Children and Young People, Special Educational Needs Service Unit. It is important not to leave a pupil with neighbours.
* Making sure that all bags are stored safely e.g. placed under the seats.
* Making sure that all medication and any information from parents is handed to a member of staff at the School.
* Under no circumstances should children be left unattended in the vehicle.
* Escorts are required not to smoke on the vehicle whilst transporting children.

The duties of the escorts do not include loading and unloading of wheelchairs. This is the sole responsibility of the driver and the escort should remain on the vehicle. Generally the escort should consider the safety of the pupils he/she is travelling with at all times as the prime consideration.

**Escort Sickness**

In the event of sickness the following procedure should be followed:

* The transport company/ driver must be notified immediately by the escort
* The School must be notified of sickness by the escort as soon as possible so that a replacement escort can be found as soon as possible.
* The school will forward payment to the substitute escort. It is unacceptable for any escort to make arrangements to forward the payment to their friend in lieu of work carried out on their absence.
* The appropriate certification for sick leave should be supplied by the bus escort, i.e. Doctor's Note or a self-certification form.
* The School and transport company should be kept informed of escort absences from work and notified prior to your return to work.

**Leave of Absence**

* Leave of absence will not be granted except in exceptional circumstances and Escorts should make a written request to the principal well in advance. Each request will be assessed individually on its own merit.
* Escorts booking holidays during the school term will not be granted leave of absence retrospectively.

This policy was revised by the staff in consultation with the parents. This policy ratified by the Board of Management at a meeting on the 22/09/2022. This policy will be reviewed every two years.

Signed:

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Patrick Mullins

(Patrick Mullins, Chairperson B.O.M.)