



Bus Éireann

Guidelines for Discipline and Procedures for Dealing with Alleged Misbehaviour on School Transport

General

Bus Éireann is responsible for the day-to-day operation of the School Transport Scheme under the general direction of the Department of Education and Skills. Bus Éireann is responsible for the discipline and safety of pupils while travelling on school buses.

Pupils availing of transport are expected to behave in a responsible manner having regard for their own safety, that of other passengers, the driver and other road users. In cases of misconduct, sanctions will be imposed by Bus Éireann. These have been agreed in consultation with the Department of Education and Skills and are set out below:

1. Misbehaviour

In the event of misbehaviour by pupils, such as failing to obey the instructions of the driver, not wearing their safety belt, etc., the school bus driver will:

- Seek an assurance from the pupil(s) that there will not be a repetition.
- If there is a recurrence, the driver may ask the Inspector to speak to the child.

The matter will be concluded at this point. If there is a similar recurrence after this procedure is exhausted, the matter will be treated as serious misconduct.

2. Serious Misconduct

- When the alleged misconduct is of a serious nature, the driver will report the matter to the Inspector, who will inform the local Bus Éireann Manager immediately and instructions will be given as to what action should be taken. The Inspector will also inform the school authorities of the position.
- The matter will be fully investigated by Bus Éireann personnel in consultation with the Transport Liaison Officer (T.L.O.)/ Chairperson of the Board of Management/ Principal and with the assistance of the school authorities.

Serious misconduct consists of behaviour which poses a threat to the safety and well-being of pupils, the driver, or the safe operation of the service generally. Intimidation of pupils, damage caused to fixtures and fittings on the vehicle or to the property of others, and behaviour which may endanger other road users is included in this definition. A pupil who disregards the instructions of the driver/Inspector or does not respond to discipline and continues to be a source of misbehaviour may likewise be charged with serious misconduct.

3. Procedure for Investigation of Serious Misconduct

In the event that there is a complaint of serious misconduct, the following procedures will apply:

- (a) Initial enquiries by the bus driver following an incident or complaint, involving speaking to students who travel on the bus, including the pupil(s) allegedly involved or the subject of complaint.
- (b) The bus driver will report the matter to the Inspector who will contact the Principal(s) of the relevant school(s) to report the incident. The Principal(s) will assist by interviewing the student(s) who travel on the bus regarding the incident/complaint.
- (c) The Inspector and the Principal(s) will report the result of their interviews to Bus Éireann immediately for further investigation. Bus Éireann will give the pupil concerned all the details of the complaint made against him/her and inform him/her that there will be further investigation by Bus Éireann, without prejudice, and explain how the investigation will operate.

4. Investigation by Bus Éireann Personnel

The investigation by the Bus Éireann Inspector will involve:

- (a) Interviewing the bus driver.
- (b) Interviewing pupil(s) alleged to be involved in the incident/complaint in the presence of School Principal/Teacher or Parent or both.

The pupil(s) concerned will be given the opportunity to respond to the allegations at this interview. Pupil(s) will also be given an opportunity to make written submissions. Where applicable, written submissions should be made within one week of the alleged incident.

- (c) Interviewing other students who travel on the bus.

Details and statements will be recorded by Bus Éireann Personnel from students travelling on the bus where they had witnessed an incident. Students will be made aware of the consequences of giving false or misleading information, intentionally or otherwise.

Pupils may be interviewed separately, or as a group, to establish the veracity of the account of the incident/complaint. All interviews should be conducted with sensitivity and with due regard to the rights and confidences of all parties concerned.

The Garda Authorities will be informed where deemed necessary, and full co-operation will be given in any further investigation.

5. Sanctions

Once the investigation has been concluded and the pupil(s) responsible identified, the following sanctions may be imposed:**

- (a) Pupil warned as to future conduct.
- (b) A written undertaking requested from pupil(s)/parent(s) that the pupil will not again misbehave himself/herself on the undertaking that if the pupil does not comply with the undertaking more serious measures will be considered, up to and including the withdrawal of the travel permit.
- (c) Withdrawal of the travel permit for a specified period or permanently, at the discretion of the Bus Éireann Manager.

In instances where a permit is being withdrawn, the pupil will be allowed to travel home on the service and parents / guardians will be advised of the circumstances by Bus Éireann.

In circumstances where a permit is being withdrawn and written confirmation is not immediately available, details of the sanction imposed will follow within seven days.

Where it is not possible to identify the culprits, having investigated the incident with the assistance of the T.L.O. and school authorities, it may be necessary to withdraw the service for a period, for example, in cases where there is:

- (i) Danger to pupils, drivers and other road users.
- (ii) Severe damage to the vehicle, where the vehicle will have to be repaired, including damage to the seat belts or fixtures.

**** If, in the opinion of Bus Éireann, the misconduct is of a sufficiently serious nature which compromises the safety of pupils or the safe operation of the service, Bus Éireann may take immediate action to suspend the individual(s) concerned from transport while investigation is still underway.**

6. Appeal Procedures

The decision of the local Bus Éireann Manager to withdraw service or travel permit may be first appealed to:

**The Manager,
School Transport,
Bus Éireann,
Broadstone,
Dublin 7**

The written appeal should be accompanied by factual evidence. Bus Éireann will record such appeals.

School Transport Appeals Board

Appeals against decisions made by, or on behalf of, the Department of Education and Skills regarding the provision of school transport services and/or grant-aid under the terms of the School Transport Schemes
or

Appeals against decisions made by Bus Éireann, following the conclusion of any appeal procedures provided for under the *Guidelines for Discipline and Procedures for Dealing with Alleged Misbehaviour on School Transport* may be submitted to The School Transport Appeals Board.

Application Forms for the School Transport Appeals Board are available at www.education.ie and together with any other relevant documentation, should be sent to:

**The School Transport Appeals Board
c/o Department of Education and Skills,
Portlaoise Rd.,
Tullamore,
Co. Offaly.**

The School Transport Appeals Board will not examine cases deemed by Bus Éireann to involve serious misconduct or behaviour which poses a threat to the safety and well being of pupils and/or the driver or to the safe operation of the service generally. Such cases may only be appealed to The Manager, School Transport, Bus Éireann.