

Code of conduct for pupils who use home to school transport

We want you and all other passengers to stay safe and travel in comfort. You must agree to the following code of conduct before we issue your bus pass. Your school and parents (or carers) will be alerted if you do not keep to the code and we may have to withdraw your transport assistance.

1. Your travel card

- Your travel card is your proof of entitlement. Please carry it whenever you travel to or from school on a bus, coach or minibus.
- If you cannot present a travel card, the bus driver has no proof that you are entitled to travel and is not obliged to allow you on board, whether or not you have been granted assistance.
- Only use your pass to travel on the route that you have been assigned.
- Do not use anyone else's pass or allow another person to use yours. It is your responsibility to protect your own bus pass, and it will be your responsibility to compensate the bus operator or County Council for any trips claimed fraudulently under your name.
- You may only possess one bus pass at any time. If you find a lost bus pass that you have since replaced, you must destroy the older pass.
- Our bus operators reserve the right to refuse any passenger who attempts to board their service using a defaced or damaged card.
- If you lose your pass, you can obtain a replacement one for a fee by selecting "Order a replacement pass" from the Gloucestershire County Council website. <http://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/applyforabuspass>

2. Your pick-up point

- You are responsible for getting to your bus or taxi's pick-up point.
- Arrive at the pick-up point at least five minutes **before** the vehicle is due to arrive. Any vehicle that runs to a timetable will not be allowed to wait if you are late.
- If transport is late, be prepared to wait at the pick-up point for 20 minutes but no longer. Agree with your parents what to do if the bus does not arrive or if you fail to catch it. (e.g. return home or go to a friend's house to organise alternative transport).
- You may only board transport from the pick-up point you have been assigned. If there are extenuating circumstances please contact the Integrated Transport Unit to agree an alternative. (Details below.)

3. Keeping safe when getting on and off the bus

- Queue sensibly, well away from the edge of the road, taking care not to block the pavement if there is one.
- Allow passengers to leave the bus before you board.
- Get on and off the bus in an orderly way so you don't hurt yourself or other passengers.
- If you need to cross the road once you have left the bus, wait for the bus to drive away so you can see other vehicles and their drivers can see you.

4. On the bus

- Sit safely in your seat once you are on the bus and use a seatbelt if one is provided.
- Do not distract the driver unless there is an emergency.
- Do not stand in front of the driver, in the aisle or on the stairwell.
- Do not use emergency exits or doors unless the driver instructs you to or there is a genuine emergency.
- Do not eat, drink or smoke (including e-cigarettes) on the bus.
- Do not use obscene or abusive language.
- Bullying will not be tolerated.
- Physical aggression of any kind will not be tolerated.
- You must not behave in a way that may cause direct harm to other passengers.
- You must not behave in a way that will make other passengers feel unsafe or less comfortable.
- You must not deliberately jeopardise your own safety or the safety of other passengers.
- You must not encourage, coerce or equip other passengers to do anything that may jeopardise their own safety or that of other passengers.
- Do not carry real or replica weapons.
- Do not throw, kick or otherwise launch objects across the bus – if you need to deliver something to another passenger, please remain in your seat and pass it by hand.
- Do not destroy, deface or deliberately soil any part of the bus. If damage is caused not only will the police be contacted but you will be liable for the full costs of repair and any fees incurred in recovering such costs.
- Do not use a mobile phone (or other electronic device) to produce images, videos or audio recordings of the driver or other transport users.
- Follow the driver's instructions at all times.

Please be aware that many bus operators monitor the behaviour of passengers using CCTV. CCTV footage may be consulted as evidence if it is alleged that the code of conduct has been breached.

Reporting Unacceptable Behaviour

The Code of Conduct exists to ensure that pupils feel safe on board transport provided by GCC, so it is important to us that if you have a concern about behaviour on one of our services you can easily report it.

If you are concerned about behaviour on your (or your child's) school bus, please send your report to the e-mail address mainstream@gloucestershire.gov.uk. Your report should include:

- The name of the school
- The name of the operator
- The date and time of the journey on which the incident occurred
- Your child's name

Please note that although Gloucestershire County Council does co-operate with the school to investigate reports of poor behaviour, transport bans are at GCC's exclusive discretion. Reports submitted to your child's school do not always reach us for investigation, so it is important that you communicate directly with us.

All reports will remain anonymous; the name of the complainant will not be disclosed to other transport users.

Updates to the Code of Conduct

The Code of Conduct is a live document, and will be updated routinely over the course of a school year. Updates will usually be issued in June and December, but may be published at any point. It is the responsibility of each transport user to ensure they have read and understand the most recent copy of the code before travelling. The latest edition will always be available via our website – visit www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/h2score.

If you would like to withdraw from home-to-school transport following an update to our terms, please contact mainstream@gloucestershire.gov.uk.

Sanctions for Unacceptable Behaviour

From time to time it is necessary to impose sanctions on children and young people who fail to conform to an acceptable standard of behaviour.

A parent or legal guardian must take responsibility for their children's behaviour on the way to and from school. It is their duty to ensure that their children understand why it is essential to behave properly in the transport provided. Young people over the age of 16 are responsible for their own behaviour and we expect them to adhere to the code of conduct independently.

Poor behaviour, especially that which puts at risk the safety of any other child, driver or road user, will lead to a ban on use of the transport provided. The responsibility to transport a banned child to school is transferred to the child's parent or legal guardian without any financial support from the County Council.

In return, we will ensure that contracts are monitored to ensure compliance with the law and the contract offered. We will investigate any complaint received from any other party, and be seen to act against anyone who contravenes the policies and agreements entered into. Although we recognise that children and young people are carried at the operator's discretion, we will encourage transport operators not to ban pupils before discussing any proposed action with the County Council and the head teacher of the school involved.

As part of its commitment to providing a safe environment for the transport of children and young people to and from school, we have determined a procedure for dealing with cases of poor behaviour reported to us, and have adopted the following list of sanctions that may be applied in certain circumstances. This is not an exhaustive list, nor is it a definitive statement that in every case the sanction indicated will be applied regardless of other circumstances. Each case will be considered on its individual merits, in consultation with the school and operator. The sanction will be applied jointly by the Travel Assistance and FSM Senior Officer and a Transport Review Officer. Any appeal will be considered jointly by the Senior Admissions & Transport Manager and Integrated Transport Manager, whose decision will be final.

Guidelines for first offences

1 Day Ban

Unhygienic behaviour, including: consuming or spilling food or drink, littering, spitting.

1 Week Ban

Self-endangerment or mischief, including: distracting driver, misuse of bell, not wearing a seatbelt (where seatbelts are available), leaving seat while the vehicle is moving.

1 Month Ban

Activities that affect, threaten or endanger others, including: bullying or fighting other passengers, misuse of emergency exit, chronic and ongoing poor behaviour.

1 Term Ban

Hazardous or criminal activities, including: assault of the driver or another passenger, possession of drugs, damage to vehicle, using or intending to use weaponry.

Please note that these are only guidelines; all bans are determined on a case-by-case basis. Where passengers who have previously been assigned bans continue to offend, they should expect longer bans than described above. For example, a passenger who repeats an offence that resulted in a **1 Week** ban may subsequently be banned for **1 Month**, or a passenger who has received several **1 Week** bans may be banned **permanently** upon committing a **1 Term** offence.

When enforcing transport bans, no distinction will be made between bullying and "banter." The difference between benign and spiteful behaviour can be difficult to judge and is usually irrelevant (as light-hearted misbehaviour is often no less dangerous or distracting). GCC will not consider whether a rule breach was teasing rather than torment, even where it is relatively clear.

The County Council may choose to refuse spare seat applications from pupils who have previously been banned multiple times for disobeying the code of conduct.

Criminal Offences

Any criminal offences that result in a ban may also be reported to the police. The following behaviours are likely to result in criminal investigation.

- Damage to vehicle, e.g. graffiti, vandalism.
- Gaining fraudulent access to the vehicle (using an expired pass, another pupil's pass, etc).
- Possession or use of drugs.
- Possession or use of offensive weapons (including replicas).
- Assault on driver, GCC pass holders or other fare paying passengers on commercial routes.

Notification

Operators will report any unacceptable behaviour to the County Council who will investigate the incident, including the recovery of any CCTV footage, and enforce the appropriate ban outlined above as necessary. Parents will be notified of this action by letter, or where an instant ban is justified, by telephone and later confirmed in writing. It is the responsibility of the parent or guardian to transport the child to school whilst the ban is in place.

Submitting an Appeal

If your child has been banned under the code of conduct and you feel it has been applied unfairly or incorrectly, you can submit an appeal by e-mailing mainstream@gloucestershire.gov.uk.

Contact:

Integrated Transport Unit:

Enquiries relating to transport arrangements, routes, replacement bus passes, and purchasing bus passes via the Spare Seat Scheme.

Tel: 01452 425387

Email: mainstream@gloucestershire.gov.uk

Travel Assistance and FSM Team:

Enquiries relating to entitlement to assistance with transport for pupils aged 4-16 and free school meals:

Tel: 01452 425390

Email: edsupport@gloucestershire.gov.uk

Enquiries relating to entitlement to assistance with transport for pupils aged 16+ and pupils with special educational needs:

Tel: 01452 426770

Email: sen.transport@gloucestershire.gov.uk