



NYCC INTEGRATED PASSENGER TRANSPORT

GUIDANCE FOR DRIVERS & PASSENGER ASSISTANTS

The following information provides a guide to drivers and passenger assistants who transport children and vulnerable adults. This guidance is by no means a definitive list but will hopefully assist you when dealing with difficult situations and ensure you and your passengers stay safe. You should also remember that you are not expected to deal with difficult situations alone. If you require assistance please seek help and this may be from your employer, the school/establishment, Integrated Passenger Transport or the Police.

TIPS FOR DEALING WITH DIFFICULT SITUATIONS & STAYING SAFE

- Greet passengers with a positive and friendly manner – your attitude and behaviour will have an impact on how your passengers respond to you.
- Establish rules and routines and try to be fair.
- Be professional at all times.
- Never use bad or inappropriate language and never ridicule passengers.
- Don't suggest punishments you can't carry out, i.e. banning passengers from the bus. The decision to ban passengers from transport is a decision made by NYCC and the school/establishment.
- Don't become involved in arguments with pupils, establishments staff, teachers or other road users, no matter who is at fault.
- If the passenger(s) are angry keep your tone of voice quiet and keep your composure at all times. If you lose your temper no one will benefit and this will escalate the situation.

- Always remember that you are the responsible adult and you have a duty of care to ensure passenger safety.
- Ensure you are always aware of any special needs of passengers including risk assessments for your own and others' safety.

WHEN SITUATIONS ARISE -

DISRUPTIVE BEHAVIOUR

- Where passenger behaviour is causing serious concern (i.e. passengers up from seats, throwing things) - stop the vehicle in a safe place.

Make it clear to all passengers in a calm and firm manner that you are doing so as their behaviour is jeopardising everyone's safety and you cannot proceed until it is safe to do so.

Make it clear what you are concerned about, what you want to happen and what steps you will take if they don't behave. This may include turning any music off, returning to school or in extreme cases stopping at a Police Station.

- Passengers fighting – guidance is that you should not touch any passenger. However, you have a duty of care to all your passengers. The steps detailed above should be followed first and as an absolute final option in **very extreme cases**, for the safety of your passengers, it may be necessary to separate pupils using reasonable force. Should this happen you must report immediately to your manager the Police, School and Integrated Passenger Transport. The incident must be fully recorded, detailing what force was used, what the rationale/necessity was for such action to be taken and whether any injury was caused as a result of this.
- If passengers have behaved in a dangerous manner (i.e. fighting, constantly standing, smoking, vandalism, etc) please try to obtain the name(s) of those involved either from a travel permit or other passengers where feasible. Please report all details of the incident to your employer, Integrated Passenger Transport or the School as soon as possible so that the matter can be investigated and appropriate action taken. Where you consider

the behaviour constitutes a real danger to you/your passengers or other road users please contact the Police immediately.

VIOLENCE TOWARDS THE DRIVER/PASSENGER ASSISTANT

- It is rare for passengers to threaten violence or be physically violent towards the driver/passenger assistant. However, should this occur it is important that you know what action you should take. Each case needs to be dealt with on a case by case basis as obviously advice on dealing with violence from a 5 year old would differ from that of a 17 year old passenger with special needs.

In all situations if a passenger threatens you with physical violence this should be reported to your manager and Integrated Passenger Transport immediately. If you feel that it is not safe to continue with the journey you should stop somewhere safe and ring immediately for assistance. This may be your manager, Integrated Passenger Transport, School/Establishment, Police or all depending on the nature of the incident. You should continue to protect the safety of other passengers and where the passenger is particularly vulnerable i.e. due to their age or special needs you should ensure, if possible, the passenger remains in the vehicle.

If a passenger has been physically violent towards you, ensure the vehicle is stopped safely and ring immediately for assistance. This may be the Police first for assistance/guidance then your manager, Integrated Passenger Transport, School/Establishment or all depending on the nature of the incident and needs of the passengers. You should NEVER retaliate with violence.

SOCIAL MEDIA & MOBILE PHONES

- You must not contact or befriend children and/or vulnerable adults who you transport via ANY web based applications or other means in ANY circumstances. It is also not appropriate to obtain mobile telephone numbers and ring or exchange text messages with them. If a contact number is required for emergency situations this should be that of the relevant parent/guardian/carer.

ALLEGATIONS

- Occasionally allegations are made regarding the conduct of drivers/passenger assistants. If an allegation is made NYCC has a duty of care to fully investigate the claims. In some instances this may require the driver/passenger assistant to be moved to another route or suspended from NYCC contracts whilst the complaint is investigated. Removal from a service is done to remove the driver/passenger assistant from the situation and is for their protection as well as the complainant, it is done without prejudice. You can minimise the risk of allegations being made against you by following the tips above and the following;
- Always be polite and professional to passengers, never become friends, you can be friendly but not their friend.
- You must not arrange to meet children/vulnerable adults outside your working environment.
- Never touch a child/vulnerable adult unless it is a safety critical situation or you are required to in assisting them (i.e. passenger assistant) as per a planned assessment.
- Do not photograph or video children/vulnerable adults and do not show them pictures or videos.
- Do not give gifts or accept gifts.
- If a child/vulnerable adult becomes over familiar with you, report this to your employer and Integrated Passenger Transport as soon as possible.

SAFE DRIVING

Please consider your passengers and other road users when driving;

- Keep the doors closed until the vehicle has come to a stop
- Don't brake sharply unless an emergency situation
- Make sure passengers are clear of the vehicle before moving off

- Ensure passengers are seated before moving away. Standing passengers are NOT permitted on ANY contracted NYCC school transport route.
- Always drive at a speed suitable for the road, conditions, speed limit and your passengers.
- Always check your blind spot and mirrors before manoeuvring.
- Be aware of, and refer to, your own company's driving and route risk assessment.
- Mobile phones and hands free must NOT be used whilst driving.
- It is also not permitted to eat or drink whilst operating your contract, unless stationary in a safe location with the engine switched off.

SMOKING & MEDICATION

- It is prohibited by law to smoke in your vehicle. In addition it is strongly suggested you leave a reasonable amount of time (i.e. 10 + minutes) between smoking and carrying out a contract. You are also prohibited from smoking in all NYCC establishments and should consider where you are seen smoking prior to and after carrying out a school service.
The use of e-cigarettes is also prohibited when operating NYCC contracts.
- If drivers or passenger assistants are required to carry their own medication with them please ensure it is clearly marked so it can be easily identified as medication and kept out of the reach of passengers.

WEATHER/ACCIDENTS

- It is the responsibility of the driver to assess the weather conditions on the day and be satisfied that it is safe to operate. If during your journey you are unable to complete the route you must return passengers home and make sure that they are properly supervised/cared for before you leave them. If you have any doubts you should keep the passengers on the vehicle with you and contact the school/establishment or Integrated Passenger Transport immediately. The school/establishment

should also be advised as soon as possible that the passengers will not be attending.

- If the weather conditions are poor please ensure that there is a responsible person at the school/establishment to receive the passengers before your depart.
- If your vehicle provides a connecting service do not leave passengers at the connecting point unless you are sure that the other service is operating. If the connecting service is not operating it is your responsibility that the passengers are either taken to the school/establishment or passengers home.
- If your vehicle becomes stationary (i.e. breakdown, accident, weather) ensure the vehicle is in a safe place, wherever possible and use your hazard warning lights. Passengers must be kept on the vehicle, where it is safe to do so until a replacement vehicle or assistance arrives. Contact your manager and the school/establishment as soon as possible.

If you have stopped as the result of an accident please also check to see if any of your passengers are injured and if so call for emergency assistance. Please refer to your own company's guidance and driving risk assessment. If your vehicle has been involved in an accident you or your manager, must notify IPT immediately, or as soon as possible.

- If your vehicle is prevented from completing its journey due to road closures i.e. an accident or road repairs please contact your manager and/or Integrated Passenger Transport for guidance. You have a duty of care to your passengers and must ensure they are safe at all times.
- In periods of bad weather you should monitor the weather during the day as it may be necessary for you to liaise with the school(s)/establishment(s) and agree to provide transport before the normal time.
- Please ensure you carry your mobile phone/radio on the vehicle at all times and where a situation does arise please keep your passengers informed and ensure their safety until help arrives.

TRANSPORT OF YOUNG CHILDREN, SPECIAL NEEDS AND SOCIAL CARE PASSENGERS – DROP OFF ARRANGEMENTS

Occasionally Integrated Passenger Transport will receive information that transport has arrived at the home of a passenger and no responsible carer is present to take receipt of the passenger.

It is essential for vulnerable passengers that are normally met by a responsible carer that they are not dropped without this person present.

From time to time there are exceptional circumstances where a responsible carer may be delayed in taking receipt of your passenger(s) and you should be aware of what procedures to follow should this happen.

- If you have the carer's mobile number, contact them or request that your manager does so.
- Inform your manager what has happened and seek advice as to what the next step is. Your manager should alert the school/establishment and Integrated Passenger Transport.
- The next step will depend on whether you have other passengers to drop off. If you do, after waiting a few minutes and contacting your office, you should continue with the rest of the journey to drop the other passengers off and then return to the drop off point of the passenger(s).
- If no one has arrived contact your office and inform them that you are returning the passenger(s) to school/establishment.
- If no one is available at school/establishment you should notify your manager who will contact Integrated Passenger Transport for advice. The advice is to take the passenger(s) to a place of safety which may be the nearest Police Station or a Social Care establishment, but IPT will clarify this when they are contacted.

Should you at any time have any concerns regarding the welfare of a vulnerable person (including in a home environment) then you **MUST** raise your concerns with your company **AND** Integrated Passenger Transport immediately. If you have significant concerns for the welfare of a vulnerable person, i.e. you feel the passenger is at significant immediate risk of harm please do not leave the passenger and phone the Police immediately.

POINTS TO REMEMBER:

Passengers **MUST NOT** be abandoned or refused travel on journeys to or from school/establishment without the prior agreement from Integrated Passenger Transport.

If a situation arises on route please refer to the individual guidance notes above.

If there has been poor behaviour please remember to report it to school/establishment and/or Integrated Passenger Transport as soon as possible – if we don't know then nothing can be done about it.

Always remain professional and keep your composure. In situations where drivers/passenger assistants have lost their temper and in some cases reacted physically this has resulted in suspension, withdrawal and, in some cases, Police action.