

## **Appointment of Operators of Student Service Vehicles**

- (1) At present, schools can appoint operators of the following types of student service vehicles to provide school bus services:
  - (i) School private light bus, with service endorsement of School Private Light Bus Service; and
  - (ii) Non-franchised public bus, with service endorsement of Student Service.
  - (iii) If a student service vehicle is found to have provided unauthorised services, TD may conduct an inquiry against the licence holder concerned under the Road Traffic Ordinance (Cap 374 of the Laws of Hong Kong). Once the inquiry has established that the licensee has violated the PSL conditions, the Commissioner of Transport may suspend, cancel or vary the PSL concerned.
  
- (2) In selecting operators of student service vehicles, it is imperative to ensure that the operators have been approved with a valid Passenger Service Licence (PSL) and their vehicles have been issued with Passenger Service Licence Certificate (PSLC) with the specific service endorsement. School can request the operators to provide the PSL and PSLC for verification.
  
- (3) There is at present around 5,523 vehicles (as at 30 June 2021) in the market with relevant licences eligible to provide student service. There is no need for the operators of these vehicles to apply to Transport Department for the relevant endorsement. There is another pool of over 4,000 non-franchised public buses in the market which do not have endorsement for providing student service. Their operators need to apply to Transport Department for the relevant endorsement if they intend to provide student services.
  
- (4) Pursuant to the recommendations of the Transport Advisory Committee, any new supply of non-franchised public buses (NFB), whether it is existing operators applying for additional vehicles or new operators applying for new PSLs and associated vehicles, would be processed in a very cautious and stringent manner to ensure that there are full justifications for the additional requirement. Besides, these applicants are required to source vehicles from the existing NFB fleet for a period of 6 months in the first instance. As a result, the processing time for applications involving additional vehicles to the

existing NFB fleet would be longer, and those failing to provide justifications would be rejected.

- (5) In view of the stringent measures on the vetting of NFB applications, schools are advised to take the following action as appropriate:
  - (i) to arrange early selection of school bus service operators so as to identify suitable prospective operators with adequate number of student service vehicles (NFBs and/or school private light buses) to provide school bus services.
  - (ii) to appoint existing operators with adequate number of student service vehicles to provide school bus services as far as possible.
  - (iii) to provide the prospective operators with all the necessary and required supporting documents to facilitate the processing of their applications.

To allow greater flexibility for non-franchised public bus operators in deploying vehicles for provision of student service, the Transport Department put forward in July 2012 a new measure that upon request by the operators, student service endorsement would be granted to all eligible vehicles for serving as spare vehicles so as to meet the operational need and public demand. All PSL holders were notified in writing of the application procedures.

- (6) To facilitate transport arrangement for students, to alleviate traffic congestion caused by student service vehicles and to achieve better utilization of vehicle resources, the Transport Department encourages school principals/management to consider adjusting the school hours and/or adopting flexible school hours arrangements as far as practicable under the principle that the education of students should always come first.
- (7) In the event that appointed operators of school bus services would need to pick up or set down students at some no-stopping restricted zones and/or to enter into some prohibited zones or bus lanes for providing the services, schools or the operators concerned may apply to the Transport Department for permits seeking exemption from such restrictions. The Transport Department will consider each and every applications on its own merits. The application may be rejected having regard to all relevant factors. In filing the applications, the applicants are required to complete a prescribed form with provision of relevant supporting documents (including supporting letters issued by the

schools). The application form (together with a set of guidance notes) can be downloaded from the Transport Department website or obtained from the regional offices of the Transport Department. The duly completed application form should be submitted to the Transport Department at least three weeks prior to commencement of the school bus services to be provided in accordance with the requirements as stated in the guidance notes. In case of any late applications or failure to provide the required supporting documents, the applicants may not be able to obtain the permits before commencement of the new school term. For further enquiries, the applicants may contact the respective regional offices of the Transport Department. Their enquiry phone numbers are 2829 5814 (Hong Kong Regional Office), 2399 2471 (Kowloon Regional Office) and 2399 2226 (New Territories Regional Office).

- (8) As stipulated in the PSL conditions, student service vehicles for kindergarten or primary students shall be subject to the provision of escort while the service is in operation. ***In recent years, various kinds of extra-curricular activities have been organized by schools keeping the students at school after normal school time. As a result, students would be on their way home at irregular time slots and student service vehicles need to pick up students various times which causes difficulties in deploying escort for every trip. In this light, schools and parent-teacher associations should work in collaboration with operators to agree on several fixed time slots for picking up students. This would not only facilitate operators to comply with the PSL conditions on provision of escort, but also ensure student safety while riding on student service vehicles.***
- (9) The Road Traffic (Construction and Maintenance of Vehicles) Regulations (Cap. 374A) stipulates that in every student service vehicle registered on or after 1 May 2009, the vehicle will be required to be fitted with passenger seats of new standards. For details, please refer to the “Requirements for Passenger Seats in Student Service Vehicles” at **Annex**.
- (10) If you have any enquiries, please contact the Public Vehicles Unit of the Transport Department at 2804 2574 (for non-franchised public bus matters) or 2804 2263 (for school private light bus matters).

Transport Department  
July 2021

(English Translation)

**Requirements for Passenger Seats in Student Service Vehicles**  
**(Generally Known as “Safer Seats”)**

According to the “Road Traffic (Construction and Maintenance of Vehicles) Regulations” (Cap. 374A), every student service vehicle registered *on or after 1 May 2009* shall be required to be fitted with “safer seats”. The salient points of the legislation are as follows:

**Definition of Student Service Vehicles**

- (1) a public bus authorized for providing student service (**A03**) as specified in s.4(3)(d) of the “Public Bus Ordinance” (Cap. 230);
- (2) a private bus authorized for providing student service (**B01**) as specified in s.27(5)(a) of the “Road Traffic Ordinance” (Cap. 374); and
- (3) a school private light bus.

**Standards of the Passenger Seats**

- seats, barriers and their anchorage shall conform to the requirements of any specification or standard specified in the legislation;
- seat backs, barriers and controlled surface shall be made of impact energy absorption material that conforms to the requirements of any specification or standards specified in the legislation;
- no folding table or folding table or folding accessories shall be installed on any controlled surface;
- seats and restraining barriers shall be made of fire resistant material that conforms to the requirements of any specification or standard specified in the legislation;
- every seat shall be forward-facing; and
- space of the passenger seat and the height of seat back should meet the requirement specified in the legislation.

**Notes to Applicants for Provision of Student Service**

- Any student service vehicle which is registered on or after 1 May 2009 shall be fitted with passenger seats of the standard as stipulated in the “Road Traffic (Construction and Maintenance of Vehicles) Regulations” (Cap. 374A).
- Approval will NOT be given for issuance of Passenger Service Licence or student service endorsement to those vehicles which are not in compliance with the new legislative requirement.

**Enquiries**

For further enquiries, please contact the following offices by phone or fax:

**Vehicle Safety and Standard Division (Vehicle Examination Centre)**

For examination of buses - Tel. no.: **2333 3112**  
 For examination of school private light buses - Tel. no.: **2759 7573**

**Public Vehicles Unit (Licensing Service)**

Public Bus - Tel. no.: **2804 2574**  
 Private Bus - Tel. no.: **2804 2450**  
 School Private Light Bus - Tel. no.: **2804 2263**  
 Fax. no. - **2865 1227**