

Code of Conduct for School Students Travelling on Buses

Information for Parents/Carers

What is the Code of Conduct for School Students Travelling on Buses?

The Code outlines expected standards of primary, middle and secondary school student behaviour while travelling on buses so that bus travel can be safe and enjoyable for everyone. The Code encourages all students to be safe and responsible passengers, provides clear processes for dealing with misconduct, outlines categories of inappropriate behaviour, consequences for students who misbehave and the rights and responsibilities of those involved in school bus transport.

How can I help my children to be safe and responsible bus travellers?

Parents/carers need to ensure that their children have the necessary skills and knowledge to be safe and responsible bus travellers and are capable of travelling independently on the bus. You can support your children by talking about the Code to ensure that they are aware of their rights and responsibilities and the consequences of misconduct on the bus.

Who is involved in implementing the Code of Conduct?

Ensuring the safe transport of each and every child is a shared responsibility which brings together the efforts of students, their parents/carers, schools, bus drivers and bus operators. If there are any bus conduct issues involving your child it is important that you cooperate with the bus operator and the school principal in discussing reported incidents of bus misconduct and in implementing agreed consequences. As a parent/carer you play a leading role in influencing and guiding your child's behaviour. Therefore, your involvement in this process is essential to ensure a satisfactory resolution and to help your child understand the importance of safe and responsible bus behaviour.

What are my responsibilities under the Code of Conduct?

Parents' and carers' roles

To actively support bus safety with their school aged children.

Parents' and carers' rights

- Safe and comfortable travel for their children.
- To be respected and treated fairly.
- To be consulted and to receive accurate information about the bus behaviour of their children.

Parents' and carers' responsibilities

- To ensure that their children are capable of travelling independently on the bus.
- To ensure their children have an understanding of the Code and the bus rules.
- To communicate respectfully with the operator, school and transport staff.
- To teach their children about bus safety and consequences for misconduct.
- To demonstrate appropriate bus travel behaviours to their children.
- To co-operate with the school and bus operator in managing bus misconduct.
- To ensure the safe travel of their children to and from the bus stop.
- To be available for discussions about the behaviour of their children.

Parents' and carers' expected behaviours

- To provide their children with the correct bus fare.
- To cooperate with their children's school and the bus operator in discussing behaviour incidents and in implementing any agreed disciplinary action.
- To communicate with the bus operator and the school about their children's bus transport and respond to phone and written communication.
- To address concerns about their children's bus travel by promptly contacting the bus operator so that relevant issues can be managed using the procedures outlined in the Code.

What if a student does not pay the bus fare?

Unfortunately, the incidence of fare evasion by school students has increased in recent times. Some students have exploited the framework for safe travel of school students by not paying the correct fare, thinking that they will not be refused travel. As a parent/carer, you need to let your children know that they cannot expect to travel on the school bus unless they pay their fare and that there are consequences for fare evasion. Therefore, you must ensure that they have the required bus fare for their school bus travel.

What about bullying on the bus?

Bullying is a complex societal issue which is not the responsibility of just one individual or group. Everyone, especially those who have responsibility for the care of children, need to cooperate in managing bullying.

Physical bullying which affects the safety of bus travel can be easily observed and is dealt with under the Code. However, other forms of bullying, while being totally unacceptable, can be very difficult to identify as threats to passenger safety. When the bus driver has concerns, either observed or reported, of bullying issues the bus operator will be advised and will then inform the school of the situation.

Useful information about strategies to identify and to deal with bullying is available for parents/carers at www.bullyingnoway.gov.au.

What can I do if I am dissatisfied with the bus service?

If you are dissatisfied with any aspect of the service provided by the bus company you should contact the bus operator to lodge a complaint and to attempt to resolve the issue. If you are not able to resolve the matter effectively with the operator you can consider referring the issue to the nearest Department of Transport and Main Roads Translink regional office (school transport) (for list of locations refer to www.translink.com.au/schooltransport) to investigate according to the Department's complaints management process.

What can I do if I am dissatisfied with a decision made by the bus operator?

After implementing the processes outlined in the Code, an operator may decide to refuse a student travel on the bus or to implement alternative consequences. If you are dissatisfied with this outcome you may request that the operator review the decision.

If attempts to resolve your dissatisfaction with the operator's decision are unsuccessful and you wish to take the matter further, more formal procedures are involved. In these circumstances you may contact the nearest Department of Transport and Main Roads Translink regional office (school transport) (for list of locations refer to www.translink.com.au/schooltransport) and request, in writing, a review of the decision.

What are the possible consequences for not following the Code*?

Category 4: The behaviour is immediately life threatening

- Refused bus travel for a defined period (school weeks) plus behaviour agreement (agreement period up to one school year) or
- Permanent refused travel.

Category 3: The behaviour is dangerous/destructive and highly likely to cause immediate harm to property and others

- Refused bus travel (maximum 10 school weeks) plus behaviour agreement (agreement period up to one school year).

Category 2: The behaviour is unsafe where there could be harm to property and others

- First Report – refused bus travel (maximum five school days).
- Repeat Report within 10 school weeks – refused bus travel (maximum 10 school days) and/or behaviour agreement (agreement period up to 10 school weeks).

Category 1: The behaviour is irresponsible but not likely to cause harm

- Report of single incident – written caution considered.
- Report of repeat of incidents in single journey – written caution and/or one to two days refused travel.
- First Repeat Report in 10 school weeks (repeat incidents across multiple journeys) – written caution and/or one to two days refused travel.
- Second Repeat Report in 10 school weeks – maximum five days refused travel and/or behaviour agreement for up to 10 school weeks.
- Third Repeat Report in 10 school weeks – maximum 10 days refused travel and/or behaviour agreement for up to 10 school weeks.

** In some circumstances an alternative consequence may be considered appropriate.*