

Contractor Drivers and Passenger Assistants Information Booklet



Contents:

1. Driver and Passenger Assistant (PA) Standards
2. Safeguarding
3. Driver and Passenger Assistant (PA) Responsibilities
4. On the Road – Pick Up and Drop Off
5. Passenger Safety
6. Safety of Wheelchair Passengers
7. Driver and Passenger Assistant Training
8. Accidents, Incidents and Breakdowns

1. Driver and Passenger Assistant (PA) Standards

- 1.1 Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS)** All drivers and passenger assistants (PAs) must be DBS checked to Child and Adult workforce level before undertaking any duties on behalf of Dorset Travel. ID Badges must always be visible.
- 1.2 Confidentiality** A driver or passenger assistant (PA) will have access to highly confidential information about passengers. All information must be treated in the strictest confidence and under no circumstances may information about the passenger be given to a third party unless they are in a position of authority (e.g., police, paramedics, Dorset Travel personnel or school staff). This must then be reported to your employer as soon as possible who should then inform Dorset Travel. **This is a legal requirement under the Data Protection Act** and any loss of data may lead to prosecution and the termination of your contract or employment. Any loss of confidential information must be reported to your employer immediately.
- 1.3 Awareness of Passengers** Drivers and PAs need to be aware of the needs of the passengers being transported. The prime concern for all drivers and PAs is the safety, wellbeing, and comfort of the passengers. Passengers must be treated with dignity and respect at all times, and it is essential that drivers and PAs understand the needs of passengers.
- 1.4 Professionalism** Drivers, PAs and vehicles are often the most visible part of the service for members of the public. Drivers are expected to drive in a safe and considerate manner, without aggression, and to display a professional and courteous attitude to their passengers and other road users.
- 1.5 The Driver** should be familiar with the workings of the vehicle and have the necessary training for specific requirements. For example, when using wheelchair accessible vehicles, they must be trained to use the equipment for securing wheelchairs and occupants, also safe operation of the tail lift; the driver must carry out the daily checks on the vehicle required by law. Speed must always be appropriate to road conditions and passenger comfort and not exceed the speed limit. Dorset Travel will take any instances of speeding or reckless /careless driving very seriously.
- 1.6 The PA** should ensure they are aware of passengers' specific requirements and must have completed all mandatory training, all regular updates of training and complete any specific training as and when required. They are expected to display a professional, caring and courteous attitude to their colleagues, passengers and their parents or carers.

1.7 PAs are responsible for the safety of the passengers on the vehicle, they must stay on the vehicle. The PA should be situated so that they can see all passengers on the vehicle and must not sit in the front passenger seat while passengers are on board the vehicle, unless otherwise agreed by Dorset Travel.

1.8 Health & Safety Drivers and PAs are responsible for the safety, comfort and security of passengers, their equipment or luggage while carried in the vehicle, and while the passenger is boarding or alighting. This includes ensuring that any equipment or luggage does not block gangways or access to seats that are being used, or access to any doors including emergency doors.

1.9 Fitness Drivers and PAs must be medically fit to undertake their duties. They must inform their employer immediately if they have any medical condition which will affect their ability to drive or undertake their duties. No alcoholic drink is to be taken before or during duty. Be aware that alcohol from drinking the day before may still remain in the blood for up to 24 hours, and any alcohol can affect judgement. Drivers and PAs must not take, or be under the influence of, any drugs which will affect their ability to undertake their duties. This may include prescribed drugs or medication.

1.10 Conduct

- **Appearance** Drivers and PAs are expected to present themselves in a smart and appropriate manner at all times. Appropriate footwear must be worn at all times.
- **Smoking** Drivers and PAs are not to smoke at any time in the vehicle, or on any Dorset/BCP Council or school premises. This includes before operating any journey and includes the use of electronic cigarettes (vaping).
- **Food & Drink** No food or drink must be consumed while working. Passengers are not allowed to consume food or drink on the vehicle unless it is agreed by Dorset Travel due to a medical condition. Passengers should not be given sweets, drinks, presents or gifts by drivers or PAs.
- **Mobile Phones** must not be used by drivers at any time while the vehicle is moving, school policies must also be followed while in school grounds and premises.
- **Co-operation** Checks are carried out to ensure that standards are maintained. All drivers and PAs are expected to co-operate with any instructions given by the Police or Dorset Travel staff.
- **Unauthorised Passengers and Goods** Only passengers listed on the Drivers Manifest are authorised for transport, allowing any other passenger or goods to travel on the vehicle without prior agreement from Dorset Travel is strictly forbidden.

1.11 Manifests A Manifest should be available for each journey; it will contain details of passengers travelling and their specific needs. The information should be kept confidential and secure at all times. It must not be left on the vehicle. Any changes to routes must be agreed by Dorset Travel in writing via your line manager.

2 **Safeguarding**

If you have any worries or concerns about the wellbeing of a child in your care or the behaviour of another adult please report it, do not ignore it. Report to the safeguarding officer at the school or centre as well as Dorset Travel via your line manager. If the concern happens out of hours report to the out of hours - Children's Advice and Duty Service (CHAD) team on 01305 228558. You should not act on any information yourself. Dorset Travel will also need to be informed so pass on the concerns to your line manager and they will inform Dorset Travel.

3 **Driver and PA Responsibilities**

3.1 Drivers are required by law to undertake daily checks on the vehicle before driving, ensuring the vehicle is roadworthy and interior of the vehicle is clean. It is advisable to use child locks on the doors when transporting children, the central locking system must be disengaged, and ID Badges must always be visible.

3.2 PA Checks PAs must ensure they check the Manifest and feedback to their line manager any information that may need amending or adding to the manifest to ensure it is kept up to date. PAs must ensure they have all relevant information including care plans if available. If equipment is required, the PA will need to check it is on the vehicle and will need to know how to use it. ID Badges must always be visible.

3.3 School Bus Signs Vehicles able to carry more than 8 passengers must display School Bus Signs while the vehicle is being used to convey school children between home and school. At all other times School Bus Signs must be removed. All school contracted vehicles must also display the route number indicated on the Manifest.

3.4 Refuelling The driver must ensure the vehicle has enough fuel to carry out the journey. Never refuel with passengers on board and there must be **no** unscheduled stops.

3.5 Cleaning The vehicle must be kept in a reasonable condition of cleanliness inside and out. Vehicle interiors should not be dirty prior to starting any journey.

4. On the Road – Pick Up and Drop Off

4.1 Boarding the Vehicle It is the responsibility of the parent or responsible adult to bring the passenger to and from the vehicle. It is the driver and PA's responsibility to ensure that passengers get on and off the vehicle in a safe manner.

- Assisting passengers on and off the vehicle where applicable.
- At no time should any passenger be lifted unless in an emergency.
- Passengers should be safely secured in their seats before the vehicle pulls away.
- All passengers, including the PA, should remain seated whilst the vehicle is in motion.
- Drivers are responsible for securing car seats in the vehicle and ensuring that child door locks are activated.
- Passengers should be ready at the notified pick-up time, on occasions when they are not, the vehicle should wait up to five minutes beyond the stated pick-up time if a parent/carer persistently does not have their child ready, or there are any other concerns, this should be reported to Dorset Travel via your line manager.
- Passengers should not have to cross the road unless it is unavoidable. Only accessible vehicles using the rear doors (solely for ramp/ tail lift access) may stop on the right (offside) of a one-way street to access premises.

4.2 Drop-off or collection at school - Avoid arriving at school early as this can cause upset for passengers having to wait a long time. If timings of the route need to be amended please contact Dorset Travel via your line manager. School staff are responsible for the passengers' safety on site. Staff should normally collect passengers from the vehicle. However, if no other passengers are left on the vehicle PAs can take passengers to reception. Each school will have an arrivals procedure, speak to the school staff if you are unsure of this procedure.

4.3 Dropping off Passengers On arrival parents/carers should collect passengers from the vehicle. It is the driver's responsibility to assist passengers in wheelchairs and the PA's responsibility to see passengers safely off the vehicle.

Ensure passengers are handed over to a responsible adult. If the parents/carers are not at home on arrival, you should contact Dorset Travel via your line manager. If it is out of office hours and you cannot contact Dorset Travel, you should contact The CHAD Team on 01305 228558 who will advise where to take the passenger. The number is on the lefthand side of the Manifest. You should not take

a passenger home with you under any circumstances, but you should stay with them until handed over to an authorised adult.

If this is a regular occurrence Dorset Travel should be notified. Dorset Travel must receive written permission from the parent/carer before any vulnerable passenger is left unattended or with a minor.

If there is a person not known to you at drop off report to Dorset Travel via your line manager without releasing the child and continue with journey. Should a parent tell you in the morning they will not be at home in the afternoon, but names another adult, this must be confirmed via Dorset Travel.

It is recommended that if a passenger behaves in an inappropriate way, the PA moves them or sits next to them and uses distraction to divert their attention. It may be beneficial for the PA to spend some time with school/centre staff to acquire behaviour management techniques, which could be used during the journey.

5. Passenger Safety

5.1 Seatbelts or special equipment, including harnesses and child seats when supplied, must be used at all times. All passengers, including the driver and PA, should wear seatbelts when the vehicle is in motion. All seats and equipment supplied for specific passengers must always be used and correctly secured and adjusted. Passengers carried in wheelchairs must always wear a seatbelt that is also secured to the vehicle.

5.2 Specialised Equipment such as, challenging behaviour harnesses and seat belt locks must have a risk assessment, signed by the parent/guardian and the Dorset Travel Compliance Officer, you must also carry a seatbelt cutter in your vehicle for quick release in an emergency situation.

5.3 Gangways and Access On minibuses, buses and coaches all luggage and equipment must be secured safely and must not block gangways or access to any door. This is to ensure that every passenger seat has clear access to any doors including emergency exits. This includes wheelchairs. Seats should not be used for passengers if wheelchairs or luggage impedes access to any exit.

6. Safety of Wheelchair Passengers

6.1 Driver Training Passengers must be carried in the appropriate manner, safely, legally and with due regard to their welfare, comfort and safety. The driver must be trained in the use of the wheelchair lift or ramp, the equipment for securing wheelchairs and passengers travelling in wheelchairs.

6.2 Securing Wheelchairs The driver is legally responsible for ensuring that all passengers are carried safely. The wheelchair and the passenger must be secured correctly. The passenger carried in the wheelchair must always wear a seatbelt that is also secured to the vehicle. If the vehicle does not have sufficient securing equipment the driver must report this to their employer immediately. Under no circumstances should a wheelchair passenger be carried unrestrained or incorrectly secured.

6.3 Wheelchair Tags All wheelchairs must have been assessed by Dorset Travel prior to being transported. A tag will be attached to the wheelchair highlighting whether it can be transported and if so the type of securing to be used.

6.4 Passengers carried in wheelchairs must always be carried forward facing and have the wheelchair handbrake applied. They must be positioned to leave adequate space to maintain walking access to all doors and seats. If you are unsure about how to secure a wheelchair or how to use the belts to secure a passenger, contact Dorset Travel immediately.

6.5 Vehicle Lift When using the vehicle lift the wheelchair handbrake must be applied and electric wheelchairs must be powered off whilst ascending/descending, the platform safety device front and rear must be up and the driver must be on the lift with the passenger while ascending or descending, except when the wheelchair leaves no space. The wheelchair must be loaded on a level surface.

6.6 Electric Wheelchairs Be aware of the risk of operating the control joystick inadvertently. When uncoupling securing equipment make it clear that the passenger is not free to move until told.

7. Driver and PA Training

7.1 Drivers Training in addition to the training for drivers in the safe securing of wheelchairs, you will also need to attend Safeguarding, Customer Care and Emergency First Aid training. This will need to be refreshed every three years.

7.2 Passenger Assistant Training All PAs must complete the mandatory training which includes, Safeguarding, Customer Care and Emergency First Aid training. This will need to be refreshed every three years.

Additional training will be required for all PAs supporting a passenger with emergency medication intervention. If this has not been arranged, the PA must contact their employer immediately who will contact Dorset Travel to arrange the training.

7.3 Disability Awareness Passengers with disabilities must at all times be treated with dignity and respect. Always listen to what the passenger is saying. Ask the passenger directly if they want to be helped, or how they wish to be helped. Remember, disabilities cannot always be seen.

8. Accidents, Incidents and Breakdowns

8.1 Making Safe Arrangements The main concern following an accident, incident or breakdown is to ensure the safety of the passengers. Drivers and PAs must give clear instructions to the passengers with this in mind. Please ensure wherever possible that:

- The vehicle stops in a safe place. If there is a risk of fire or a risk to life then evacuate passengers to a safe place away from any danger from traffic or other potential hazards.
- Call for help.
- Switch on the hazard lights and switch off the engine.
- If safe to do so, passengers should be instructed not to leave the vehicle and keep them informed that help is on the way.
- Call your employer as soon as you are able if there is a breakdown, emergency or accident.

8.2 Accidents The law states that in the event of an accident it is an offence not to stop and exchange the name and address of the driver and the name of the vehicle owner with all interested parties. If this is not possible, or if any person is injured, the driver must report the incident to the police as soon as possible and in any case, within 24 hours.

8.3 Emergency Procedures In the event of an accident the driver or PA should notify their employer immediately. The employer must call and follow this up with a written report to Dorset Travel as soon as possible.

8.4 Adverse Weather In extreme weather conditions, the final decision as to whether the journey can be operated safely or not must rest with the driver and their employer who are best placed to assess the local conditions. When making the decision, it should be taken into account that if

passengers are transported into a school/centre in the morning, it is the responsibility of the contractor to ensure their safe return in the afternoon.

If, after the outward journey, the return journey may not be operated safely unless it runs early, Dorset Travel should be notified. If the morning journey is not operated but conditions subsequently improve, Dorset Travel should be consulted to see if the return journey is required. Contractors must keep in touch with Dorset Travel and their local schools to keep up to date with any changing circumstances.

8.5 Infection Control you should carry equipment to help prevent the spread of Infections, viruses and diseases. Dorset Travel recommend all vehicles should have:

- Gloves for dealing with body fluid or spillages.
- Tissues for anyone who may need them.
- Soak up powder to help stop the spread of infections if a passenger is sick on the journey.
- Blue roll to help clean up body fluid or spillages.
- Hand sanitiser to prevent the spread of infection.
- Anti-bacterial wipes to clean handhold surfaces.

These items will help to protect you, your passengers and your families from becoming unwell due to cross contamination if someone is unwell on your vehicle.