

SCHEDULE 4**CODE OF PRACTICE****MARCH 2022****TRANSPORT SERVICES TEAM**

This Code of Practice should be read by all Suppliers, Drivers and Passenger Assistants involved in transport operations on behalf of West Berkshire Council's Transport Services and the Conditions of Contract.

The Code provides guidance to ensure the safe and effective provision of transport in accordance with the statutory duties, responsibilities and policies of West Berkshire Council.

This Code of Practice has been produced by the

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GUIDANCE FOR SUPPLIERS

- 1.** As the Supplier, you are responsible for ensuring that the Contract is at all times operated in accordance with both the Conditions of Contract and the Code of Practice, and should ensure that you and your staff are familiar with these documents.
- 2.** Ensure that the phone numbers of the Supplier, the establishment served and the Council are kept in the vehicle for contact in an emergency, and that contact numbers for vulnerable passengers are available only whilst the Service is in operation. Passenger contact details must be kept securely at all times.
- 3.** Ensure that vehicles carry the route schedule, the Code of Practice and all relevant risk assessments. Route schedules, and any other documents containing passenger names, addresses, contact details or any other personal information, must be removed from the vehicle when the Service is not in operation.
- 4.** Ensure that you have any specialist equipment required such as booster seats, harnesses and wheelchair restraints for the operation of the Service. The Council may be able to provide some equipment if required, but this must be returned to the Council when no longer required.
- 5.** Ensure that your Staff have received adequate training and monitor them to ensure they are competent in the use of any equipment which is required, including car seats, harnesses, and wheelchair restraints. If you feel that you or your Staff require further training, you should contact the Council.
- 6.** Ensure that your Staff have received adequate training (and 3-yearly refresher training) in the areas identified within the Contract, including first aid, emergency situations, safeguarding, discrimination and disability awareness, and, where applicable, the safe transportation of passengers in wheelchairs.
- 7.** Ensure your Staff are aware of the special needs and / or requirements of all passengers being transported. Where the regular Driver or Passenger Assistant is unavailable, any replacement must also be aware of this information and suitably trained.
- 8.** Ensure that your Staff report to you any instances of passenger misbehaviour, and then pass this information on to the Council at the earliest opportunity.
- 9.** Ensure that you provide the Council with a copy of any correspondence received in connection with the Contract at the earliest opportunity, such as complaints or requests from establishments, parents or other parties, together with a copy of your reply.
- 10.** Report any late running of the Service, vehicle breakdown or accident / incident to the Council and establishment served at the earliest opportunity. In the event of an accident / incident, a written report must be submitted to the Council at the earliest opportunity, regardless of whether anyone was injured or not.
- 11.** Ensure that all Services are operated in accordance with the agreed route schedule, and that no variations are made without the prior permission of the Council.
- 12.** Ensure that any requests received to deviate from the agreed route or stopping places are reported to the Council at the earliest opportunity, and that no changes are made without the permission of the Council.
- 13.** Ensure that you do not combine any routes, Services or stopping points without the prior permission of the Council.
- 14.** Ensure that your Staff are familiar with the location of, and trained in, the use of all vehicle safety equipment such as fire extinguishers and first aid kits.
- 15.** In the event of adverse weather rendering routes potentially hazardous, contact the Council to determine how the Service can be provided.
- 16.** Ensure that you and your Staff comply with government guidance in the event of epidemics / pandemics.

GUIDANCE FOR DRIVERS AND PASSENGER ASSISTANTS

General guidance

1. The welfare of passengers is of paramount importance and every care must be taken to maintain the dignity of passengers, especially those who are vulnerable or have disabilities.
2. Drivers are responsible for their vehicle and its load, but when not driving should be prepared and able to assist the Passenger Assistant. Passenger Assistants are responsible for passengers.
3. Drivers and Passenger Assistants should ensure they are aware of the needs and / or requirements of all passengers being transported and are suitably trained.
4. Drivers and Passenger Assistants should ensure that they carry the route schedule, the Code of Practice and all relevant risk assessments provided by the Council at all times. Route schedules, and any other documents containing passenger names, addresses, contact details or any other personal information, must be removed from the vehicle when the Service is not in operation. Information on the route schedule regarding passengers should be treated as confidential and retained securely. Out of date route schedules must be securely destroyed.
5. Drivers and Passenger Assistants must regard as confidential any information concerning passengers and their families provided in connection with the Services.
6. Drivers have a duty of care not to drive any vehicle that they consider to be un-roadworthy or in contravention of any legislation relating to vehicle licensing regulations (PSV, Hackney Carriage, PHV or permits). 'School-only' plated vehicles must NOT be used on West Berkshire Council Contracts.
7. Where travel passes are issued, Drivers must check each pass to ensure that the passenger is eligible for transport and is travelling on the correct vehicle. Unless instructed otherwise, Drivers should not refuse to transport a passenger who does not display a travel pass when they should have one but take the passenger's name and ask their employer to refer the matter to the Council.
8. The Council does not normally issue travel passes to passengers travelling in taxis.
9. Drivers and Passenger Assistants should always report instances of passenger misbehaviour to the establishment served and their employer on the day it occurs. If Staff threaten to report misbehaviour, they must do so otherwise their authority with the passengers will be undermined. Misbehaving passengers should not be removed from the vehicle unless permission has been given by the Council. If the continuing presence of a misbehaving passenger puts the safety of other passengers or the vehicle at risk, Staff must contact their employer immediately and await a response from the Council before taking any agreed action.
10. Drivers and Passenger Assistants must ensure that they have received adequate training and are competent in the use of any equipment which is required, including car seats, harnesses, and wheelchair restraints. If they feel that they require further training, they should inform their employer.
11. Drivers and Passenger Assistants must ensure that they have received adequate training (and 3-yearly refresher training) in the areas identified within the Contract, including first aid, emergency situations, safeguarding, discrimination and disability awareness, and, where applicable, the safe transportation of passengers in wheelchairs.
12. Drivers and Passenger Assistants are responsible for the security of any equipment on the vehicle, including car seats, harnesses, and wheelchair restraints.
13. Drivers and Passenger Assistants should check for any lost property at the end of each journey and pass all items in to their employer.
14. Drivers and Passenger Assistants are to be of neat and tidy appearance and wear Council-approved identity badges at all times.
15. Drivers must ensure that where PSV vehicles are used to provide school transport, yellow 'School Transport' signs are displayed at both the front and rear of the vehicle.
16. Drivers must ensure that a correct route reference is clearly visible from the front of the vehicle.

17. Passenger Assistants should occupy a seat in the vehicle where they can easily reach the doors, observe passengers and manage passenger behaviour.
18. Drivers and Passenger Assistants should maintain a courteous, professional relationship with passengers and should not enquire into the personal circumstances of either the passengers being transported or their families.
19. Drivers and Passenger Assistants must not give to, or accept from, passengers or their families any personal contact details without the prior permission of the Council.
20. Staff are not to engage in any form of communication with passengers which could be interpreted as sexually suggestive or provocative, or seek any social contact with passengers or their families.
21. Drivers and Passenger Assistants must not give passengers birthday presents, Christmas presents, or any other form of present or treat.
22. Drivers and Passenger Assistants must not give passengers food or drinks. Passengers may consume food or drinks provided by their family or school, provided the Driver is happy for these to be consumed in the vehicle.
23. Drivers and Passenger Assistants must not give passengers rewards for good behaviour. Instead, Drivers and Passenger Assistants are encouraged to report good behaviour to the school or family. Some schools may have their own reward schemes for good behaviour. This is acceptable, as long as the reward is provided by the school.
24. Drivers and Passenger Assistants are not to take any photographs / images of passengers.
25. Vehicle interiors should be maintained at an appropriate temperature for the comfort of passengers, with working heating or cooling / air conditioning.
26. Drivers and Passenger Assistants must inform their employer of any welfare concerns that they have in relation to passengers.
27. Drivers and Passenger Assistants must comply at all times with government guidance in the event of epidemics / pandemics.

Boarding and alighting

1. Drivers must ensure that passengers only board or alight in safe and suitable locations and should politely decline any request to stop at any location which has not been agreed with the Council.
2. Drivers must ensure that they do not depart from any boarding point before the time specified on the route schedule. If there are no passengers in sight, the driver should wait until the appointed time before driving away.
3. Where passengers are collected from their home address they should be ready and waiting to board at the appointed time. Drivers should not, except where they have been instructed otherwise or in occasional exceptional circumstances, wait for longer than three minutes after the time specified on the route schedule.
4. If the times specified on the route schedule prove to be difficult to keep to, Drivers should inform their employer who should then work with the Council to consider adjusting the timings.
5. Drivers must ensure that, when passengers are boarding or alighting from vehicles with side doors, vehicles are parked alongside the pavement (if present) facing the direction of travel, and that only the doors on the nearside of the vehicle are used.
6. Drivers and Passenger Assistants must ensure that passengers are directly supervised when boarding or alighting from vehicles with rear doors.
7. Drivers should ensure that passengers do not travel in sideways facing seats on vehicles except on a registered local bus service where this is allowed by legislation. Wheelchair passengers are not to travel facing sideways under any circumstances.

8. Drivers and Passenger Assistants should ensure that passengers board and alight in safety by adhering to the following practices:
- Doors should be kept closed until vehicle is stationary.
 - Passengers should not be allowed to open or close doors.
 - Child locks should be used where fitted.
 - Passengers must be seated and wearing their seat belts before the vehicle moves off.
 - Any specialist equipment must be securely fastened before the vehicle moves off.
 - Any passenger personal belongings must be stored in such a way that the gangway, doors and emergency exits are not obstructed. They should be securely stored so that they will not be dislodged or cause an obstruction in the event of heavy braking or an accident.
 - Passenger Assistants should alight from the vehicle before passengers to ensure that passengers are kept clear of the vehicle and do not attempt to run off.
 - Alighting passengers should be discouraged from crossing a road immediately in front of or behind the vehicle.
 - Drivers should ensure that passengers are clear of the vehicle before moving off.
9. In addition to the above, the following practices apply to any passengers with physical difficulties:
- Drivers and Passenger Assistants are required to give assistance as necessary in the boarding and alighting of passengers.
 - Any special features of the vehicle such as kneeling device, access ramp or passenger lift should be deployed if appropriate.
 - Drivers must ensure that when passengers using wheelchairs are boarding or alighting from the rear door of a vehicle, the vehicle is parked facing downhill if on a slope.
 - Drivers and Passenger Assistants must ensure that when passengers in wheelchairs are using a passenger lift to board or alight, the wheelchair brakes are applied during operation of the lift. Either the Driver or Passenger Assistant should stand beside the tail-lift and keep hold of the wheelchair throughout the lifting procedure. The other should remain on board the vehicle.
 - Passengers who travel in wheelchairs should never be transported in a vehicle without a floor restraint (tracking) system fitted except where the Specification states otherwise.
10. Drivers and Passenger Assistants should ensure that, when delivering a vulnerable passenger to their destination, the passenger is received by a responsible adult/carer unless the Specification states otherwise. If no responsible adult is present, if practical the passenger should remain on the vehicle whilst the other passengers are dropped off. The Driver should then return to the destination. If there is still no responsible adult present, the Driver or the Passenger Assistant should contact their employer and / or the Council, who will attempt to resolve the situation.

Emergency procedures

1. Drivers and Passenger Assistants should ensure that they have been supplied with the phone numbers of all those that they may need to contact in an emergency – i.e. their employer, the establishment served, the Council, and the parents / carers of any passengers as appropriate. Passenger contact details must be kept securely at all times, and should not be kept in the vehicle whilst the Service is not in operation. The Supplier must provide a means of communication that can be used in the event of an emergency.
2. In the event of a medical emergency involving a passenger, the driver should pull over where safe to do so, the Emergency Services must be contacted immediately (telephone 999) and a request made for assistance.
3. Drivers and Passenger Assistants should ensure that they know how to use the fire extinguisher, first aid kit, emergency exits and any safety equipment in the vehicle, and how to safely evacuate the vehicle in an emergency.
4. In the event of a breakdown or accident / incident, Drivers and Passenger Assistants should immediately notify their employer and the Council.
5. Every effort must be made to ensure that passengers are not left unattended in the event of an accident / incident or emergency. Vulnerable passengers and those with special needs should never be left unattended. If there are two or more Staff on the vehicle, then at least one should remain with the passengers at all times.

6. If the Driver or Passenger Assistant is unable to summon assistance using the mobile phone or other means of communication, they should try to enlist the help of a passer-by to summon assistance if the alternative is to leave passengers unattended.
7. Passengers should remain on board the vehicle unless they would be at greater risk by doing so, for example if the vehicle breaks down in an unsafe location or the vehicle is at risk of catching fire. If this is the case, Drivers and Passenger Assistants should evacuate the vehicle in a calm, orderly manner and take the passengers to a safe distance from the vehicle.