

Taxi Driver and Passenger Assistant Code of Conduct

Taxi Drivers and Passenger Assistants must:

- **Read the code of conduct - Failure to abide by it may result in cancellation of the driver or passenger assistant's authorisation to work on Oxfordshire County Council Transport contracts and/or taxi license.**
- **Acknowledge that any information regarding an incident or specific driver and/or escort may be shared with other organisations where deemed appropriate.**

Transport providers must:

- Read the code of conduct to ensure an understanding of what is expected of drivers and passenger assistants.
- Ensure that these guidelines are read and understood by all drivers and passenger assistants working on Oxfordshire County Council contracts.
- Contact the Transport Hub if there are any new staff you have employed or any staff that have left and respond to any requests for this information in a timely manner.
- **Note that failure to abide by it may result in removal of OCC transport contracts.**
- **Acknowledge that any information regarding an incident or specific driver and/or escort may be shared with other organisations where deemed appropriate.**

Purpose of code of conduct:

- All adults who come into contact with children and vulnerable adults in their work have a duty of care to safeguard those children and vulnerable adults. As with other occupations, drivers and passenger assistants working with vulnerable people are expected to show high standards of behaviour.
- This code of conduct has been written to explain how drivers and passenger assistants are expected to behave in order to safeguard the passengers they are transporting.
- Although this code of conduct aims to cover a wide range of areas it is recognised that it isn't exhaustive and that professional judgements will need to be made in situations not covered by the code of conduct or that directly go against the guidance given by their employer. **It is expected that in these circumstances the driver or passenger assistant concerned will inform their manager who can then contact the Transport Hub and seek further advice.**

Oxfordshire County Council Badges:

- In order to drive or assist on an Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) transport contract drivers and passenger assistants need to obtain an OCC badge. They will also have to provide evidence that they have undertaken appropriate safeguarding training within the past 3 years and other training as requested by OCC.
- Drivers and passenger assistants must at all times wear their valid ID badges.
- Drivers and passenger assistants who work for more than one company will require an OCC badge for each company. Drivers and passenger assistants should not work on any OCC contracts for a company unless they have an OCC badge for that company.
- If an OCC Badge is lost or stolen the driver/passenger assistant must inform their manager who will contact the DBS & Badging Team at transport.safeguarding@oxfordshire.gov.uk or 03300 240022 who will deactivate the badge and issue a replacement.
- If a driver/passenger assistant is no longer employed by a company who carries out transport for OCC, they will notify the Transport Hub for advice on where to return the badge.
- If the details are incorrect on your OCC badge, drivers/passenger assistants must inform their manager who will arrange for the DBS & Badging Team to reissue a new badge.

Appearance:

- You should be clean with presentable appearance.

Picking Up and Dropping off Passengers:

- The instructions that you receive from your manager or OCC must be adhered to. In the instance that instructions cannot be adhered to please contact your manager who will then contact the OCC Transport Hub.
- Arrive at the prearranged/booked pick up or drop off time.
- If you are running late, please inform your controller as soon as possible.
- On reaching the correct destination please ensure that the passenger is handed over to a responsible adult. **Do not leave vulnerable individuals unescorted in any**

circumstances. You will be given any important handover instructions for vulnerable clients by your manager.

- Please do not beep your horn. Go to the front door and knock when picking up a client, if you already have a passenger in the vehicle, make sure you turn off your engine, remove your keys, money and/or bag/valuables and take them with you and explain to the passenger what you are doing.
- Give reasonable assistance with any loading or unloading of luggage before or after a journey.
- The Driver shall not at any time when driving the vehicle cause or permit the vehicle to be parked in a position that causes unnecessary danger or obstruction (e.g. double parked, parked at or close to a road junction).
- Drivers and passenger assistants will be helpful and polite to other drivers and passenger assistants who may be transporting passengers in other vehicles.

Transporting the Passengers:

- Whilst driving on an OCC transport contract you must not convey any unauthorised passengers under any circumstances.
- If you are transporting 2 or less passengers they must sit in the rear of the vehicle, passenger assistants must sit amongst the passengers, not separately or in front.
- Do not ask the client where they are going, your controller will tell you this information.
- Do not accept any travel amendments directly from passengers. They must be approved by the Transport Hub first.
- All seatbelts must be worn as per legislation.
- You should not make any unauthorised stops on your journey unless there is an emergency.
- If a passenger runs away while you are transporting them contact your controller who will contact the Transport Hub immediately. Child locks should be in use if available on the vehicle.
- Smoking in or around a vehicle is prohibited (this also applies to the use of e-cigarettes). Do not smoke at a destination where you are either picking up or dropping off passengers. All OCC school sites and establishments are non-smoking environments.

- Do not use a hand held mobile phone whilst transporting passengers. This is against the law.
- It may be necessary for an assistance dog to accompany a passenger. This will be without any additional charge unless the driver has a medical exemption certificate that allows him/her not to carry dogs for medical reasons. Drivers should make their manager aware of any such exemptions.
- It is forbidden for a driver or passenger assistant to have consumed any illegal substances or alcohol before/while driving.
- Be aware that some passengers with additional needs will carry a passenger passport. Where this is the case, the controller should pass on the information on the passport to you. Please make sure you read and understand the information that is given to you. If you think a passenger you are transporting should have a passenger passport, please contact your controller.
- All drivers will adhere to and be aware of the highway safety code and road traffic regulations. Failure to abide by these rules could result in prosecution.

Behaviour with Passengers:

Drivers and passenger assistants should be clear in their communications with passengers so as to avoid any misinterpretation of motives or inappropriate behaviour. This means drivers and passenger assistants **must not:**

- Make discriminatory remarks relating to age, gender, sexuality, disability, race, religion.
- Share personal information with their passengers or request or respond to any information shared by the passenger. If a passenger shares information which causes you a concern please inform your manager as soon as possible.
- Share/exchange telephone numbers with passengers. However, it is acceptable to share/exchange telephone numbers with parents/carers but please recognise that text messaging is rarely an appropriate response to an emergency situation.
- Under any circumstances give or take details of any blogs or personal websites or use any form of electronic communication to send messages to a vulnerable passenger. This includes social networking sites such as Facebook, Twitter or any other form of electronic communication.
- Use foul or inappropriate language in front of any passenger or parent/carer of a passenger.

- Use their position of power to force or indoctrinate passengers into following a political, spiritual or religious belief. This could be seen as a form of 'radicalisation' and will be treated as a safeguarding issue. If you think a passenger you are transporting may be showing signs of being 'radicalised' please contact the Transport Hub.
- Take photographs of passengers even if it is at their request.
- Provide any form of gift, no matter how small or invaluable.
- Have sexual relationships with passengers or attempt to engage in a relationship with a passenger.
- Have any form of communication with a vulnerable passenger which could be misinterpreted as sexually suggestive.
- Make sexual remarks to a passenger.
- Discuss your own sexual relationships with or in the presence of a vulnerable passenger.
- Look after/keep safe a passenger's personal belongings (e.g. mobile phone, iPod or money).
- Keep written details/notes on the passengers you convey. (If asked by school staff to keep notes please consult with the Transport Hub immediately).
- Physical contact should be limited to assisting a passenger in and out of a vehicle if needed. However, it is recognised that there may be other rare circumstances where physical contact will need to be used (e.g. to stop a passenger running away or hurting themselves) to reduce the risk of harm to a vulnerable passenger. The driver/passenger assistant is expected to exercise professional judgement in these situations and be prepared to explain if necessary why physical contact was used.

Confidentiality:

Drivers and passenger assistants may have access to confidential information about passengers they transport through verbal communication with their controller or written documents e.g. passenger passports. Any details or documents driver and passenger assistants are provided with must be kept confidential at all times. This means that drivers and passenger assistants **must:**

- Be clear about what information can be shared and in what circumstances it is appropriate to do so.

- Treat information they receive about passengers in a discreet and confidential manner.
- Seek advice from the Transport Hub if they are in doubt about sharing information they hold or which has been requested of them.
- Not promise to keep secrets for passengers or ask the passengers to keep secrets under any circumstances.
- Pass on any concerns regarding allegations of abuse of passengers to their manager without delay.
- **Never** use any information you receive about a passenger to intimidate, humiliate or embarrass the passenger involved

Guidance on who to contact if a driver/passenger assistant has any concerns about a passenger:

If any driver/passenger assistant has a concern about the child or vulnerable adult being a risk of any form of abuse they must act on this. Either inform your manager or the Transport Hub/ District Council if appropriate or contact one of the following:

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|---|---|
| To report specific concerns about the abuse or neglect of an adult , call Social and Health Care | 0345 050 7666 |
| If you are worried that your manager or any other professional (e.g. teacher) may be abusing a child, call the Local Authority Designated Officer for Child Protection (LADO) | 01865 810603 |
| If you are concerned that a child may be being abused by someone other than your manager or another professional (e.g. parent). Please contact the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) | 0345 050 7666 |
| To discuss general safeguarding concerns for the particular attention of the Transport hub call Or: Transport Quality Monitoring Team | 01865 323500 qmcc@oxfordshire.gov.uk |
| If there is an urgent risk call | 999 |

Coach Drivers Code of Conduct

Coach Drivers must:

- **Read the code of conduct and note that failure to abide by it may result in cancellation of their OCC badge and ability to work on OCC transport contracts**
- **Acknowledge that any information regarding an incident or specific driver may be shared with other organisations where deemed appropriate.**

Transport providers must:

- Read the code of conduct to ensure an understanding of what is expected of coach drivers.
- Ensure that these guidelines are read and understood by all coach drivers working on Oxfordshire County Council contracts.
- Contact the Transport Hub if there any new staff you have employed or any staff that have left and respond to any requests for this information in a timely manner.
- **Acknowledge that any information regarding an incident or specific driver may be shared with other organisations where deemed appropriate.**
- **Note that failure to abide by it may result in removal of OCC transport contracts.**

Purpose of code of conduct:

- All adults who come into contact with children and vulnerable adults in their work have a duty of care to safeguard those children and vulnerable adults. As with other occupations, coach drivers working with vulnerable people are expected to show high standards of behaviour.
- This code of conduct has been written to explain how drivers are expected to behave in order to safeguard the passengers they are transporting.
- Although this code of conduct aims to cover a wide range of areas it is recognised that it isn't exhaustive and that professional judgements will need to be made in situations not covered by the code of conduct or that directly go against the guidance given by their employer. **It is expected that in these circumstances coach drivers will inform their manager who can then contact the Transport Hub and seek further advice.**

Oxfordshire County Council Badges:

- In order to drive on an Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) transport contract, drivers need to obtain an OCC badge. They will also have to provide evidence that they have undertaken appropriate safeguarding training within the past 3 years and other training as requested by OCC.
- Drivers must at all times wear their valid OCC ID badges.
- Coach drivers who work for more than one company will require an OCC badge for each company. Drivers should not work on any OCC contracts for a company unless they have an OCC badge for that company.
- If an OCC Badge is lost or stolen the driver must inform their manager who will contact the DBS & Badging Team at transport.safeguarding@oxfordshire.gov.uk or 03300 240022 who will deactivate the badge and issue a replacement.
- If a coach driver is no longer employed by a company who carries out transport for OCC, they will notify the Transport Hub for advice on where to return the badge.
- If the details are incorrect on your OCC badge, drivers must inform their manager who will arrange for the DBS & Badging Team to reissue a new badge.

Appearance:

- You should be clean with presentable appearance.

Picking Up and Dropping off Passengers:

- The instructions that you receive from your manager or OCC must be adhered to. In the instance that instructions cannot be adhered to please contact your manager who will then contact OCC.
- Arrive at the pick up or drop off point at the correct time.
- If you are running late please inform your controller as soon as possible.
- If a child attempts to board the bus without their bus pass in the morning journey, they **must** be transported to school. In the situation where this isn't possible and the bus is already full you must contact your manager who will contact the Transport Hub immediately. This policy should also be practiced for the afternoon journeys as far as possible. If a child who travels on your bus repeatedly does not have their bus pass please inform the school and the Transport Hub who will be able to take further action.

- On reaching the correct destination, please ensure that the passenger is handed over to a responsible adult. **Do not leave vulnerable individuals unescorted in any circumstances.** If there is no responsible adult, the child should remain on a vehicle while the driver completes the rest of their journey. The driver should then return to the stop where the child was meant to be collected. If the parent/guardian still isn't there to collect the child, the driver should inform their manager who will ring the Transport Hub. The driver will then receive instruction on how to proceed.
- If a driver thinks a primary school child has got off the bus without a responsible adult there to collect them, they should contact their manager who will contact the Transport Hub immediately.
- Give reasonable assistance with any loading or unloading of luggage before or after a journey.
- The Driver shall not at any time when driving the vehicle cause or permit the vehicle to be parked in a position that causes unnecessary danger or obstruction (e.g. double parked, parked at or close to a road junction).
- Drivers will be helpful and polite to other drivers and passenger assistants who may be transporting passengers in other vehicles.

Transporting the Passengers:

- Whilst driving on an OCC transport contract you must not convey any unauthorised passengers under any circumstances.
- Do not accept any travel amendments directly from passengers. They must be approved by the OCC Transport Hub first.
- All seatbelts must be worn as per legislation.
- You should not make any unauthorised stops on your journey unless there is an emergency.
- If a passenger runs away while you are transporting then contact your manager who will then contact the Transport Hub immediately.
- If your vehicle breaks down whilst transporting children, ask the children to remain on the bus (unless there is an immediate risk e.g. fire) until the next course of action is agreed with your manager. If a child does not remain on the bus and walks off, inform your manager who will inform Transport Hub immediately.
- Smoking in or around a vehicle is prohibited (this also applies to the use of e-cigarettes). Do not smoke at a destination where you are either picking up or

dropping off passengers. All OCC school sites and establishments are non- smoking environments.

- Do not use a hand held mobile phone whilst transporting passengers. This is against the law.
- It is forbidden for a coach driver to be in possession of or have consumed any illegal substances or alcohol before/while driving.
- Be aware some passengers with additional needs will carry a passenger passport. Where this is the case, the controller should have pass on the information on the passport to you. Please make sure you read and understand the information that is given to you. If you think a passenger you transport should have a passenger passport, please contact your controller.
- All drivers will adhere to and be aware of the highway safety code and road traffic regulations. Failure to abide by these rules could result in prosecution.

Behaviour with Passengers:

Drivers should be clear in their communications with passengers so as to avoid any misinterpretation of motives or inappropriate behaviour. This means drivers **must not**:

- Make discriminatory remarks relating to age, gender, sexuality, disability, race, religion.
- Share personal information with their passengers or request or respond to any information shared by the passenger. If a passenger shares information which causes you concern please inform your manager as soon as possible.
- Share/exchange telephone numbers with passengers. However, it is acceptable to share/exchange telephone numbers with parents/carers but please recognise that text messaging is rarely an appropriate response to an emergency situation.
- Under any circumstances give or take details of any blogs or personal websites or use any form of electronic communication to send messages to a vulnerable passenger. This includes social networking sites such a Facebook, Twitter or any other form of electronic communication.
- Use foul or inappropriate language in front of any passenger or parent of a passenger.
- Use their position of power to force or indoctrinate passengers into following a political, spiritual or religious belief. This could be seen as a form of 'radicalisation' and will be treated as a safeguarding issue. If you think a passenger you are

transporting may be showing signs of being 'radicalised' please contact the Transport Hub.

- Take photographs of passengers even if it is at their request.
- Provide any form of gift, no matter how small or invaluable.
- Have sexual relationships with passengers or attempt to engage in a relationship with a passenger.
- Have any form of communication with a vulnerable passenger which could be misinterpreted as sexually suggestive.
- Make sexual remarks to a passenger.
- Discuss your own sexual relationships with or in the presence of a vulnerable passenger.
- Look after/keep safe a passenger's personal belongings e.g. mobile phone, iPod or money.
- Keep written details/notes on the passengers you convey (If asked by school staff to keep notes please consult with the Transport Hub immediately).
- Physical contact should be limited to assisting a passenger in and out of a vehicle if needed. However, it is recognised that there may be other rare circumstances where physical contact will need to be used (e.g. to stop a passenger running away or hurting themselves) to reduce the risk of harm to a vulnerable passenger. The driver is expected to exercise professional judgement in these situations and be prepared to explain if necessary why physical contact was used.
- If a child is misbehaving on the bus (e.g. bad language, violent behaviour) contact the school and the Transport Quality Monitoring team. Do not attempt to punish or sanction the student(s) in question yourself.

Confidentiality:

Coach drivers may have access to confidential information about passengers they transport through verbal communication with their controller or written documents e.g. passenger passports. Any details or documents drivers are provided with must be kept confidential at all times. This means that drivers **must:**

- Be clear about what information can be shared and in what circumstances it is appropriate to do so.

- Treat information they receive about passengers in a discreet and confidential manner.
- Seek advice from the Transport Hub if they are in doubt about sharing information they hold or which has been requested of them.
- Not promise to keep secrets to passengers or ask the passengers to keep secrets under any circumstances.
- Pass on any concerns regarding allegations of abuse of passengers to their manager without delay.
- **Never** use any information you receive about a passenger to intimidate, humiliate or embarrass the passenger involved.

Guidance on who to contact if a Coach Driver has any concerns about a passenger

If any driver has a concern about the child or vulnerable adult being a risk of any form of abuse they must act on this. Either inform your manager or the Transport Hub/ District Council if appropriate or contact one of the following:

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|---|---|
| To report specific concerns about the abuse or neglect of an adult , call Social and Health Care | 0345 050 7666 |
| If you are worried that your manager or any other professional (e.g. teacher) may be abusing a child, call the Local Authority Designated Officer for Child Protection (LADO) | 01865 810603 |
| If you are concerned that a child may be being abused by someone other than your manager or another professional (e.g. parent). Please contact the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) | 0345 050 7666 |
| To discuss general safeguarding concerns for the particular attention of the Transport hub call Or: Transport Quality Monitoring Team | 01865 323500 qmcc@oxfordshire.gov.uk |
| If there is an urgent risk call | 999 |