

Greater Manchester School Transport Protocol

Local authorities in Greater Manchester are committed to ensuring the safety and well-being of all pupils and students who use Home to School transport. Students travelling on Council-arranged transport are expected to follow behaviour guidelines outlined below, which are designed to protect their own safety as well as that of others on board.

Oldham Council will work in partnership with families, transport operators and their staff, schools, and other educational settings to promote and support appropriate standards of behaviour. Pupils and students using transport services are expected to adhere to these expectations. Any behaviour that does not meet these expectations will be monitored, and appropriate action will be taken where necessary.

This protocol is designed to clearly outline the principles and decision-making process followed by the Transport Team when addressing incidents of concerning or unsafe behaviour.

Expected Behaviour for Individuals using Home-to-School Transport

Individuals using home-to-school transport are expected to:

- Follow all reasonable instructions given by the driver, passenger assistant, Council officers, or authorised school/establishment staff.
- Show respect and consideration to others, including fellow passengers and transport staff, treating them as you would wish to be treated.
- Always behave in a courteous, and considerate manner.
- Act in a safely and responsibly throughout the journey.
- Refrain from smoking, using e-cigarettes, or consuming alcohol or drugs.
- Avoid tampering with, or causing damage to, any vehicle or property.
- Refrain from any engagement in anti-social behaviour or any criminal activity, including violations of relevant by-laws.

- Avoid behaviour that may disturb or upset others, such as littering, playing loud music, spitting, or using offensive/inappropriate language.

Consequences of not following behaviour expectations

Access to transport may be temporarily or permanently withdrawn in cases of unacceptable behaviour. Passenger safety the highest priority and will be a key consideration during decisions. The following factors will be taken into account:

Important Information about Consequences for Unacceptable Behaviour

- In cases where a pupil's or student's behaviour is deemed unacceptable, suspension or permanent removal from home-to-school transport may occur and be considered as a last resort.
- If transport is suspended or withdrawn, it remains the responsibility of the parent or carer to ensure their child continues to attend school.
- Health and safety are priority and must not be compromised.
- Any action taken will consider the pupil's or student's special educational needs or disabilities (SEND). The Council will work with families, where appropriate, to identify safe and suitable alternative transport arrangements.
- Schools, parents/carers, and pupils/students will be informed of this Behaviour Protocol, which is published and accessible via our [school transport policy webpage](#).
- Transport operators have the right to report incidents to the appropriate authorities. They may seek financial compensation from the parent or carer for any damage caused to a vehicle by the pupil or student. Payment of damages does not guarantee immediate reinstatement of transport access.

The Process

Parents and carers will receive written notification explaining any decision to suspend or withdraw their child from home-to-school transport, with details such as – the duration of the suspension or withdrawal, the process for returning to transport, information on how to appeal, provide feedback, or make a complaint.

A copy of this notification will also be shared with the school.

During the suspension or withdrawal period, it is expected that the parent, carer, and pupil/student take steps to address the behaviour that led to the decision. Before the pupil/student returns to transport, the relevant Council officers will consult with the parent/carers, the pupil/student (where appropriate), and the school to agree on suitable arrangements for reinstating transport.

What Families Can Expect

Families will receive the following communications in relation to concerns about a pupil's or student's behaviour on home-to-school transport:

1. **Initial Notification** – A communication outlining the initial concerns raised.
2. **Informal Warning** – A warning that explains the actions taken to address the behaviour and advises that transport assistance may be withdrawn if issues continue.
3. **Final Warning** – A formal notice stating that continued issues will result in the removal of transport assistance.
4. **Confirmation of Removal** – A final letter confirming the decision to withdraw transport, including the reasons for the removal, the date it will take effect, and details of the appeal process.

Immediate Suspension of Transport Assistance

If the Council or its transport providers determine that a child's or young person's behaviour poses an immediate or ongoing risk to their own health and safety, or that of other passengers, such as transport staff or members of the public, the Council reserves the right to suspend travel assistance with immediate effect.

Transport will remain suspended until the issue is resolved—through the involvement of parents/carers, the school or college, or other relevant professionals—and the Council is satisfied that all reasonable adjustments have been made to ensure safe travel can resume.

How Parents and Carers Can Support Safe and Smooth Transport

Parents and carers play a vital role in helping ensure that home-to-school transport runs safely and efficiently by:

Being Ready on Time: Ensure passengers are ready at least five minutes before the scheduled pick-up time. Drivers can only wait up to three minutes after the agreed time if there is no response. If passengers are not ready within this window, it becomes parent/carers' responsibility to get them to school

Accompanying Your Child to and from the Vehicle: Parents/carers should accompany their child to the vehicle. Drivers and passenger assistants are not expected to collect children from the home and cannot leave vehicles unattended with passengers on board.

Being Available at Drop-Off: Make sure a responsible adult—listed on your application form as a parent/carer or emergency contact—is at home to receive your child at the end of the school day. If no one is available, the Council may need to involve other services (e.g. Social Care or the Police), and you may be liable for any additional costs incurred to ensure your child's safety. If no one is at home to receive the pupil, the driver or passenger assistant will notify the Travel Assistance Team and continue the route to ensure that other passengers are dropped off on

time. Children will be taken to the council's designated place of safety drop off point and parents or carers will be responsible for collecting their child from this. If you know you will be late home, please ensure you are reachable on the mobile numbers provided to the office. Recurring issues of the absence of somebody at home to receive passengers may result in transport services being suspended until you are able to provide and confirm suitable future arrangements.

Providing a Suitable Car or Booster Seat: If your child requires a car seat or booster, you will need to provide one due to the wide variation in sizes and designs. The seat will be transferred between home and the vehicle as needed.

Communicating Absences: Let the Travel Team know as soon as possible if your child will not be attending school (e.g. due to illness), in addition to informing the school. You will also need to provide the Transport team with a return date to reinstate transport.

Informing of One-Way Travel: Notify the Travel Team if your child only requires transport one way on any given day (e.g. due to an appointment or illness).

Sharing Relevant Information Daily: Let the passenger assistant or driver know of anything that might affect your child's needs or behaviour on a particular day.

Reinforcing Positive Behaviour: Support your child in understanding and maintaining appropriate behaviour while travelling.

Avoiding Lost Property: Help your child remember to take all belongings with them when leaving the vehicle. If something is left behind, contact the transport company, driver, or passenger assistant directly.

Providing Emergency Contact Details: On your application form, include the name, phone number, and relationship to your child of at least one other adult who can take responsibility in an emergency if you are unavailable

Updating the Council About Changes: Notify us promptly of any changes that could affect transport arrangements, such as:

- A change of address
- Updated contact details (yours or your emergency contact's)
- New medical needs, allergies, or medication (note: transport staff cannot administer medication or provide medical care)
- If your child will be using a new wheelchair
- Changes to pick up and drop off points. No alternative requests of the driver are possible unless arranged by the Transport team.

Giving Positive Feedback: Share any good experiences with transport providers so we can recognise and promote best practices.

Reporting Issues Promptly: Inform us of any problems or concerns about the transport service so they can be addressed quickly and appropriately.

Late transport - If transport is more than 15 minutes late for reasons out of the drivers' control (bad weather / heavy traffic) and you are concerned, please telephone the Travel Assistance Team. If a contractor advises us that transport will be late, the Travel Assistance Team will attempt to contact you advise.