

Shetland Islands Council



**Children's
Services**

School Transport Policy

2024

School Transport Policy

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School Transport Policy

1 Introduction

- 1.1 Local Authorities have certain powers and obligations in respect of transport to school. They generally have an obligation to make such arrangements as they consider necessary, for the provision of transport to schools. Local Authorities must take into account where pupils live further from school than the maximum walking distances when determining when school transport is necessary.
- 1.2 Parents who choose to send their child, through a Placing Request, to a school other than their designated school will be responsible for their child's transport.
- 1.3 This Policy sets out the Shetland Islands Council's approach to fulfilling its responsibilities along with responsibilities and expectations of other parties involved in the safe transportation of pupils from home to school.

2 Aims

- 2.1 In relation to home to school transport, this Policy aims to:
 - Clarify entitlement to home to school transport provision.
 - Describe the options available to Local Authorities to fulfil their responsibilities; and
 - Describe the responsibilities of contractors, operators, drivers, parents, pupils and school staff.

3 Objectives

- For Shetland Islands Council to fulfil its responsibilities for home to school transport;
- For Shetland Islands Council to do its utmost in providing safe and reliable transport;
- To provide flexibility for Shetland Islands Council, transport operators, parents, pupils and communities to find the most appropriate, sustainable solutions;
- To encourage active travel to school compatible with the Schools (Health Promotion and Nutrition) (Scotland) Act 2007 and the Health and Wellbeing outcomes in the Curriculum for Excellence;
- Engage in consultation with parents, pupils, transport operators and communities when there is a proposed significant change to transport arrangements; and
- To develop a school transport policy which is delivered in alignment with public service network and commercial operations.

4 Entitlement

- 4.1 The Education (Scotland) Act 1980 places a legal responsibility on Local Authorities to make such arrangements as they consider necessary for the provision of school transport to pupils residing and attending schools in their area. Generally, local authorities meet their legal requirements by providing school transport to those children living beyond maximum walking distances from their school specified in legislation. The current walking distance is specified as two miles for pupils who have not reached their eighth birthday and three miles for pupils aged eight years and over.
- 4.2 In Shetland, this is amended during the winter months (October break to Easter break) to provide transport for all pupils who live more than a mile-and-a-half from their school.
- 4.3 Shetland Islands Council has given a commitment that, as far as possible, the maximum single journey time on school transport will be 40 minutes for a primary pupil and 65 minutes for a secondary pupil.
- 4.4 The Education (Scotland) Act 1996 amended the 1980 Act to require education authorities to have regard to the safety of pupils when considering whether to make arrangements for the provision of school transport. Further detail is outlined in section 6 of this Policy.
- 4.5 Shetland Islands Council has identified catchment areas for all its primary schools and secondary schools. These are clearly laid out in the Council's Admissions Policy.

When enrolling a pupil within a primary or secondary school, only one address can be used to identify the appropriate catchment area and entitlement to school transport. School transport will only be provided from one address and will not be provided from multiple addresses.

Shetland Islands Council requires up to twenty working days to organise and arrange transport for a new pupil between home and school, or to implement a change of address, which may also mean a change of bus route.

- 4.6 Where a pupil is redirected from their catchment school due to mothballing, transport will be provided directly to the new school for the period of one year. After one year school transport will be reviewed in line with the School Transport Policy.
- 4.7 Education Authorities are also required to offer any vacant seats on dedicated school transport to pupils who live on a route but within walking distance of their school. The Authority can charge for the use of a vacant place or they have the discretion for a vacant place to be used without charge. However, they can only charge for the use of a vacant place if the charges can be met without undue hardship on the parent(s) /carers(s).

If the number of non-entitled pupils exceeds the number of vacant seats available, the Authority must select which of those pupils can travel on the vehicle. If the number of pupils entitled to places increases then those

who are not entitled will need to relinquish their place. Placing request pupils will not be taken into account when specifying the number of seats required for any future contracts.

- 4.8 Vacant seats must be re-applied for each school year. In the event that more applications are received than the number of vacant seats on any given route then priority shall be given as follows:
- To those children referred by Social Work or Health professionals;
 - To those attending their catchment area school over those attending an alternative school by parental choice;
 - Amongst those attending their catchment area school, to those who live furthest away; and
 - Amongst those attending an alternative school by parental choice, to those who live furthest away.
- 4.9 When pupils enrol at a school and are entitled to school transport they will be allocated a seat on the school transport already provided in their area.
- 4.10 Transport provision will not be diverted from an existing route unless the journey from their house to the main road pick-up point is more than the maximum walking distance specified in paragraph 4.1, or the walking part of the journey is considered unsuitable on safety grounds.
- 4.11 Where a pupil's home is accessed via a private way, school transport will only be considered from a suitable location on the public road network accessible beyond the point where the private way joins the public road network. Pupils will be required to travel to the public road in order to access the school transport. Where this results in the pupil having to travel in excess of the specified maximum walking distance(s) to access vehicular school transport, the Council will consider other methods of providing school transport as outlined in paragraph 5.1.
- 4.12 Where a young person attends college or a place other than school as part of their educational programme, it is expected they will apply for the NEC/ Young Scot Travel Card Scheme in order that they can travel safely to their educational establishment using designated public transport routes. Where there are no public transport routes that are suitable, alternative travel arrangements will be organised by the Council.
- 4.13 In cases where alterations to school transport arrangements are necessary, pupils and parents/carers will be given as much notice as possible and unless there are safety reasons, changes will take effect as soon as practicable, or when the contract becomes due for renewal. If the change is significant pupils, parents, transport operators and communities will be consulted in line with the objectives of this Policy. The Council will try, where practicable, to give a term's notice of any change.

5 Options available

- 5.1 Local authorities are required to make arrangements as necessary for the provision of school transport and have to pay all or part of reasonable travelling expenses for school pupils. This legal responsibility could be

fulfilled by providing either a means to get to school, such as a bicycle, an allowance for parents/carers to make their own arrangements, or the use of any form of public transport.

- 5.2 Local Authorities are not required to provide “door-to-door” transport. Children may be expected to walk anything up to the legally specified maximum walking distance to/from the transport pick-up and drop-off (PUDO) point. Parents/carers are responsible for this part of the journey.

6 Route Safety

- 6.1 To assess whether transport should be provided for safety reasons, an assessment of the walking route may be carried out by the Infrastructure Services Department’s Roads Service. The method of assessing safety factors was approved by the Council in July 1996; this method was recently revisited and found to continue to be appropriate.

If a parent or carer considers that a walking route is unsuitable for safety reasons, a request for an assessment of the walking route must be made in writing, to the Executive Manager – Schools.

If a route is assigned a pedestrian safety factor of 1 or 2 it is considered that there is no abnormal or exceptional road safety hazard to children walking whilst accompanied as necessary. A pedestrian safety factor of 3 or 4 indicates that the route is not suitable, in terms of road safety, for children accompanied as necessary on foot. Council policy is that school transport provision should be made for pupils who live within the maximum walking distance of the school if the route has been assigned a pedestrian safety factor of 3 or 4. A Briefing Note detailing the audit process for school walking route assessments is attached to this Policy as Appendix A.

There may be circumstances where it would be unreasonable to expect a parent to be able to accompany a child, e.g. permanent or long-term mobility or disability issues. In such cases, a re-evaluation of the route suitability for that specific set of circumstances would be appropriate. Any such cases will be considered on their own merits.

- 6.2 If a parent or carer considers that a route assessment is either out of date or fails to consider a material factor, they can make a written submission to the Executive Manager – Schools, giving reason(s) why they feel the assessment should be reviewed.

The Executive Manager – Schools, along with the Executive Manager-Roads, shall review any request for the re-assessment of a route. A response to the request will be issued within one calendar month, either to confirm the validity of a re-assessment of the route and to agree grounds and outline timescales for so doing, or to explain why there is considered to be insufficient grounds to carry out a re-assessment of the walking route.

If a parent or carer is dissatisfied with a decision not to carry out a re-assessment of the walking route, or is dissatisfied with the outcome of the

re-assessment, they can use the Shetland Islands Council's Complaints Handling Procedure.

7 Responsibilities

7.1 Contractors, transport operators, school staff, parents/carers and pupils will all be expected to adhere to the guidance set out in Appendix B.

7.2 Local Authority

The Schools (Safety and Supervision of Pupils) (Scotland) Regulations 1990 place a general duty on Local Authorities to secure, as far as is practicable, the safety of pupils under their charge. Pupils travelling on dedicated school transport arranged by the local authority are under the charge of the Authority. Therefore, the Authority will keep school transport provision under review to ensure the safety of pupils when travelling on school transport.

The Local Authority is responsible for undertaking risk assessments on designated Pick Up and Drop Off (PUDO) points. Parents should be aware that any other PUDO points which have been agreed directly with the transport operator are classed as undesignated and as such the responsibility for risk assessment lies with the transport operator, not the Local Authority. The Transport Operator must be able to produce such risk assessments when required.

7.3 Contractors/Transport Operators

Contractors provide home to school transport using cars, mini-buses, buses and/or coaches. It is the responsibility of those who are awarded school transport contracts to take all reasonable steps to ensure the security, safety, dignity and comfort of pupils in their care. The vehicles used must be suitable for the purpose and drivers must be PVG checked, adequately trained and qualified.

Seat Belts on School Transport (Scotland) Act 2017, requires all motor vehicles provided for the dedicated transport of pupils to be fitted with seat belts. Local Authorities are required to prepare a seatbelt statement.

Contractors must ensure that they have contingency plans, acceptable to the authority, to deal with vehicle failures, staff unavailability, emergency closure of schools and other emergencies. Any driver employed by the contractor should be aware of issues involving pupil safety and behaviour and who to contact in an emergency.

As school transport drivers are deemed to have "substantial opportunity for access" to children all drivers must have PVG clearance prior to driving any vehicle used for school transport provision. Contractors must provide the Authority with details of all persons who may drive their vehicles or be employed as attendants or supervisors.

A contractor must not sub-contract to another operator without the written permission of the Local Authority.

The contractor is responsible for identifying suitable turning places. The Authority can specify alternative and/or additional PUDO points at no extra cost unless an additional daily journey in excess of three miles is required. The contractor must ensure that all pupils included in the route are conveyed to school in time for opening and collected at the end of the school day when dismissed.

If at any time a contractor is not in a position to fulfil the requirements of the contract, due to the number of pupils in the area exceeding the number of seats available or due to the unavailability of a suitable vehicle or driver or for any other reason, they must inform the Executive Manager Transport Planning immediately in order that new arrangements can be put in place.

7.4 Vehicle operators

All passengers must be notified that seat belt wearing is compulsory.

The driver is responsible for ensuring that passengers aged 3 to 13 years wear a seat belt.

Passengers aged 14 years or over are responsible for wearing a seat belt where they are fitted.

Drivers of home to school transport bear much of the responsibility for the safety of pupils. However, parents/carers remain responsible for the behaviour of their children and they should encourage their children to follow the instructions of the driver. Failure to act responsibly will compromise pupils' own safety, and the safety of other pupils, and may result in entitlement to school transport being withdrawn.

There is no statutory requirement for the Local Authority to provide supervisors on school transport. The Local Authority has discretion to provide a supervisor on school transport if this would assist in minimising any issues in relation to behaviour.

7.5 Additional Support Needs

Local Authorities have duties under the Education (Additional Support for Learning (Scotland) Act 2004 (as amended) to "identify, provide for and review the additional support needs for their pupils", this includes their right to free school transport. The relevant Policy and ASN Transport Request form are available on the Council website or can be requested from the Council's Children's Services Department. Parents/carers of pupils with additional support needs are responsible for requesting transport arrangements to and from school.

7.6 Parents

Parents/carers have a legal duty to provide for the education of their children, either by causing them to attend school regularly, or by other means. Parents/carers have a right to expect that suitable arrangements for safe and reliable school transport will be made for their children. However, the ultimate responsibility for the safety and welfare of pupils rests with their parents/carers and it requires parents/carers working along with the Local Authority, schools, and transport operators to ensure that a high level of service is maintained.

Unless the route is considered unsuitable for road safety reasons, pupils will have to make their own way to access school transport, travelling anything up to the maximum walking distance.

Parents/carers are responsible for this part of the journey. Parents/carers are also responsible for the behaviour of their children whilst on the vehicle and when waiting at the pick-up point. Persistent behaviour which is of concern can lead to a pupil being removed from school transport.

7.7 Pupils

Pupils should adhere to the guidance as laid out in Appendix B.

8 Complaints / Appeals

If a request for school transport is refused or parents/carers believe the option they have been offered is not appropriate, a written complaint can be submitted under Shetland Island Council's Complaints Handling Procedure. A copy of Shetland Island Council's Complaints Handling Procedure can be obtained by contacting Children's Services or can be accessed online at <https://www.shetland.gov.uk/contact-us/make-complaint>.

9 Review

- 9.1 The Schools Management Team will arrange for a review of this policy in five years or when required by legislation or local circumstance.

Appendix A: Briefing Note – Assessment of School Walking Routes

Background

The Traffic & Road Safety Section of the Roads Service undertakes assessments of walking routes for school pupils on behalf of the Schools Service. The Roads Service has been carrying out this function since 1996 when a formal policy on route assessments was first approved. This briefing note provides a quick summary of the process and gives some guidance on the framework under which the assessments take place. The audit framework is based on our current understanding of national guidance and best practise amended as appropriate for Shetland.

Route Assessment

The walking route covers the public road and footpath network from the point that a private property accesses the public network to the school or the designated school transport pick-up point (PUDO).

The audit process used in the assessment of walking routes to school in Shetland follows a similar pattern to that used across the UK. The factors considered and the level of pedestrian provision required for a suitable walking route in Shetland are either in line with, or at a higher level, than national guidance.

Fundamentally, the assessment is a subjective one based on available traffic and accident data, a consideration of the physical and environmental characteristic of the route, and professional judgement based on experience of and training in road safety matters.

The main parameters considered as part of the process can be summarised as follows:

- Traffic Flow – typically expressed as average daily flows (AADT) but flows during the walking period are looked at in detail;
- Traffic Speeds – consideration is given to both the average and 85% speeds. If speeds are of a concern then particular attention will be given to them during the walking periods;
- Traffic Composition – this would be looked at if it was thought that HGVs may form a significant percentage of the traffic movements on the route during the walking periods;
- Accident History - any accidents along the route will be looked at to check for significance;
- Road Widths – considered where relevant in relation to traffic flows, speeds and composition;
- Verge Widths and Shape – verges, and in particular grass verges, are generally not considered suitable for walking along, but rather are used to provide step-off refuges when meeting oncoming vehicles;

- Footway/ Street lighting Provision;
- Ditch Location, Width and Depth;
- Visibility - assessed throughout the route in relation to vehicle speeds, but specifically considered at critical points such as summits and narrow sections, and at locations where step-off are limited;
- Structures along the Route – bridges, cattle grids, retaining and boundary walls and culverts all pose particular hazards in certain circumstances; and
- School Crossing Patrols or Pedestrian Crossings – an important consideration on busy roads.

National guidance identifies that the assessment of a walking route does not determine whether a route is “safe” or “dangerous”. This is because all roads present some element of road safety risk, whether they are heavily-trafficked urban routes, or more lightly-trafficked rural routes.

A walking route is considered suitable if a child, “accompanied as necessary”, could walk the route in *reasonable* safety. The requirement to make assessments on the basis of children accompanied as necessary comes from the statutory guidance on home to school travel. The walking route audit process therefore determines whether school transport should be provided because a particular walking route presents *abnormal* or *exceptional* road safety hazards.

The adopted policy in Shetland provides each walking route a ‘Pedestrian Suitability Factor’ or PSF. This is an arbitrary ranking number in the scale of 1 to 4 and is used to compare pedestrian safety on one route against another - the higher the number, the less suitable the route.

Currently, routes with a PSF of 1 or 2 are suitable; routes with factors of 3 and 4 are not suitable, and will require pupils to be provided with school transport.

Nationally, and locally, it is considered that the most appropriate means of ensuring that children can safely travel to school is through road safety education, and parents are expected to educate children in road safety matters from an early age.

Notes relating to the main parts of the assessment framework are outlined in the following paragraphs:-

Accompanied Children

The audit process does not consider a circumstance where the accompanied child is further accompanied. This is because it may not be the case, and if it is then by what – one other child, a pram or buggy, double buggy and additional children? It is not practical to take into account all of the variable and changing circumstances of each household accessing school walking routes. Therefore, the process considers the standard requirement of an accompanied child.

There may be circumstances where it would be unreasonable to expect a parent to be able to accompany a child, e.g. permanent or long term mobility or disability issues. In such cases a re-evaluation of the route suitability for that specific child would be appropriate.

Poor Weather

Parents are responsible for ensuring that their children have suitable clothing and footwear, reflective clothing or other visibility aids, torches etc. as may be appropriate for the walking route and weather conditions.

Poor weather can occur at *any* time of the year and as such the process considers average conditions. However, in Shetland the assessment goes beyond the national guidance in considering the suitability of the route separately for summer (April to October) and winter (October to March). This is in recognition of the significant differences in *daylight* between the different seasons.

Extreme weather conditions *may* be considered as a factor in the *winter months* assessment for particularly exposed sections, but ultimately it is the parent's responsibility to decide whether it is safe or not for their child to travel to school in bad weather, either by transport or on foot.

Traffic Flows

The assessment of traffic flows and speeds is undertaken from count information covering the morning and afternoon travel periods of at least 3 school days. This is accepted nationally as allowing a reasonable approximation of the typical scenario for travel to and from school.

Unless there have been significant local factors that may impact on traffic flows or compositions any count up to 5 years old would normally be considered relevant. In many locations older counts may also be relevant due to there being little change locally.

An audit process following national guidance expects that traffic along the routes will be acting in a reasonable manner and abiding by road traffic regulations.

HGV and other large vehicles are only considered relevant where their numbers are greater than 10 in the hourly flow corresponding with the walking period and where this constitutes more than 10% of the traffic volume. Routes that present *abnormal* or *exceptional* road safety hazards will be seen to exist regardless of the total traffic volumes.

Drivers of large vehicles, including those used for agricultural purposes, have a legal duty to consider the suitability of any route they drive along and a responsibility not to create a safety risk for other road users, including pedestrians and cyclists.

Traffic flows vary from road to road. Traffic flows up to 400 vehicles per hour two-way flow are considered nationally to be low. Flows over 840 vehicles per hour are considered to be heavy. Locally we consider flows below 60 vehicles per hour to be very low.

Walking Provision

Footway and roadside strips are those surfaces which are considered to provide an adequate width and a reasonable surface condition to facilitate walking. The normal minimum width is defined as “at least one metre wide”. For the reasons given previously this surface is not considered in relation to prams or buggies, only walking.

A verge is that area of ground adjacent to the road carriageway that is not considered suitable for walking along. This area may provide space for “step-offs”. The normal minimum requirement for a step-off is a *reasonably firm and even surface* with a minimum width of 0.5m over a 1.5m length.

On roads with low and very low traffic flows a verge providing *sufficient* “step-offs” is considered suitable for a school walking route, as long as there is also *adequate* visibility. The number or frequency of step-offs required depends on the width of the carriageway and the number of vehicles travelling along the road during the periods that walking occurs. Adequate visibility is determined from the 85% speed of vehicles along the route. This can vary along the length of a given route and is assessed by experienced roads engineers. It may also be confirmed by automated traffic count equipment.

In Shetland many of our main and improved roads carry low levels of traffic flow but at a high speed. Therefore, along roads where flows are defined as low (less than 400 vehicles per hour two-way) but 85% speeds are greater than 53mph, we normally require the walking route to be provided by way of footway and roadside strips with minimal breaks.

Crossing Roads

Where roads need to be crossed specific consideration needs to be given to the approaching speed and volume of traffic and the level of visibility available. Before a road can be crossed safely there needs to be sufficient identifiable gaps in the traffic to allow enough time to cross. On roads with two-way traffic flows over 240 vehicles per hour a specific gap time analysis may be required. Below 240 vehicles per hour it is normally assumed that sufficient gaps will be available to cross safely. Pedestrian facilities such as splitter islands, pedestrian and school crossings can aid the crossing of busy roads. However, continuous queuing or significant volumes of HGV traffic at a junction can make it difficult to cross safely and a site specific study may need to be undertaken.

It is not uncommon for roads, particularly single track ones, to have to be crossed and re-crossed to improve sight lines. It is also quite normal do so to make use of footways or better stretches of verge, or to avoid a particular hazard. In assessing such a route the availability of suitable crossing points will be considered by the Engineer. A note will be made in the report if specific crossing points should be used.

Assessment Outcome

A report on the route is prepared after it has been walked and driven by the assessing Engineer. This report summarises the salient features and details of the route and identifies any particular points of concern. Where particular improvements or maintenance works would significantly enhance the safety of the route these will be noted.

In line with the Councils School Transport Policy, if parents or guardians are dissatisfied with the assessment of a route then they may make a request to the Executive Manager – Schools for it to be reviewed. However, unhappiness with the outcome is, in itself, insufficient grounds for a review. A review will normally only be instructed if:

- (a) there has been a material change in the environmental or physical features of the walking route since it was assessed; **or**
- (b) there is a particular aspect of the environmental or physical features of the route which does not appear to have been considered by the assessment.

The review process does not consider the level of risk that has been assessed, but rather it looks to determine that what material changes (if any) have occurred along the route and to check that there have not been any omissions in the assessment process.

The request for a review should be made in writing to The Executive Manager – Schools, and it must clearly outline the grounds for the request.

Roads Service
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Appendix B: Home to School Transport Guidance

Listed below are key guidelines which drivers must follow to support the safe transport of pupils between home and school and/or on school trips/outings.

Pupils

School transport is provided to get pupils to and from school. The behaviour of pupils between home and school, whether as a pedestrian or as a passenger in a vehicle, has a direct bearing on their safety. Pupils should be given sound advice on what constitutes responsible and safe behaviour and they should be encouraged to develop their own road safety skills. Pupils should be encouraged to adopt the following as a code of conduct in relation to their journey between home and school:

- Make sure you leave home in plenty of time so that you do not have to rush;
- Always walk on the pavement, where there is one;
- If there is no pavement, always walk facing the oncoming traffic.
- Always wear something bright to make you more visible in the dark or in bad weather;
- If you are with younger children, set them a good example and let them walk on the inside so that they are furthest away from any traffic;
- On narrow roads with no pavement, walk in single file;
- Walk, don't run;
- Act responsibly and don't be persuaded by others to act foolishly as this could compromise your own safety and the safety of others;
- Stand back when the vehicle arrive;
- Get on and off the vehicle one at a time and do not push or shove.
- Sit still on the vehicle and fasten the seat belt. All pupils are required to wear a seat belt for the duration of the journey;
- Do not open or play with emergency doors or windows;
- Always obey the instructions of the driver;
- Treat other people with respect;
- When you get off the vehicle do not cross the road until the vehicle has moved off and you can see clearly in both directions;
- Between the vehicle and the school entrance keep your eyes open for other vehicles near the drop-off point; and
- If you have left anything on the vehicle do not run after it but tell your teacher or playground supervisor as soon as possible.

Parents/Carers

- Young children should be accompanied by an adult while walking;
- Young children should be met at the bus stop;
- Ensure that your child takes the safest route;
- Walk the route with your child at least once and talk about the hazards;

- Children must be suitably dressed for the weather and should always wear something bright, preferably with reflective and fluorescent strips or panels;
- Make sure children leave home in plenty of time so that they do not have to rush;
- Children need to be at the designated pick-up point before the scheduled departure time of their transport. Transport operators cannot wait for latecomers;
- Teach your children about road safety;
- Passengers aged 14 years or over are responsible for wearing a seatbelt where they are fitted;
- Remind your children that playing about at pick-up points or on the vehicle can result in accidents or injuries. Extreme or persistent misbehaviour may lead to the withdrawal of school transport from the pupils responsible;
- Ensure children do as the driver says and not to misbehave. Parents / carers will be held responsible for any vandalism caused by their children;
- When they return from school, if the vehicle stops on the opposite side of the road, cross over to meet your child do not expect them to cross the road to meet you;
- If parents/carers are concerned about the behaviour of pupils on school transport, they should contact the Head Teacher;
- If the service is unreliable, or parents/carers are concerned about the vehicles being used, or the attitude of the driver, they should contact the Quality Improvement Officer for the school, preferably in writing. It is important that complaints are notified promptly;
- All behavioural issues which are of concern to the driver must be dealt with. Concerns over the conduct of pupils must not be ignored as this only encourages situations / patterns to develop and escalate. If it becomes apparent that a particular pupil cannot continue to be allowed to travel on school transport, the Head Teacher must inform Children's Services immediately by contacting the relevant Quality Improvement Officer;
- Report any discipline or behaviour concerns to the Head Teacher of the relevant school. This should be done even if the driver feels they have dealt with a particular issue effectively;
- Be aware that the safety and welfare of all pupils on the vehicle is of paramount importance and a considerable degree of responsibility rests with the driver on each journey; and
- Understand their responsibilities as defined in the Shetland Islands Council School Transport Policy.

Drivers

- Do not drive a vehicle which you are not suitably licensed or insured to drive;

- Do not drive a vehicle you suspect of being unroadworthy or in contravention of relevant regulations or legislation;
- Follow the scheduled route and use pick-up and set down points designated by the contractor or agreed by the authority;
- Approach each stop slowly and carefully and keep doors closed until the vehicle has stopped;
- If applicable, check pupil bus passes. Pupils who do not have a pass should not be refused transport but it should be reported to the relevant Head Teacher;
- Do not drive off until all pupils are seated, the doors are closed and you have checked that no pupils are in the vicinity of the vehicle;
- Remind pupils to fasten their seat belts before driving off;
- Know who to contact in the event of an emergency, such as a breakdown, an accident, adverse weather conditions, an unforeseen delay or other hazard;
- Never eject a pupil from the vehicle under any circumstances. Report any discipline or behaviour concerns to the head teacher of the relevant school. This should be done even if the driver feels they have dealt with a particular issue effectively. In the event of extreme or persistent misbehaviour the authority reserves the right to suspend school transport provision for the pupils responsible. Transport arrangements will then become the responsibility of their parents/carers; and
- Understand their responsibilities as defined in the Shetland Islands Council School Transport Policy.

Schools

- All behaviour issues which are of concern to the driver must be dealt with. Concerns over the conduct of pupils must not be ignored as this only encourages situations / patterns to develop and escalate. If it becomes apparent that a particular pupil cannot continue to be allowed to travel on school transport, the Head Teacher must inform Children's Services immediately by contacting the relevant Quality Improvement Officer;
- Be aware that the safety and welfare of all pupils on the vehicle is of paramount importance and a considerable degree of responsibility rests with the driver on each journey; and
- Understand their responsibilities as defined in the Shetland Islands Council School Transport Policy.