

Code of Conduct

For drivers and passenger assistants transporting children and adults



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Section 1: Introduction

1.1 Council aims and commitments

Cheshire West and Chester Borough Council aims to make Cheshire a thriving Council and sets out themes and priorities that residents say are important to them.

The Council will make sure that the Borough has a thriving economy which is a good place to live, work and visit, now and in the future; a place where communities will thrive along with residents to ensure:

- vulnerable adults and children feel safe and protected
- families and young people are supported to get the best start in life
- people are well educated and earn a decent living
- neighbourhoods are the cleanest and safest
- it's a great place to do business
- the Borough is well connected and accessible
- good quality and affordable housing is provided
- resources are well managed and reflect the wishes of residents.

In order to adapt new ways of working to continue to thrive, the Council has adopted a number of values that have been shaped by staff. These are:

- teamwork
- honesty
- respect
- innovation
- value for money
- empowerment

Please do your day to day work with these objectives and commitments in mind.

1.2 About this handbook

This handbook has been written to help you do your job in transporting passengers for the Councils. It covers Council and external transport services provided for social care for adults, children with complex special needs, children cared for by the authorities and children in mainstream education.

Where the word 'Council' is used it applies to Cheshire West and Chester Council. Where the word 'you' is used, it applies to both drivers and passenger assistants. Where the word 'driver' or 'passenger assistant' is used, it applies primarily to that job but will also be of interest to other staff.

It sets out what the Council expects of you in your work and provides information on many situations which you may come across. However, it cannot cover everything and you must contact your line manager if you need further advice or support with anything to do with your work.

1.3 The transport team

Having the care of often vulnerable passengers without anyone directly on hand to give you support and advice can mean that you feel isolated. It is important that you feel part

of the team of people responsible for transport and that you feel able to approach other team members when you need help.

Children West Transport Commissioning – Chester and Ellesmere Port Vale Royal	01244 977231 01244 973630
Adult Social Care West Transport Commissioning	01244 973039
Children and Adults Social Care Emergency Duty Team Social Care	01244 977277
SPED Transport Request West	SpedTransportRequestWest@cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk

Section two: What We Expect of You

This section sets out the standards which the Council expects of all staff who are involved in the transport of passengers.

2.1 Safeguarding and safeguarding training

'Safeguarding' is a term used to cover a wide range of approaches to ensure that every vulnerable person is free from harm. It is a duty of care that everyone plays their part in ensuring that vulnerable people are safe.

From 2018, it will be rolled out that all staff working on Cheshire West and Chester Borough Council contracts will receive 'Safeguarding Level 2 training'. The course is essential for staff to understand their role in safeguarding children and vulnerable adults in their care, as well as for them to safeguard themselves in their role.

This is a mandatory requirement for all staff who must make time to attend the course, and any subsequent refresher courses.

Please note: the Council reserves the right to revoke the driver/passenger assistant badge, should they not attend this training - a number of dates and times will be made available to ensure staff are able to attend

Examples of safeguarding

- only Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) vetted staff are used on transport
- from 2018 Safeguarding Level 2 will be rolled out to all staff on transport contracts
- any concerns must be reported and passed on but can be anonymous

Important note: please see section five for more information on safeguarding of vulnerable children and adults

2.2 Disclosure of criminal background

To prevent unsuitable people working with children and vulnerable adults, the Government requires that checks are made against criminal records. These checks are carried out by the Council through the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) for all driving staff and passenger assistants employed by and contracted by the Council. You will be required to complete a declaration form. The check is renewed every three years but you must report any known or suspected breaches of the law to the Council as they arise - failure to do so may result in disciplinary action.

2.3 Driving licences

Drivers: You must ensure that you hold a current driving licence that is valid for the vehicle you drive. You must report to your manager any driving convictions or other circumstances that affect your ability to drive. You must produce your driving licence to your manager or to any other authorised person on request.

2.4 Roadworthiness of your vehicle

As a driver, it is your legal responsibility to make sure the vehicle you are driving is in a roadworthy condition before taking it out on the road. You must not drive a vehicle if you know it is not roadworthy in any way.

As a passenger assistant, if you are concerned about the roadworthiness of a vehicle, please contact your line manager as soon as possible.

2.5 Knowledge of your vehicle and good driving practice

Your line manager must ensure that you are trained and are competent to safely use the controls, equipment and other features of your vehicle. This includes the entrance door, the passenger lift and its controls, the seat belt and wheelchair restraint systems and the emergency exits. Vehicles fitted with rear child proof locks must ensure they are working and in the locked position. You must know where the fire extinguisher and first aid kit are stored in your vehicle and be able to produce them for inspection if required.

You should drive in a manner which sets a good example to others, keeping safety and economy in mind. Concentrate on your driving; plan ahead; be observant; anticipate what you can and cannot see; allow enough space between you and other vehicles to give you time to decide how to act and then to act on your decision. These points will help to give you good fuel mileage and keep you, your passengers and your vehicle as safe as possible on the road.

2.5.1. CCTV

If your vehicle is equipped with CCTV or Dash Cam cameras, you must check them daily for damage or operational failure - any faults must be reported immediately to your line manager or the Transport Commissioning Service.

The use of CCTV is covered by the Data Protection Act of 1998 and a code of practice has been issued by the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO). This explains your legal requirements, responsibilities and obligations. Further information can be found on the ICO website where the code of practice is held.

2.6 Dress code, uniform, protective and high visibility clothing

You must be neat and tidy when on duty. If there is a dress code, you must comply with it. If you are issued with uniform, protective or high visibility clothing for your work, you must wear it whilst on duty.

2.7 Personal identification

You must wear your official identity badge at **all** times whilst on Council business.

2.8 Smoking, alcohol and drugs

You must not smoke in Council vehicles or buildings at any time or in hired vehicles whilst these vehicles are under contract to the Council. No smoking is permitted in a vehicle immediately prior to operating a contract. For further information, refer to the

Council's 'Smoking at Work' policy (also see paragraph 2.10.5) about passengers smoking).

You must not work if you are under the influence of alcohol or drugs. You need to be aware that alcohol may remain in the body's system for around 24 hours and drugs for up to 72 hours. For further information, refer to the Council's policy 'Managing Alcohol and Drug Abuse'.

2.9 Confidentiality

It is important to remember that all information about passengers is confidential and any paperwork or information must be kept secure on the vehicle or returned to the office for disposal.

It is important that parents and carers are kept informed regarding changes to transport, for example, on timing or route changes, so that they may use the service with confidence. You should however, ensure that any information about other passengers remains confidential.

You may be given personal or medical information about passengers you transport and their families which is necessary for you to do your job. You must regard this information as confidential. The same applies to information you may have about the Council's business.

You must not take part in or repeat any gossip about passengers. However, if you have any reason to believe that a passenger may be being bullied or abused, you should report it to your manager. (See section five of this handbook).

Do not talk about a passenger in front of them or any other passengers on board.

2.10 Relationships with passengers

Many of our passengers have special needs of some kind, and further advice on some of these needs is given elsewhere in this handbook. However, the following paragraphs apply to everybody we transport.

2.10.1 Meeting

When you meet a new passenger for the first time, take time to introduce yourself with your first name or surname as you prefer. Ask them how they prefer you to address them. Try to make them feel at ease and safe in your care.

2.10.2 Greeting

Greet each passenger, and their parent or carer, with 'Good morning/afternoon' and their preferred title and name. If in doubt, use Mr., Mrs, or Ms. Be pleasant and friendly - remember that a smile goes a long way towards creating a positive image. You must not engage in inappropriate conversation with your passengers or use inappropriate or offensive language. You should be aware that over-familiarity can cause offence and you must always maintain a professional relationship with your passengers and their carers.

2.10.3 Respect

You must always treat your passengers with respect and dignity. You must behave towards others as you would want others to treat you. You must be sensitive towards passengers' individual and cultural needs and expectations, which may be different from your own. If you are not sure how to handle a situation, ask your line manager for advice. Alternately the school may also help and advise on specifics if you have a difficult situation relating to a child.

2.10.4 Acceptance and offering of gifts

You should never accept personal gifts from carers, parents, passengers or any organisation.

2.10.5. Driving school and college contracts

Driving school and college contracts and dealing with students can be difficult. The following points may help you.

- Be consistent and fair in the way you treat people.
- Be willing to listen and be reasonable.
- Be calm but firm.
- Be understanding and be prepared to apologise if required.
- Avoid confrontational situations.
- Remain courteous and treat everyone with respect.
- Never refuse a child travel or make them leave the bus unless you have been authorised to do so.
- Do not smoke – if passengers smoke, report it
- please report all incidents to the Transport Commissioning Service either directly or through your line manager.

2.11 Punctuality

Punctuality is very important. You must follow the prescribed route as closely as possible unless there are exceptional circumstances beyond your control. If you are 20 minutes behind or in front of your schedule it is really important to communicate this information so that waiting passengers and establishments can be forewarned of any change of expected arrival time. It is important and courteous to explain to the carer and passenger why there has been a change of time and your explanation might avoid a formal complaint being made in the future. If you are regularly late or ahead of time, report the cause to your line manager so that changes can be made to retime the schedule.

2.12 Training

You are expected to attend any training the Council identifies to help you do your job to the required standards.

2.13 Use of vehicles

You must only use Council vehicles for authorised purposes. You must only carry passengers you have been authorised to convey.

2.14 Mobile telephones iPads and two-way radios

Where it is a condition of the contract, all vehicles must be provided with a means of emergency contact, either radio or mobile telephone. Drivers must not under any circumstances use mobile telephones or radios whilst driving, the passenger assistant may answer a call if it is safe to do so. If it is necessary for drivers to make or receive calls in connection with your work, you must stop the vehicle in a safe place and turn off the engine before making a call. Drivers and passenger assistants must keep their phones secure and preferably in a pocket away from passengers. Under no circumstances should any electronic material be shared with passengers on any mobile devices.

There may be occasions when it has been agreed with parents/school that a child travels to and from school with an iPad to aid as a distraction. If you have children who use electronic devices on the journey, please ensure that they are only used by that child and not passed to other passengers.

2.15 Use of car radios, CD players, I-phones

You must not play radios, CD players or music on I-Phones etc. without the agreement of your passengers. You must not play material which is inappropriate for, or may be offensive to your passengers.

2.16 Council and other checks or inspections

You must co-operate with any checks on your licences or vehicle carried out by Council or school staff, a taxi licensing officer, the Vehicle Inspectorate, the Police or any other authorised person.

2.17 Complaints

You must report to your line manager any complaints that are made to you about the transport service and you must cooperate fully in any subsequent investigation.

2.18 'Whistle blowing' policy

The Council is committed to the highest possible standards of openness and has adopted a 'whistle blowing' policy to provide a way for you to raise concerns in confidence. Details are given in Appendix A at the back of this handbook.

Section three: Passenger Care and Safety

This section gives instructions and advice about the day to day running of transport.

3.1 Responsibilities

Drivers have overall control of the vehicle and the main responsibility for safety. Where a passenger assistant is employed on a vehicle, they are responsible for the welfare and control of passengers.

Drivers should be aware of the special needs of individual passengers by risk assessments and information provided by the Council, schools and care establishments they serve. Drivers must follow this advice on medical and behavioural matters concerning passengers.

3.2 Risk assessments

Some passengers may have a 'Travel Care Plan' or risk assessment which contains the specific needs of a passenger and advice on how to care for the individual on the journey. Passenger Assistants should have the Travel Care Plan available on the journey and make sure they are aware and understand the advice enclosed in the plan. (See confidentiality 2.9).

3.3 Getting to and from the vehicle

The arrangements for passengers to get to the vehicle depend on the type of transport you are providing:

3.3.1 Adult social care

You should pick-up and drop-off the passenger from their home address unless instructed to do otherwise by the Transport Commissioning Service. If there is no reply when you knock on the door, try all the doors and look through the ground floor windows.

Check with neighbours to see if they know the person's whereabouts. If you cannot find out where they are or you have information about them, you must contact the Transport Commissioning Service or your line manager as soon as possible and also inform the care establishment on your arrival.

On the homeward journey, when there is no carer at home and the passenger requires assistance, you should see them safely inside their home. As you have responsibilities to other passengers on the vehicle, you should normally limit any assistance in the home to closing or locking doors, switching on fires and drawing curtains. If you are asked to do more than this, you must consult your line manager.

3.3.2 Children with complex special needs

Prior to commencement of all new contracts the driver and passenger assistant must conduct an introductory visit to meet the child, parent or carer.

Parents/carers are responsible for bringing children to the vehicle and collecting them from it. If a parent/carer does not co-operate with you in this, you must let your line manager know.

If a parent/carer fails to bring a child to the vehicle, the driver should park safely and legally (with the engine switched off and the key removed) and go to the door of the house, whilst the passenger assistant remains in the vehicle with any other children. If after two or three minutes the child is not brought out or there is no response, you should put a note through the door, continue the journey and report the matter to the school and the Transport Commissioning Service.

If there is no passenger assistant on the vehicle, the driver must not leave other children unattended.

At the school end of the journey, you should cooperate with the school's arrangements for leaving and collecting children. Whilst as a general rule, transport is gate to gate, and as such there is no requirement for you to take children into school, the circumstances of each contract will vary according to the needs of the children on the individual contract.

Examples

- At some schools (e.g. mainstream secondary schools), the agreement may be that pupils will be dropped off at the designated 'bus stop'.
- Where children are younger (for example primary school pupils), an agreement will be reached with the school as to the appropriate drop off point and you may then work in partnership with school staff.
- For other pupils, particularly those attending SEN schools, there may be an established arrangement at the relevant school in partnership with school staff.

Please ensure you are aware of the agreed arrangements at the schools you are serving.

It is imperative that the child is picked up and dropped off at the designated points and passed to the assigned person as pre-arranged with the Transport Commissioning Service. If a parent fails to meet a child on the homeward journey, you should follow the advice given in paragraph 4.9.2 of this handbook.

3.3.3. Mainstream education

Most school bus accidents occur when students are getting on or off the vehicle or waiting at the bus stop, therefore particular care should be taken on approaching each pick up point. Keep the doors closed until you have brought the vehicle to a complete standstill. Under no circumstances should students be allowed to operate the doors.

Hazard warning lights should be used when students are getting on or off buses and coaches.

When parked at schools, engines should be switched off until the vehicle is ready to move.

Drivers must check all bus passes to ensure that only authorised students travel.

You should not refuse to carry a student even with an invalid pass unless you have been instructed to do so by the Transport Commissioning Service. You must record the name of any student without a valid bus pass and report this information to your line manager. This information must be reported to the Transport Commissioning Service on the same day. Students who have lost their pass should be told to contact the Transport Commissioning Service within seven days for a replacement pass, for which there is an administration charge. Their name should be added to the monitoring form. There is no obligation for you to carry older students over the age of 16 if they do not have a bus pass.

For safety, always allow students waiting at a stop to get on the bus before doing any reversing manoeuvre and make sure that students stay on the bus if a reversing manoeuvre is required when dropping off. Where journeys involve the need to regularly reverse, this must be reported to the Transport Commissioning Service who will complete a risk assessment.

Only authorised pick up and drop off points should be used, unless this is impractical due to temporary hazards, in which case the nearest safe point should be used. Drivers must inform their employers of any site they consider unsafe or inappropriate. Drivers may suggest suitable alternatives.

Where it is not possible to get onto school grounds, drivers should pick up and drop off on the same side of the road as the school entrance.

Where students need to cross the road, they should be informed by the driver to wait until the vehicle has moved away and the road is clear of traffic. Drivers are not expected to leave the vehicle to help students cross the road. It is the driver's responsibility to stay with the vehicle. Students should not be left unattended in a vehicle except in an extreme emergency.

Drivers should co-operate with Council inspectors/staff who may board vehicles at any time.

3.4 Picking up and dropping off passengers

You must only pick up and drop off passengers at suitable and safe stopping places as specified on the bus pass or in accordance with the information provided by the Transport Commissioning Service. Please refer to paragraph 3.9 if you are transporting passengers in wheelchairs or using a passenger lift (also see Appendix D: Use of passenger lifts.)

If your vehicle has side doors, it must be parked alongside the pavement facing the direction of travel and only the door(s) on the pavement side should be used. When using rear doors, you must directly supervise passengers getting on and off the vehicle and stand between them and the flow of traffic. You must supervise passengers closely whilst they get on or off the vehicle, and assist them as necessary.

3.5 On the vehicle

For many passengers, the journey is an important part of their day. You should try to ensure that their time on your vehicle is as comfortable, enjoyable and stress-free as possible. School or care establishment staff may be able to suggest ways of helping you with the individual needs of passengers. Make sure any requests or instructions to passengers are clear and have been understood. If you have difficulty communicating with a passenger, you should speak to the Transport Commissioning Service, the school or the care establishment staff.

Passenger assistants must sit in a position where maximum supervision can be exercised. It is unlikely that proper supervision can be exercised from the front seat of a vehicle, unless it faces towards the rear of the vehicle.

3.5.1 Seat belts

Before you move your vehicle, you must make sure that all your passengers are seated with their seat belts/harnesses securely fastened. Assistance should be offered to passengers to fasten and unfasten seatbelts/harnesses, if required.

Passengers are legally responsible to wear their seatbelts/harnesses except in the case of children under the age of 14, where the driver is legally responsible.

The Council expects all passengers to wear a seat belt. No belt no journey. If a passenger has a medical exemption from wearing a seat belt they will be carrying a doctor's 'letter of exemption' with them and you will have knowledge of this exemption from the Transport Commissioning Service. Anyone without a seat belt must be seated in a position where they cannot cause harm to another passenger in the event of an accident. If a passenger should wear a seat belt/harness but refuses to do so or regularly unfastens it during the journey, you must do your utmost to persuade them to wear it for a their entire journey. If you have concerns about a passenger not wearing a seat belt, contact your line manager as soon as possible. Faulty seat belts/harnesses must not be used and must be replaced; you must report this to your line manager urgently. Some types of seat belt/harness may need adjustment to take account of winter and summer clothing.

You must keep gangways and entrances clear at all times, including the emergency exit. Any equipment being transported (for example, a walking aid) must be secured so as not to become a flying lethal object in the event of an accident or severe braking.

You must not allow any passengers to stand for a journey or to sit in a sideways facing seat.

Before driving away you must make sure all passengers are clear of the vehicle, in particular that no clothing or bags are caught in the door. At the end of the journey, you must check to see that no passengers or their possessions remain on board.

3.6 Passenger behaviour

If you are concerned about a passenger's behaviour, you should discuss it with the parents/carers or staff at the school/establishment where the passenger attends. They

may be able to offer advice as to how to manage the situation. You must also report any issues to your line manager.

If a passenger is very disruptive or destructive during a journey, or absconds from the vehicle, you should follow the advice in sections 4.2 and 4.7 of this handbook.

You must never instruct a passenger to leave your vehicle unless, in exceptional circumstances, they are a danger to themselves or others if they stay on the vehicle. You must never use, or threaten to use, any form of punishment.

3.7 Passengers with epilepsy

You may have passengers in your care who have epilepsy. If a seizure occurs on the journey it is important to remain calm and reassure other passengers. Make sure the passenger is safe and comfortable and wait for the seizure to pass. If the seizure lasts more than a few minutes or you are concerned contact your line manager for instructions or dial 999 for an ambulance.

Further information and advice on this important aspect of your work is given in Appendix B at the back of this handbook.

3.8 Passengers with Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD)

Children and adults with ADS usually:

- find it difficult to accept change - change of vehicle, change of passenger assistant, change of route, change of time
- find it difficult say how they feel - happy, sad, tired, upset, frightened, unwell, anxious
- behave in ways that people may call 'naughty', but because of their autism they may not be able to tell you how they feel - frustrated, upset, tired
- are unable to understand how other people are feeling – embarrassed, upset, frustrated
- find it difficult to get along with other children or adults
- have favourite things which are very special to them and can be the most important thing in the world.

Further information and advice on this important aspect of your work is given in Appendix C at the back of this handbook.

3.9 Passengers who travel in wheelchairs

Passengers who travel in wheelchairs must enter and leave the vehicle by using the passenger lift/ramps. You must follow the advice for operating a passenger lift which is given in Appendix D, passenger's risk assessment at the back of this handbook and on the vehicle under Safe Operating Guidelines usually posted close to the lift.

Where a vehicle is provided with ramps instead of a lift, these must be used on all occasions when getting passengers in wheelchairs on and off the vehicle. Drivers, not passenger assistants, must fit, use and safely stow ramps on their vehicle. Passenger assistants should watch whilst the ramps are being used to direct and offer guidance to

the driver. Ramps must have non-slip material and raised edges; they must be properly fixed to the vehicle before and during use and they must be securely stowed whilst travelling.

Once in the vehicle, the wheelchair must be secured by the assigned webbing restraints as appropriate for the type of wheelchair. The passenger must then be made safe by a separate seat belt. You will be provided with information about the specific restraints to be used, but if there is any doubt, you must consult your line manager. You must ensure that you use the equipment specified for each individual passenger and their wheelchair and that you report any changes to the wheelchair or damaged equipment to your line manager as soon as possible.

No unauthorised person may restrain a wheelchair. The Road Traffic Act 1988 states that the journey must not proceed until the driver has checked and made sure that both passenger and wheelchair are safe and secure.

3.10 Smoking

Passengers must not smoke prior or in or near Council vehicles or vehicles that are on contract to the Council (also see paragraph 2.8).

3.11 Passengers' equipment

Passengers may need to bring equipment such as folding wheelchairs and walking aids with them on their journey. You should be provided with information about their needs, but if you have any concerns, you should consult with your line manager. All equipment must be safely stowed and secured on the vehicle. It must not obstruct doorways, gangways and emergency exits or pose a threat to passenger/driver/assistant in the event of an accident or severe braking.

3.12 Carriage of oxygen cylinders

Oxygen cylinders may be transported with passengers as long as they can be secured safely. You should be provided with a risk assessment and you are asked to follow the guidelines. You must display an oxygen warning symbol on the window of your vehicle to signify that you are carrying an oxygen cylinder. Emergency teams will look for this warning sign in the event of an accident.

3.13 Passengers' money

Passengers may need to take money to school or a care establishment which may be given to you for safekeeping and handing in at the destination. You should ask the parent or carer to put the money in a sealed envelope with the name of the passenger and the amount, written on the front. The signature of the parent/carer should be written across the seal and at the school or care establishment a written acceptance should be attained at the handover.

3.14 Passengers' medication

Passengers may need to take medication to the school or care establishment. If this is given to you for safekeeping and handing in at your destination, you should ask the

parent or carer to put it in a sealed envelope or secure container with the name of the passenger written on it. You must not administer medication to your passengers unless trained to do so.

3.15 Passengers' keys

As indicated at section 3.3.1, some Adult and Social Care passengers may need help with locking and unlocking their home. The best practice should be to return the keys to the passenger. However, if the passenger is unable to look after them, you must consult the Transport Commissioning Service or the care establishment manager to determine a routine for handling the keys, this information will then be held by the Transport Commissioning Service for future reference.

3.16 Lost property

You must check your vehicle for lost property at the end of each journey. Keep a record of any item(s) discovered, secure them (if necessary overnight) and hand in to the establishment concerned as soon as possible.

3.17 Unusual or suspicious substances and packages

If you discover any unusual or suspicious substance, package or item on the vehicle, contact your line manager or other responsible person as soon as possible.

3.18 Long journeys

Additional advice for drivers and passenger assistants employed on long journeys (usually to and from distant residential schools) is given in Appendix E at the back of this handbook.

3.19 Incidents/accidents whilst a passenger is in your care

If there is an accident or incident to a passenger resulting in injury or not, you must report it to the Transport Commissioning Service as soon as possible. It is important that you explain to the parents/carers/establishment staff / teachers exactly what has taken place, even if you think the incident may be insignificant. This is so that they can watch for any changes to the passenger which might develop as a result of the incident. Inform your line manager as soon as possible and complete an accident/incident report along with statement forms.

Section four: Dealing With the Unexpected

This section gives examples of out-of-the-ordinary situations which can arise whilst passengers are in your care and gives advice on how to deal with them.

4.1 General

You may from time to time encounter difficult or even emergency situations. No two situations are likely to be the same and much must be left to your knowledge and experience to deal with them, but you should remember that the safety and well-being of your passengers must be your first consideration.

The following guidelines are a common sense approach to dealing with the unexpected.

- Stop the vehicle.
- Assess the situation, the environment and the risks.
- Seek assistance - contact your line manager or the emergency services as appropriate ensure the safety of the passengers and yourself.
- Do not move an injured person unless you are absolutely confident that it is safe to do.
- Record and report the incident.
- Always carry a notebook or diary with you to record anything out of the ordinary which may occur in the course of your work.

4.2 Passenger's excessively disruptive behaviour and the use of physical intervention

4.2.1 Initial stage

If a passenger is very disruptive or destructive during a journey, you should stop the vehicle as soon as it is safe to do so. Assess the situation, making use of any advice which the school or care establishment has given you about how to manage their behaviour. Reassure other passengers.

4.2.2 Circumstances in which physical intervention may be justified

Physical intervention may be justified only in exceptional circumstances where there is a serious and immediate risk of harm to the passenger concerned, or to any other person, or to prevent serious damage to property. You must remember that you still have a duty of care to the passenger. Physical intervention must never be used as a form of punishment.

4.2.3 Procedure for the use of physical intervention

If you decide that the situation needs you to use physical restraint, you must follow this procedure:

- tell the passenger clearly to stop the disruptive or destructive behaviour
- if this fails, give the passenger a clear warning that you are going to use physical force

If this in turn fails, you may need to use physical force to restrain the passenger, but you must ensure that:

- you only apply the degree of physical force necessary to stop the behaviour; the physical force must be in keeping with the passenger's behaviour and their circumstances and must be kept to a minimum and for the shortest time possible
- you should be aware that legal action could be taken on behalf of a passenger if they consider that unreasonable force has been used
- the physical force should be by way of holding clothing wherever possible
- you should always try to avoid injury and must never deliberately harm a passenger.

If all of the above fails and you still have a potentially dangerous situation that you feel unable to deal with, remain parked, with hazard lights switched on if appropriate, and summon assistance from the Transport Commissioning Service or the Police.

4.2.4 Reporting procedure

All incidents however insignificant at the time should be reported and recorded to the Transport Commissioning Service or your line manager as a matter of urgency. (See also 3.6).

4.3 Passenger's illness

If a passenger falls ill during a journey, you should take them to the nearest point of assistance, for example:

- a health centre
- a hospital
- the passenger's home
- the passenger's school or care establishment.

If you have an emergency situation on board (e.g. heart attack) you should call 999 and ask for an ambulance to meet you. Whichever option you choose will depend on the severity of the illness and the point you have reached in the journey. You must make contact with your line manager or the Transport Commissioning Service /carer /parents/ care establishment/school and inform them of the action you have taken.

For children with a Travel Care Plan, passenger assistants should refer to this document for further advice.

If your decision is to return a child to their home and there is no one at home the procedure as laid down in paragraph 4.9.2 should be followed.

4.4 Body fluid spillage

From time to time you may have to deal with spillage of body fluids such as vomit, blood, urine, semen, faeces or saliva.

In order to assist you in disposing of these fluids you are provided with waterproof gloves, tissues and disposable bags (fleet only).

You should always wear gloves; use the tissues to soak up the fluid and then place them with the gloves in the disposable bag and securely seal. The bag may be disposed of at the next establishment visited or via the domestic waste disposal system. If the passenger's travel plan/risk assessment identifies them as infectious, the waste is classed as 'hazardous waste' and must be disposed of at a Council establishment via the yellow waste sack system.

If your skin comes into contact with these spillages you should wash the skin thoroughly. If splashes of bodily fluid enter your mouth or eyes, wash your mouth/eyes with plenty of water, as soon as possible.

If body fluids from someone who may have an infection enter your body through your eyes, mouth, open wound, abrasion, or broken skin you should take the following action:

- if the skin has been broken then encourage the wound to bleed, wash with water and cover with a waterproof dressing
- attend the nearest Accident and Emergency Department within two hours of the incident for assessment of risk, possible treatment and blood sampling
- after the event, contact your line manager who will ask you to complete an accident report form.

You may wish to consider a vaccination against Hepatitis B. This is a course of three vaccinations, a blood test to check immunity and a regular booster. Assistance with any cost may be available.

You should note that the risk of infection from exposure to blood is greater than from any other body fluid. You can only vaccinate against Hepatitis B, although other blood borne infections include Hepatitis C and HIV. For further information, contact the Occupational Health Unit through your line manager and the Transport Commissioning Service.

4.5 Needle, bite and scratch injuries

Some of you may come into contact with needles or be subjected to bite or scratch injuries from passengers you accompany. By needles we mean hypodermic needles/syringes which are also known as 'sharps'. These can be harmful if not handled correctly. The main risks from accidental skin puncture wounds are from Hepatitis B and C and HIV viruses. The Hepatitis viruses are more infectious than HIV and Hepatitis C can also cause a life threatening illness. Both Hepatitis B and C are blood-borne diseases that can be spread by 'sharps' contaminated with blood or bloodstained body fluids such as vomit, urine or saliva from a bite.

In the unexpected event that you come across needles/syringes on your vehicle, the following advice should be followed.

- Never under any circumstances, put your unprotected hands or another part of your body where you cannot see what you are doing (remember a needle can penetrate clothing).

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- Assess the situation. Do not move the needle/syringe unless absolutely necessary.
 - If you feel you have no other option but to remove the needle/syringe you should protect your hands and use extreme care. Pick the syringe up by the handle or plunger end not the needle end, place it in suitable temporary protection (e.g. a tin with lid, plastic lunch box or between two sheets of plastic or cardboard) until it can be taken to a needle disposal container. If anyone's skin has been punctured, take the needle with you to a GP or hospital accident and emergency department.
 - Needle/syringe disposable bins can be found at local pharmacies, and many social care service establishments, health centres, schools and hospitals.
 - Do not allow any of your passengers to come into contact with the needle/syringe.

4.5.1 Action if need injury occurs

In the event of a skin puncture or laceration caused by a needle or a scratch or a bite by a passenger, the following action should be taken:

- encourage the wound to bleed
- wash well under cold running water with soap if available
- cover with a dry waterproof dressing
- seek medical help as soon as possible from your GP, Accident & Emergency department of a local hospital, take the needle which caused the injury with you
- you can obtain a protective injection against Hepatitis B for up to 48 hours after the incident
- report and complete the necessary accident form and return it to your line manager.

Depending on the time of the incident, please try to complete your journey if possible, if not contact your line manager and/or the Transport Commissioning Service for advice

4.6 First Aid

Drivers should regularly check their vehicle's First Aid box to ensure it is fully stocked. You should only use items from the First Aid box that you know how to use. Any use of items should be reported under the accident/incident reporting procedure and the box should be re-stocked as required.

4.7 Absconders

If a passenger gets out of your vehicle along the route other than at their intended destination you should try to stop them by calling them back. If they refuse to return do not leave your vehicle to follow them if there are other passengers on board. Notify the Transport Commissioning Service or your line manager as quickly as possible and take their advice about continuing your journey.

4.8 Bad weather

The decision whether to provide the service on the day will be taken by managers or heads of establishments. If the transport is running, you must use your good sense and judgement as the person 'on the ground' in deciding how to respond to bad weather

conditions, but the safety and well-being of your passengers must be your first consideration. You must take into account the needs of passengers who have medical or other difficulties and for who longer than usual journeys could cause problems.

The following are general instructions for vehicles conveying passengers in bad weather.

4.8.1 Morning journeys

If bad weather occurs overnight or in the early morning and it is not possible for schools/establishments to open, head teachers will often arrange for an announcement to be made on local radio.

Drivers should listen out for announcements but also use their own judgement taking local conditions into consideration as to whether or not to operate the morning journey. If it is decided not to operate the journey, the driver must notify their line manager or the Transport Commissioning Service as quickly as possible.

If students have been picked up and taken to schools/care establishments in the morning and on arrival the school is closed, you should ask for guidance from the head teacher or a responsible member of the teaching staff. If it is decided that children should be taken home again, parents should be telephoned from the school or by the Transport Commissioning Service. If children are returned and the parents are not at home, the procedure in paragraph 4.9.2 should be followed.

4.8.2 Afternoon journeys

If bad weather occurs during the day, after students have been taken to school, it may be necessary to arrange earlier journeys home than usual. If so, the Transport Commissioning Service will liaise with contractors, Council drivers and schools to make these arrangements. It may not always be possible to provide transport at an earlier time due to prior commitments but the cooperation of all concerned is looked for to look after the passenger's best interest. Parents will be contacted by the school or the Transport Commissioning Service and if any students are returned and the parents are not at home, the procedure in paragraph 4.9.2 should be followed.

4.9 Carer or parent not in or not available

4.9.1 Adult social care transport

If there is no carer at home and you feel it is unsafe to leave the passenger alone in their home, you must contact the Transport Commissioning Service or your line manager for advice. They may be able to contact family or neighbours through emergency contact details held on the database or you may have to return the passenger to the care establishment. If the journey time is out of office hours you will have to contact the Duty Officer or the Emergency Duty Team.

Whatever action is taken, you must leave a note at the passenger's home to reassure the carers explaining what action has been taken and why, together with a contact telephone number.

4.9.2 Children with complex special needs

If you arrive at a child's home and no one is in, contact the Transport Commissioning Service or your line manager immediately and advise them of the situation. They will endeavour to make contact with the carer/parents.

Keep the child on board and continue with the run returning when the other passengers are safely home. If the carer is still not in, the passenger assistant should again telephone the Transport Commissioning Service for advice.

A note should be left at the home advising the carers/parents where the child has been taken and a contact telephone number.

4.10 Breakdown or road traffic accident

In the event of a breakdown or road accident involving your vehicle, remember that:

- your first responsibility is for the safety and wellbeing of your passengers and yourself
- you should keep calm
- you must be familiar with exits from the vehicle and how to release passengers from their seat belts or restraints if the vehicle has to be evacuated
- you must not move an injured person unless you are absolutely confident that it is safe to do so
- communication to all concerned, is essential
- you must make contact with your line manager and the Transport Commissioning Service as soon as possible to make a report. Depending on the nature of the incident, follow up reports should be made so that other people can be kept informed
- you must arrange a suitable and safe place for passengers to wait, if it is not safe for them to stay on the vehicle.

If it is necessary to leave the scene of the incident to get help, the driver should do this while the passenger assistant stays with the passengers. If there is no passenger assistant on the vehicle, the driver must remain with the passengers. If the emergency services are needed, the driver should call them and inform the Integrated Transport Service as soon as possible. The passenger assistant must inform the driver of any individual passenger medical or specific needs.

4.11 Fire

In the event of a fire, act quickly and stay calm. If the fire occurs on your vehicle:

- switch off the engine, ensure the safe evacuation of all passengers, then call the Fire Service - use the vehicle's fire extinguisher only if there is imminent danger to yourself or others in a passenger's home
- ensure everyone is out of the building (if it safe to do so) then call the Fire Service

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- in a Council building
 - follow the instructions of the head of the establishment.

4.12 Reporting accidents and incidents

If there is an accident or incident as part of the journey you must report it to your line manager or the Transport Commissioning Service straight away. It needs to be recorded and reported whether the incident/accident results in injury/damage or not.

It is important that you explain to the parents/carers/establishment staff/teachers exactly what has taken place, however insignificant you think the accident/incident may have been. You must complete an accident/incident report form, as required by the Council's Health and Safety procedure within 24 hours in accordance with the Special Conditions of Contract.

Section 5: Child and Vulnerable Adult Protection

5.1 General

Many of the adults and children using Council transport services have special needs making them vulnerable to abuse or bullying by others. Bullying can make the lives of victims a misery. It destroys their confidence and self esteem and ruins their sense of security. You play an active role in protecting passengers from possible abuse/bullying by reporting any concern you may become aware of through your day to day contact with your passengers. This reporting is in line with the Government 'Every Child Matters' guidance and links in with the Council's aims and objectives set out in section one.

You also need to know what would happen if an allegation of abuse were to be made against you.

5.2 What is 'abuse'?

Abuse can be physical or verbal it can be sexual, emotional, or neglect. It is the intimidation or manipulation of one person by another(s). Abuse can be caused by a single or repeated act or a lack of care or an action which causes 'significant harm' or distress to a person where there is an expectation of trust.

The law does not specify exactly when harm can be considered to be 'significant', which means that judgements must be made based upon what we know. Consequently, it is always best to seek advice if you have concerns.

5.3 Who might abuse/bully or be a victim of abuse/bullying?

You should be aware that anyone might abuse/bully a child or vulnerable adult, regardless of age: children or young people might be responsible for abusing/bullying someone because of that person's disability, ethnicity, culture, gender, sexual orientation or lifestyle.

Equally, anyone may be the victim of abuse/bullying. However, children and adults with disabilities are particularly vulnerable to all forms of abuse/bullying for a number of reasons; they may have communication difficulties which make it hard for them to 'tell'; they may not understand that they are being abused; they may need help with certain personal care tasks; they may look and sound different.

Abuse or bullying can be difficult to identify, there is no 'checklist'. It can be more difficult to identify the abuse or bullying of people with disabilities because there is a wider range of possible explanations for a wider range of behaviours.

There are a number of ways in which concerns about possible abuse or bullying might arise; for example:

- when someone tells you that they or another person is being abused/bullied

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- because you see something which concerns you, for instance, the way in which someone is being treated
 - because you notice marks or injuries on a person
 - because a pattern of behaviour develops at certain times, in certain places or around certain people.

5.4 What is your role in dealing with possible abuse or bullying?

5.4.1 Abuse: You should be clear that Social Care Services and/or the Police are responsible for investigating suspected abuse. You must not investigate and are not expected to make judgements about whether someone is definitely being abused, whether something is true or false or whether someone is guilty or innocent. Your role is to record and share information appropriately wherever you have concerns.

5.4.2 Bullying: If you become aware of any bullying or victimisation it is important that you report this to either the school/establishment or your line manager. This is in line with your council and their partner's anti-bullying guidelines.

If you are uncertain or uncomfortable about something you see, hear or are told, seek immediate advice from your line manager.

5.5 What should you do if you think that someone is being abused?

5.5.1 If someone tells you that they are being abused or bullied you should:

- be calm
- inform the person who is telling you that you have a responsibility to pass this information on
- listen carefully and reassure them that they are right to tell
- make a brief record of the facts of the conversation as soon as possible (using the person's exact words wherever possible) and sign and date it
- report what you are told or what you have seen to the head teacher of the school or the officer in charge of the care establishment as soon as possible, but in any event within 24 hours. If for any reason you cannot speak to the head teacher or the officer in charge, you must report the facts to your manager as quickly as possible, but in any event within 24 hours
- discuss the matter and any action taken with your manager as soon as possible, and certainly within 24 hours (including what you have passed on, when and to whom).

You should not:

- promise to keep 'secrets'

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- investigate, ask leading questions (such as “did he/she touch you?”), or probe for information
 - offer opinions or make comments about the alleged abuse or the people allegedly involved
 - forget to make a record and/or pass on the information
 - discuss what you have seen, heard or been told with anyone other than the head teacher/officer in charge and your manager.

5.5.2 If you see something that causes you concern and which might be abuse or bullying

Make a brief note of what you have seen: Who? What? Where? When? Sign and date it. Again, this information should be passed to the Head Teacher/Officer in Charge and to your manager within 24 hours. You must not discuss this with anyone else.

When you have passed your information on, you should do nothing else. The Head Teacher/officer in charge/your manager will seek appropriate advice and co-ordinate any further action that is necessary.

Please also see the Council’s “whistle blowing” Policy (Appendix A).

5.6 What will you be told about what has happened after you have reported a concern?

The purpose of confidentiality in the process of protecting children and vulnerable people is to keep them safe. It might be that you receive no further information or ‘feedback’ about an incident or concern that you have reported and we appreciate that this can be difficult. However, information must only be shared on a ‘need to know’ basis. Your manager will make judgements about who ‘needs to know’, what they need to know and why.

5.7 Allegations against staff

Because of the work you do you always need to keep in mind that you could be susceptible to allegations being made against yourself. Regrettably, in rare cases, transport staff have been found to have abused those in their care. As described in this handbook, your contact with passengers will always be professional and proper but you could be the subject of false, malicious or misplaced allegations. You should be particularly aware of the advice on the use of physical intervention given in paragraph 4.2 of this handbook.

The Council has a procedure for handling all allegations of abuse. Depending on the circumstances, Social Care Services and/or the Police may investigate an allegation independently of the Council’s procedures. Be aware that once an allegation has been made your Council has a duty of care to investigate. Depending on the allegation the driver and/or the passenger assistant may be suspended for their own welfare whilst the complaint is investigated.

Following these guidelines will help to minimise the risk of allegations against you:

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- adopt a polite and professional relationship: never become friends with your passengers or their carers
 - do not swap any personal details e.g. mobile phone numbers
 - do not meet with passengers or their carers outside your working environment
 - do not swear; use inappropriate language or humiliating comments
 - do not touch a child or young person unless this is part of your agreed role or in a safety critical situation
 - do not photograph or video passengers
 - do not show passengers photographs or videos
 - do not share any information or images on your mobile phone or any other electronic device
 - do not give or receive gifts to/from passengers
 - if someone particularly befriends you report it to your line manager and record anything that makes you feel uncomfortable.

5.8 What should you do if you are concerned about the conduct of a colleague or any other person?

Follow the guidance in 5.5.2.

5.9 Allegations made against other people by members of the public

It could be that a parent or member of the public makes an allegation to you against a teacher at school, a member of staff at a care establishment or another person. Under these circumstances, you should tell the person making the allegation to contact whichever of the following is most appropriate:

- the Head Teacher at the relevant school (or the Chair of Governors if the head teacher is the subject of the allegation)
- the officer in charge of the care establishment
- your manager
- the Police
- Children's services
- Adult services
- Council safeguarding team

You should not comment on what is said to you or discuss it with anyone but you should report it to your line manager as soon as possible, who can then take appropriate action.

Section 6: Health and safety

This section provides guidance on the responsibilities of employers, employees and others in health and safety matters.

6.1 Responsibility for health and safety

The law puts responsibilities for health and safety on employers, employees and others, these responsibilities are set out below. You must always take reasonable care of your own health and safety and the health and safety of other people who may be affected by what you do or not do. You must always take special care of children in your supervision.

6.2 Employers' duties

The responsibilities of employers are:

- to provide and maintain vehicles, equipment and systems of work
- to make suitable arrangements to ensure the safe transport of people, goods and associated equipment
- to provide information, instruction, training and supervision necessary for a safe system of work
- to provide a safe working environment.

6.3 Employees' duties

Your responsibilities as employees are:

- to take reasonable care of yourself and of anyone who is affected by your actions
- to report changes in your circumstances which affect your health and safety (for example, pregnancy or illness)
- to co-operate with your employer on health and safety matters
- to use any equipment provided correctly
- to report and replace defective equipment as soon as possible
- to report accidents, incidents and dangerous occurrences to your line manager as soon as they happen
- to know and use the Council's safety procedures
- to use personal protective equipment if issued.

6.4 Duties of the self-employed

Self-employed people must run their business so that they do not expose people, not in their employment, to health and safety risks.

6.5 Meeting health and safety requirements

More detailed advice and instructions on individual subjects (for example, risk assessment, accident reporting procedure) are contained elsewhere in this handbook.