

Guidelines for Ensuring Safety of Students on Student Service Vehicles – For Escorts to Observe

- (1) As a licensing condition in the Passenger Service Licence, every school bus and school private light bus carrying primary and kindergarten students should provide an escort while in operation.
- (2) Each passenger should be allocated a seat. A passenger shall not be permitted to travel in the vehicle unless seated in a properly constructed seat secured to the body of the vehicle. The vehicle shall not carry passengers in excess of the number of passenger seats specified in the registration document of that vehicle and every passenger shall be counted.
- (3) To meet the demand for student transport services as far as possible and to better utilise existing fleet resources, although Regulation 53(1) of the Road Traffic (Traffic Control) Regulations (Cap. 374G) allows that a child under the age of 3 years shall not be counted, and 3 children aged 3 years or above but each not exceeding 1.3 metres in height shall be counted as 2 persons for the purpose of counting the number of persons that may be carried in a vehicle, it is also stipulated in Regulation 53(2) of the same Regulations that drivers shall ensure that each passenger must be seated in a properly constructed seat secured to the bodywork of the vehicle. Escorts are reminded *to accord priority to student safety on board and obtain prior consent from schools or parents/guardians before exercising flexibility given by law in counting the number of persons that may be carried in a vehicle.* For more information, please contact 1823 or 2804 2600.
- (4) An updated name-list of students travelling on the vehicle should be kept by the escort such that a headcount can be conducted at the beginning of each journey.
- (5) Escorts should assist students in boarding and alighting from the vehicles. They should escort the students during the journey and ensure that all students are properly seated and the doors of the vehicles are properly closed. They should also ensure that the students board or alight from the vehicles only after the vehicles have come to a complete standstill.
- (6) Escorts should assist students to wear seat belts, if fitted, before the vehicles are moving off. The seat belt should be worn properly. It should securely fasten the wearer to the seat. Two or more persons should not share a seat belt at the same time. Drivers may consider

refusing to move off the vehicle if a passenger refuses to wear a seat belt installed on the vehicle.

- (7) Escorts should ensure discipline of students travelling on the vehicles. Students, for example,
 - (i) must remain seated unless boarding or alighting;
 - (ii) must not talk to the drivers or shout;
 - (iii) must refrain from playing;
 - (iv) should not eat or drink for the sake of keeping the vehicle clean;
 - (v) must not put their heads, hands or any part of bodies out of the windows of the vehicles;
 - (vi) they must not board or alight from the vehicle until the vehicle has come to a standstill;
 - (vii) must not play with the emergency exits; and
 - (viii) must not play with the seat belts or unfasten the seat belts during the journey.
- (8) Escorts should ensure that no student is missing, and all the students reach schools safely and are collected by their parents/guardians on their homeward journey. The practice of transferring students from one vehicle to another during the journey increases the risks of student missing and is therefore not recommended.
- (9) There should be a replacement for the escort in case he/she takes leave.
- (10) In case of emergency or accident, drivers together with the escorts should help the students to keep calm to avoid unnecessary panic and lead the students to evacuate the vehicle safely if necessary.
- (11) Escorts should ensure that the alighted students are safe before the vehicles are moving off by the drivers.
- (12) Escorts should help to ensure that –
 - (i) all necessary warning devices for the emergency exits and any power-operated doors are in good working order;
 - (ii) the gangway and emergency exits are not obstructed;
 - (iii) the “CAUTION CHILDREN 小心學童” sign board is displayed at the rear of the school bus while student service is in operation; and
 - (iv) the “STUDENT SERVICE 學生服務” sign board is displayed on the windscreen of the school bus while student service is in operation.

- (13) Escorts should know where the fire extinguisher(s) are located, and how to operate them.

Transport Department
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