



Transport Policy (School Bus Service)

Document control

Policy title	Transport Policy (School Bus Service)
Policy category	Pupil welfare, health and safety
Policy owner	The Bursar
Senior leader responsible	The Bursar
Applies to	All parents, pupils, staff
Effective date	1 September 2026
Review date	September 2027
Review cycle	Annual
Statutory status	Not individually required by statute. Adopted by the School to support its duties under the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974, Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026 and the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 (Part 3 – welfare, health and safety of pupils). The School's minibus operations are covered by a Section 19 permit under the Transport Act 1985.
Publication	This policy is published on the School website and is provided to families who book a place on the bus service

Policy summary

This policy explains how the School bus service works: how to book a place and the terms of the service, arrangements for our youngest pupils, what happens when a bus is delayed or cancelled, how we keep pupils safe on board, what we expect of passengers, and how pupils are met and set down. It is written for parents and pupils.

Contents

1. Why this matters	2
2. What we are seeking to achieve.....	2
3. Scope and application.....	3
4. Roles and responsibilities.....	3
5. Booking a place and terms of the service.....	3
6. Pre-Prep and Prep School travel.....	3
7. Timetables, running late and cancellations	4
8. Vehicles and drivers — keeping pupils safe.....	4
9. Behaviour on the bus — our shared expectations.....	5
10. Meeting and setting down pupils	5
10.1 Prep School pupil set-down protocol	5
11. Communication with drivers	6
12. Questions, concerns and complaints	6
13. Training and communication.....	6
14. Monitoring, review and publication.....	6
15. Related School policies and procedures	6
16. Legislation, regulation and guidance.....	7

1. Why this matters

The safe, calm and reliable transport of pupils to and from School is an important part of the care we provide. Many families rely on our bus service every day, and for some children the journey is their first and last experience of School each day. We want every journey to be safe, orderly and positive, and we want parents to feel confident that their children are well looked after from the moment they board until they are safely set down.

This policy explains how the School bus service works, what families can expect from us, and what we ask of pupils and parents so that travel is safe and enjoyable for everyone.

2. What we are seeking to achieve

We want every pupil who travels with us to arrive safely, calmly and on time, and to feel looked after on the journey. Through this policy we aim to:

- provide a reliable, well-organised bus service that families can plan around;
- keep pupils safe on the journey to and from School;
- set out clearly what parents and pupils can expect from us, and what we ask of them in return;
- communicate promptly and clearly when a service is delayed or cannot run; and
- make sure our youngest pupils are met and set down safely every time.

3. Scope and application

This policy applies to the School's daily bus and minibs service for pupils travelling to and from School. It covers pupils in the Prep School (including, in defined circumstances, Pre-Prep) and the Senior School, their parents and carers, and the drivers and vehicles used to provide the service, whether operated by the School or by our contracted coach company.

4. Roles and responsibilities

Role	Responsibility
Bursar	Policy owner; overall responsibility for the School's transport arrangements.
Facilities Manager	Accountable lead for School transport, including the day-to-day running of the bus service and assurance over the contracted coach company.
Transport Administrator	Bookings, timetables, day-to-day communication with families and drivers, and the transport records.
Drivers and escorts	The safety, supervision and good order of pupils on board, and prompt reporting of any concern.
Parents	Booking and notifying changes, meeting pupils at the nominated stop, and supporting the expectations set out in this policy.
Pupils	Travelling considerately and following the passenger expectations in section 9.

5. Booking a place and terms of the service

When booking regular transport, please contact transport@cokethorpe.org.

Bus timetables for the forthcoming academic year are based on our expected pupil numbers. Routing may need to be amended once demand has been assessed. The stops listed will normally be used but may be moved between routes where appropriate. We ask for your co-operation and will advise of any changes as quickly as possible.

All bookings are for full-time seats. In extenuating circumstances a part-time arrangement may be possible if there is space on the bus for a short term period. A pupil traveling to two different homes will be required to purchase two full price seats. Part-time seats are not guaranteed and must be relinquished if there is demand for a full-time seat.

Any new travel requirements must be arranged directly with the School and not with the bus driver or operator.

Should you wish to withdraw from the bus service, we require a full academic term's notice.

6. Pre-Prep and Prep School travel

Children in Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 (Pre-Prep) may travel on School transport only where they have a sibling in Year 6 or above and parents have signed the Transport Agreement for parents of Prep School pupils.

Prep School pupils are set down in accordance with the set-down protocol in section 10.1

7. Timetables, running late and cancellations

The advertised morning times are departure times from the stop. In the morning, a bus will not wait beyond the designated departure time, as this would delay the route and risk a late arrival at School for all passengers. Equally, it will not leave a stop early unless all expected passengers are already on board.

Please arrive in good time. If, in the morning, a bus is running late, parents should assume it is on its way.

We will keep parents informed as follows:

Morning: if a bus is cancelled for any reason, or is running more than 30 minutes late, the School will contact parents via Involve notification.

End of the day: if a bus is going to leave School more than 20 minutes late, pupils will be asked to contact their parents, either using their own mobile telephone or the telephone in the Senior School Office. Prep School pupils will be helped to do so if they do not know how to use a telephone.

Homeward journey: if a bus that left School on time is running more than 30 minutes late, the driver will alert the School and parents will be notified via an Involve message.

The School may cancel the service in inclement weather that would make the journey dangerous (for example heavy snow or ice). Parents will be contacted by SMS as soon as the decision is made, and can also check the position via the School website, the weather and travel telephone line and the School notification system.

8. Vehicles and drivers — keeping pupils safe

The safety of pupils in our care is our first priority. To help keep pupils safe:

- All School and contracted coach company bus drivers hold an Enhanced DBS check.
- School minibuses operate under a Section 19 permit.
- Approved staff licensed to drive School minibuses undergo an external driving assessment every five years; drivers over seventy years of age are re-assessed every two years.
- Safeguarding training is provided to all drivers in line with the current version of Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE 2026 from 1 September 2026).
- Where vehicles have seat belts, they must be worn.
- A driver must not leave the vehicle unattended while pupils are on board.

While we aim to keep the same vehicle and driver on each route, there are occasions when we need to substitute a vehicle or driver. From time to time the contracted coach company may need to substitute two or three smaller vehicles, such as 9-seat MPVs, to cover a regular bus that is off the road. These vehicles are always driven by the coach company's own staff and are never third-party taxis. They are clearly marked with a sign in the window showing Cokethorpe transport and the route being covered.

The School's Prevention of Bullying Policy applies at all times.

Some school minibuses are fitted with cameras to help keep pupils and staff safe. These are operated in accordance with the School's CCTV Policy and the associated Data Protection Impact Assessment. Cameras on daily-route vehicles record video only; audio recording is not used.

9. Behaviour on the bus — our shared expectations

We want every journey to be calm, safe and considerate. Our Code of Conduct is designed to make journeys as enjoyable and safe as possible for everyone. Please read the following expectations with your child.

We ask all passengers to:

- Arrive at the bus stop five minutes before the pick-up time.
- Queue sensibly, away from the road.
- Approach the bus only after it has come to a complete stop.
- Board calmly and without pushing.
- Find a seat and remain seated, with the seatbelt fastened, for the whole journey.
- Not stand while the bus is moving.
- Not distract the driver unless there is an emergency.
- Look after the bus and take all rubbish and belongings away at the end of the journey.
- Respect other people and their property.
- Store bags sensibly and not place bags on seats needed by other passengers.
- Follow the instructions of the bus driver at all times.
- Leave the bus in an orderly way when it stops.
- If crossing the road after getting off, wait until the bus has moved away and the road is clearly visible in both directions, or use the nearest available crossing.

Senior School pupils have a responsibility to look out for and take care of any Prep School pupils on the bus.

Inappropriate behaviour may lead to a temporary or permanent exclusion from the bus service.

Such decisions will be made by the Deputy Head Pastoral and Wellbeing. Where damage is caused to a vehicle, the School may raise an invoice.

10. Meeting and setting down pupils

Neither the School nor the bus operator is responsible for children from the point at which they leave the bus at their designated stop. It is for parents to decide whether Senior School pupils are met at the stop; the School recommends that pupils are met until they enter Third Form. Prep School pupils are set down in accordance with the protocol below.

10.1 Prep School pupil set-down protocol

1. Prep School pupils must be met by a parent (or nominated childminder) at their designated bus stop, unless they are accompanied by an older sibling attending the Senior School with whom the parent has agreed they may walk home.
2. Year 6 pupils may walk home from their stop at the Head's discretion, following a written request by parents.
3. If a Prep School pupil is to be met by an adult not known to the driver, parents are asked to let the School know the name and contact number of the person collecting the pupil, by email to transport@cokethorpe.org. The driver will use the contact number as a means of verifying identity.
4. If a child is not met at the bus stop, the driver will wait for a maximum of five minutes after the designated arrival time.
5. After five minutes, the driver will notify the School that the child has not been met and will continue on the route with the child remaining on board. The School will notify the parent, who may be able to reach a later stop to collect the child.

6. If the child has not been met by the final stop, the driver will notify the School and return to the bus operator's depot (or to the School where a School minibus is used) with the child.
7. If arrangements for collecting the child have not been agreed within 30 minutes of arrival at the depot, the School or the bus operator will contact the Police.

The School reserves the right to make a charge where a pupil is not collected at their nominated stop.

11. Communication with drivers

All communications from a bus driver to the School depend on the driver being able to send a message legally and safely.

It is illegal to hold and use a phone, sat nav, tablet or any device that can send or receive data while driving — including while in traffic, at traffic lights, or when the engine is stopped in a stop-start mode. For this reason:

- Bus drivers must not use or store pupils' mobile phone numbers on their personal phones, and should communicate through the School's communication channels.
- A driver may legitimately share their personal phone number with parents, but we encourage parents to avoid contacting drivers by phone other than in an emergency.

12. Questions, concerns and complaints

If you have any questions, concerns or complaints about the bus service, please contact the School Office as soon as possible, or email transport@cokethorpe.org. Concerns will be handled in line with the School's Complaints Procedure Policy.

13. Training and communication

This policy is published on the School website and is provided to families who book a place on the bus service. Drivers and escorts receive the briefing and training set out in the Vehicle and Driver (Fleet) Management Policy, including safeguarding awareness appropriate to their role. Pupils are reminded of the passenger expectations at the start of each academic year and whenever it is helpful to do so.

14. Monitoring, review and publication

The Facilities Manager monitors the reliability and safety of the service and reports to the Bursar. This policy is reviewed annually, and sooner if the law, authoritative guidance or the School's arrangements change.

15. Related School policies and procedures

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following School policies and procedures:

- Vehicle and Driver (Fleet) Management Policy
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and Procedures
- Prevention of Bullying Policy
- Promoting Positive Behaviour Policy
- Mobile Phone Policy
- CCTV Policy (and the CCTV and Vehicle (Minibus) Cameras DPIA)
- Educational Visits Policy
- Complaints Procedure Policy

- First Aid Policy

16. Legislation, regulation and guidance

- Keeping Children Safe in Education (current version) — KCSIE 2026 in force from 1 September 2026.
- Section 19 and 22 permits: not for profit passenger transport (DfT).