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Policy on Escorting the pupils of St. Gabriel's Special School.

The Board of Management of St. Gabriel's employs the staff, who escort the pupils on school transport – buses and taxis.

The escort will be present on the vehicle at **all** times that pupil/s are on the vehicle. At no time will the pupil/s be left alone nor will the bus driver be left in sole charge of a pupil/s, no matter how short the time. Parents will be advised to bring pupils to and collect them from the door of the bus/taxi.

Escorts will help pupils enter into and exit from the vehicles and will ensure that all pupils are properly harnessed (where appropriate) and their seat belt secured **before the bus moves**. (If a child needs a harness, then **both** harness and seat belt must be worn)

Escorts will **supervise** the safety of the pupils. They will decide where the pupils are seated and if necessary rearrange seating arrangements if there is a safety concern e.g. proximity to windows, doors, fellow pupils and the bus driver. Difficult situations regarding correct seating arrangements must be discussed with Principal, class teacher or school nurse.

Escorts are to be aware of and contribute to the formulation of **risk assessments** on the pupils on transport. If a risk assessment needs to be reviewed, the escort brings that to the attention of management or the school nurse.

A **ratio of 3:1 (pupils to staff)** should be maintained where possible. Where relief escorts are not available, then the route may be split if the pupil numbers exceed three. Pupils furthest away will be brought to school first and delivered home last. . Where there are less than three pupils on a vehicle and no relief is available, then parents may have to arrange transport for their child/ren on that day. However, this will depend on the individual circumstances on each bus e.g. one escort may feel comfortable with more than three pupils depending on the behaviour and medical needs of the pupils. The Principal and escort will decide, in consultation with each other.

Escorts will abide by **confidentiality** rules. Events or information from the escorting job can only be discussed with the Principal or class teacher or escort rep.

When an escort receives a routine **verbal message** from a parent / social care leader, they will convey it to the relevant school staff. If a message is not of a routine nature, then the escort may suggest to the parent / social care leader to make contact with the school Principal or class teacher directly. If parents have queries referring to an incident in school, suggest to them to contact the school.

All vehicles are equipped with first aid **bags**, eco-mats (where necessary) and escorts have a list of the relevant phone numbers. It is imperative that any names and addresses of parents are kept strictly confidential and safe in compliance with data protection guidelines.

If a **child presents with an illness** on the bus, the escort will supervise that child closely but will proceed to bring that child to school, when the child is brought to the nurse immediately for assessment. Where a child has a diagnosis of epilepsy then a separate procedure should be followed. (See medical emergency procedure on transport or escort uses training in Buccal Midazolam Administration if prescribed for the pupil.)

Escorts are **not** in a position to give a pupil routine **medication** on transport, except in circumstances where specific escorts have received specific training in the administration of a specific medication e.g. buccal midazolam for epilepsy

If **medications** for a pupil are being sent to school with the child, parents inform the escort of the medications and the bus escort passes the medications to the school nurse for safe keeping (locked) during the school day. The escort collects the medication from the school nurse at the end of the school day and brings it home to the parents. All handing over of medications by escort to nurse and vice versa are recorded and signed (as per school Medication Policy).

If the **bus breaks down** while pupils are on board:

- If it happens en route to school, then the escort will contact the school immediately to advise of the situation. The escort will consult with the bus driver and school staff will decide on how best to proceed.
- If it happens on the way home, then the escort will try to contact and inform the school first, then inform the parents of the children on the bus.

Pupils should **not** be evacuated off school transport unless in a situation where they are less safe **on** the bus than **off** the bus.

Escorts will be **collected** from their own homes if they live en route. If escorts do not live directly en route, the Department of Education & Skills state that “escorts are

responsible for making their way to their placement of employment.” Thus bus drivers are not obliged to divert from their route to collect escorts. The bus driver will make arrangements with the individual escort regarding pick-up and drop-off locations.

In the event of an **escort being sick**, they will contact the designated relief escort and inform their driver or contact the school Principal/secretary who co-ordinates escort arrangements, in the event that there is no relief available for that route.

In the event of **parent/guardian not being home to receive the child off transport**, please refer to emergency procedure for same.

Ratified by the Board of Management

Date: _____

Signed: _____

Chairman