

SCHOOL TRANSPORT SCHEME FOR CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

Department of Education & Skills 2011.

Purpose of the Scheme

The purpose of the scheme is, having regard to available resources, to support the transport to and from school of children with special educational needs arising from a diagnosed disability.

School transport services are operated by Bus Éireann on behalf of the Department of Education & Skills (Department).

Eligibility Criteria

Children are eligible for transport where they:

- have special educational needs arising from a diagnosed disability in accordance with the designation of high and low incidence disability set out in Department of Education and Skill's (DES) Circular 02/05 and
- are attending the nearest recognised: mainstream school, special class/special school or a unit, that is or can be resourced, to meet their special educational needs

Eligibility is determined following consultation with the National Council for Special Education (NCSE) through its network of Special Education Needs Organisers (SENO).

Decisions regarding transport eligibility will be based on the prevailing circumstances at the time of first enrolment.

Eligible children will retain their eligibility while they remain enrolled in the special class/special school or unit.

Eligible children who are enrolled in an autism class/unit attached to a mainstream school and who subsequently mainstream in that school will retain their transport eligibility for the duration of their primary education in this school. Should these children transfer to a different school; a new transport application will be required.

The provision of therapeutic services such as Speech and Language Therapy, Occupational Therapy, Psychological Services etc. which are matters for the Health Service Executive will not be a factor in identifying the nearest recognised placement for transport eligibility purposes.

Application Process

Applications for transport provision, under the terms of this scheme, should only be completed in circumstances where children are not in a position to avail of standard school transport services.

An Application Form should be completed and signed by the Parents/Guardians, School Principal and the SENO prior to or at the time of first enrolment.

Completed Application Forms forwarded by the SENO to School Transport

Level of Service

Bus Éireann is responsible for the planning and timetabling of school transport routes. Bus Éireann endeavours, within available resources, to ensure that each eligible child has a reasonable level of school transport service.

These services will be subject to periodic review and may be withdrawn and/or replaced with an alternative service/grant where circumstances change..

School transport services for eligible children will generally operate during the 'Standard School Year' and will facilitate a child's attendance during normal school opening and closing times.

RESPONSIBILITY OF BUS ESCORT

1.00. The Bus Escort must:

- 1.01.** Ensure that s/he is on the school transport at the time of the first pick-up and last set down.
- 1.02.** Is responsible for the safety of children when opening and closing doors prior to "stop" and "move off".
- 1.03.** Assist children to board and alight safely from the school transport.
- 1.04.** Ensure that all children are seated with appropriate straps and harnesses where provided.
- 1.05.** Ensure that each pupil is received by some responsible person at the set down point.
- 1.06.** Supervise the children travelling on the school transport
- 1.07.** Maintain a good working relationship with the driver of the school transport.
- 1.08.** Act as liaison between the School Principal and/or class teacher and parents when required
- 1.09.** Observe confidentiality in all aspects of work.
- 1.10.** Be aware of particular needs of children on the school transport and be briefed by the School Principal on how to deal with same
- 1.11.** Perform any other duties relevant to the position of escort which may be assigned by the School Principal from time to time.
- 1.12.** Not leave the school transport unless under exceptional circumstances
- 1.13.** Ensure that his/her position on the school transport is where maximum control of the children is achieved.
- 1.14.** Report all concerns to the School Principal and/or Class Teacher.

Responsibility of Bus Operators/Drivers:

Bus Éireann will issue guidelines in due course re operation of School Transport Service.

Responsibility of PARENTS/GUARDIANS:

Pick-up and Set Down points are always AT BUS, either at pupil's home or at school.

- Notify Bus Escort/Bus Driver **in good time** if child not availing of transport
- Notify Bus Escort/Bus Driver **in good time** when child is returning to school after a period of absence.
- Notify Class Teacher **in good time** if child not availing of transport at end of school day
- Supply Bus Escort with names and contact details of TWO named adults who will bring child to pick-up point and collect child at set-down point every day. If pupil not collected at delivery point, bus continues to next house where parent/named adult can meet pupil. If at end of route a pupil is not collected, then Driver brings that child to nearest Garda Station.
- Ensure that child is handed over safely to bus escort for morning journey and that child is received safely by named adult on the return journey.
- Make sure that child is ready for morning journey, has all necessary school requisites, has gone to the toilet and has eaten breakfast. **NO EATING OR DRINKING** permitted on school transport.
- Supply booster seats, harness etc if these are required.
- Teach children **BASIC RULES** for Travelling on Bus Transport
- **NO REQUESTS PLEASE FOR CHANGES IN COLLECTION/PICK-UP ARRANGEMENTS.**

Responsibility of BOARD of MANAGEMENT:

- Recruitment, Appointment and Payment of Bus Escorts.
- Recruitment of Substitute Bus Escorts
- Responsibility for compliance with Child Protection Procedures.
- Provision of Safe Bus Parking Spaces at School Buildings.

Responsibility of SCHOOL PRINCIPAL:

- Link with Bus Escort re School Transport.
- Ensure that SNA staff/ Teachers are at collection points in good time to receive pupils
- Notify parents/school staff if unavoidable delays in Transport and/or cancellation of transport due to weather conditions.
- Link with Bus Escorts re needs of particular children.
- Assign and review the duties of Bus Escorts.
- Link with Bus Éireann, DES and NCSE re School Transport.
- Sign forms re School Calendar etc for submission to Bus Éireann

Responsibility of Class Teacher:

- Link with Bus Escort re Children travelling on bus.
- Have children ready in good time for Collection.
- Notify Bus Escort if Child is unwell and where possible contact parents in good time if child unfit to travel home by bus.

USEFUL CONTACTS:

1. School Transport Section, Department of Education & Skills, Portlaoise Road, Tullamore, Co.Offaly
2. School Transport Office, Bus Éireamm, Tara House, Tara Street, Dublin 2. Phone: 01 830 2222.
3. Bus Inspector: MR. SIMON BYRNE.

SEPTEMBER 2014.

My Child ; _____ leaves for school by bus at _____ (approx. time)

My Child: _____ arrives home from school by bus at: _____ (time)

_____ (Parent)

or _____ (Responsible Adult)

Brings _____ (child) to the bus and collects _____ (child)

from the bus every day

Parent Contact Details:

Mother: _____ Mobile Number: _____

Father: _____ Mobile Number: _____