

Oxfordshire County Council Supported Transport Service:

Code of Conduct for Drivers, Passenger Assistants and Approved Service Providers

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Taxi Driver and Passenger Assistant Code of Conduct

Taxi Drivers and Passenger Assistants must:

- **Read the code of conduct; failure to abide by it may result in cancellation of the driver or passenger assistant's OCC Transport ID badge and authorisation to work on Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) Transport contracts and/or taxi license.**
- **Be aware that any information regarding an incident or specific driver and/or passenger assistant will be shared with other organisations where deemed appropriate.**

Approved Transport Providers must:

- Read the code of conduct to ensure an understanding of what is expected of drivers and passenger assistants working with their company.
- Ensure that these guidelines are read and understood by all drivers and passenger assistants working on Oxfordshire County Council transport contracts for their company.
- Update the Supported Transport Service with any staffing changes and respond to requests from Supported Transport regarding staffing information in a timely manner.
- Return all OCC Transport badges that are no longer in use to Supported Transport so these can be disposed of. Alternatively, photo evidence of the cut-up badges should be provided to the DBS & Vetting team.
- **Note that failure to abide by the Code of Conduct may result in removal of OCC transport contracts.**
- **Acknowledge that any information regarding an incident or specific driver and/or passenger assistant will be shared with other organisations where deemed appropriate.**

Purpose of code of conduct:

- All adults who come into contact with children and adults in their work have a duty of care to safeguard those children and adults. As with other occupations, drivers and passenger assistants working with vulnerable people are expected to show high standards of behaviour.

- This code of conduct has been written to explain how drivers and passenger assistants are expected to behave to safeguard themselves and the passengers they are transporting on OCC transport contracts. The code of conduct is not a job description or a replacement of the job requirements which should be set out by the company a driver and/or passenger assistants is working for.
- Although this code of conduct aims to cover a wide range of areas, it is recognised that it isn't exhaustive and that professional judgements will need to be made in situations not covered by the code of conduct or that directly go against the guidance given by their employer. **It is expected that in these circumstances the driver or passenger assistant concerned will inform their manager who can then contact the Supported Transport Service and seek further advice.**

Oxfordshire County Council Transport Badges:

- In order to drive or assist on an Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) transport contract drivers and passenger assistants need to obtain an OCC Transport ID badge. They will also have to provide evidence that they have undertaken appropriate Safeguarding & Disability Awareness training within the past 3 years as well as any other training deemed necessary and requested by OCC.
- Drivers and passenger assistants must always wear their valid OCC Transport ID badges when working on OCC transport contacts and must show this if requested to do so.
- Drivers and passenger assistants who work for more than one company will require an OCC Transport ID badge for each company (up to a maximum of 3 different companies). Drivers and passenger assistants should not work on any OCC contracts for a company unless they have a valid OCC Transport ID badge for that company in their possession.
- If an OCC Transport ID Badge is lost or stolen, the driver/passenger assistant must inform their manager who will contact the DBS & Vetting Team at transport.safeguarding@oxfordshire.gov.uk who will deactivate the old badge and issue a replacement.
- If a driver/passenger assistant is no longer working with a company who carries out transport for OCC, their badge will be deactivated and can no longer be used. They must ensure their OCC Transport badge is returned to their old provider or directly to the Supported Transport DBS & Vetting Team.
- If the details are incorrect on your OCC Transport ID badge, drivers/passenger assistants must inform their manager who will arrange for the DBS & Vetting Team to reissue a new badge.

Appearance:

- You should be clean with a professional, presentable appearance.

Vehicle Livery:

- It is a condition of contract that if the vehicle being used on an OCC transport contract does not display the livery of the contracted provider, you must ensure the A4 sheet detailing the contracted Service Provider name and/or trading name and phone number is printed and displayed on the dashboard (passenger side of vehicle). The contract provider will receive this attached to the Call-Off document.

Picking Up and Dropping off Passengers:

- The instructions that you receive from your manager or OCC must be adhered to. In the instance that instructions cannot be adhered to, please contact your manager who will then contact the OCC Supported Transport Team for instructions.
- Arrive at the prearranged/booked pick up or drop off time and location.
- If you are running late, please inform your manager as soon as possible who will then report this to the OCC Supported Transport Team.
- If you are unable to locate a passenger or have been waiting for 5 minutes or longer, please inform your manager as soon as possible who will seek further advice from the relevant OCC Supported Transport Team.
- If you get a no pickup of a passenger, you must inform your manager as soon as possible who must then report this to the OCC Supported Transport Team.
- On reaching the correct destination, please ensure that the passenger is handed to a responsible adult. **Do not leave individuals unescorted in any circumstances unless specific instruction or approval to do so has been given by the OCC Supported Transport Team. You will be given any relevant handover instructions for passengers by your manager.**
- Please do not beep your horn. If safe and practical to do so without leaving another passenger unattended, please knock on the front door when picking up a client to make sure they know you have arrived. If you have any problems locating a passenger, call your manager who will contact the relevant OCC Supported Transport team.
- Give reasonable assistance with any loading or unloading of luggage before or after a journey.

- The Driver shall not at any time when driving the vehicle cause or permit the vehicle to be parked in a position that causes unnecessary danger or obstruction (e.g. double parked, parked at or close to a road junction).
- Drivers and passenger assistants must be helpful and polite to all individuals they come in to contact with, remaining mindful that whilst working on all OCC Transport contracts, you are ambassadors of OCC, and your behaviour should remain professional at all times to reflect this.

Transporting Passengers:

- Whilst driving on an OCC transport contract, you must not under any circumstances convey any unauthorised passengers.
- Do not accept any travel amendments or instructions directly from passengers. All changes to travel arrangements must be approved by the relevant OCC Supported Transport Team.
- Passengers must sit in the rear of the vehicle unless an arrangement has been made by the relevant OCC Transport team to authorise a passenger to sit in the front of the vehicle.
- Passenger assistants must sit amongst the passengers, not separately or in front of the vehicle unless specifically requested by OCC Supported Transport.
- Do not ask the client where they are going, your controller will tell you this information.
- All seatbelts must be worn as per legislation.
- If your contract requires car seats; please ensure that these are lawful and comply with Government regulations. If you require any further advice on the suitability of a car seat type, please email the Passenger Risk Assessment team TransportRiskAssessment@Oxfordshire.gov.uk
- You should not make any unauthorised stops on your journey unless there is an emergency; in this instance, you should inform your manager or controller as soon as possible who will in inform the relevant OCC Supported Transport team.
- If a passenger runs away while you are transporting them, contact your controller who will contact the Supported Transport Team immediately. Child locks should be in use if available on the vehicle.
- If you are involved in an incident or road traffic accident whilst working on an OCC Transport contract, you must report this to your manager as soon as possible. Your manager must then inform the relevant OCC Supported Transport team immediately.

- Smoking in or around a vehicle is prohibited (this also applies to the use of e-cigarettes). Do not smoke at a destination or near a destination where you are either picking up or dropping off passengers. All OCC school sites and establishments are non-smoking environments.
- Do not use a handheld mobile phone whilst transporting passengers. This is against the law. Hands free usage should be limited to transport contract related use.
- It may be necessary for an assistance dog to accompany a passenger. This will be without any additional charge and must not be refused unless the driver has a medical exemption certificate that prevents him/her from carrying assistance dogs. Drivers should make their manager aware of any such exemptions.
- It is forbidden for a driver or passenger assistant to have consumed any illegal substances or alcohol before/while driving. This is against the law.
- Be aware that some passengers with additional needs will carry a passenger passport. Where this is the case, the controller should pass on the information on the passport to you, please make sure you read and understand the information that is given to you. If you think a passenger you are transporting should have a passenger passport, please contact your controller.
- All drivers will adhere to and be aware of the highway safety code and road traffic regulations. Failure to abide by these rules could result in prosecution.

Behaviour with Passengers:

Drivers and passenger assistants should be clear in their communications with passengers to avoid any misinterpretation of motives or inappropriate behaviour. This means drivers and passenger assistants **must not**:

- Make discriminatory remarks relating to age, gender, sexuality, disability, race, religion, or appearance.
- Share personal information with their passengers or request or respond to any personal information shared by the passenger. If a passenger shares information which causes you a concern, please inform your manager as soon as possible.
- Share/exchange telephone numbers with passengers. However, it is acceptable to share/exchange telephone numbers with parents/carers but please recognise that text messaging is not an appropriate response to an emergency situation.
- Under any circumstances, give or take details of any blogs or personal websites or use any form of electronic communication to send messages to a

passenger. This includes social networking sites such Instagram, Facebook, TikTok, Snap Chat or any other form of electronic communication.

- Use foul or inappropriate language in front of any passenger or parent/carer of a passenger.
- Use their position of power to force or encourage passengers into following a political, spiritual, or religious belief. This could be seen as a form of 'radicalisation' and will be treated as a safeguarding issue. If you think a passenger, you are transporting may be showing signs of being 'radicalised', please contact the Supported Transport team.
- Take photographs of passengers even if it is at their request.
- Use any device to take photographic content on any OCC establishments or school sites.
- Provide or receive any form of gift, no matter how small or invaluable.
- Have sexual relationships with passengers or attempt to engage in a relationship with a passenger.
- Have any form of communication with a passenger which could be misinterpreted as sexually suggestive, this includes making sexual remarks to a passenger.
- Discuss your own sexual relationships with or in the presence of a passenger.
- Look after/keep safe a passenger's personal belongings (e.g. mobile phone, iPad, or money).
- Keep written details/notes on the passengers you convey unless instructed to do so by OCC Supported Transport. If asked by school staff to keep notes, please consult the OCC Supported Transport Team immediately.
- Physical contact should be limited to assisting a passenger in and out of a vehicle if needed and securing/releasing harnesses and seat belts as required. Parents and school staff are responsible for assisting students to/from the vehicle so there should be no routine requirement for hand holding. However, it is recognised that there may be other rare circumstances where physical contact will need to be used (e.g. to stop a passenger running away or hurting themselves) to reduce the risk of harm to a vulnerable passenger. The driver/passenger assistant is expected to exercise professional judgement in these situations and be prepared to explain, if necessary, why physical contact was used.

Confidentiality:

Drivers and passenger assistants will have access to confidential information about passengers they convey through verbal communication with their manager or written documents e.g. passenger passports. Any details or documents driver and passenger assistants are provided with must be kept confidential. This means that drivers and passenger assistants **must**:

- Be clear about what information can be shared and in what circumstances it is appropriate to do so, in line with 'General Data Protection Regulations 2018'.
- Treat information they receive about passengers in a discreet and confidential manner.
- Not promise to keep secrets for passengers or ask the passengers to keep secrets under any circumstances. If a passenger shares information like this, please inform your manager as soon as possible.
- Pass on any concerns regarding allegations of abuse of passengers to their manager without delay.
- **Never** use any information you receive about a passenger to intimidate, humiliate or embarrass the passenger involved.

Useful Contact Numbers if a driver/passenger assistant has any concerns about a passenger:

If any driver/passenger assistant has a concern about the child or vulnerable adult being at risk of any form of abuse they must act on this. Either inform your manager or OCC's Supported Transport Team/ District Council if appropriate or contact one of the following:

To report specific concerns about the abuse or neglect of an adult , call Social and Health Care	0345 050 7666
If you are worried that your manager or any other professional (e.g. teacher) may be abusing a child, call the Local Authority Designated Officer for Child Protection (LADO)	01865 810603
If you are concerned that a child may be being abused by someone other than your manager or another professional (e.g. by a parent). Please contact the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)	0345 050 7666
To discuss general safeguarding concerns for the particular attention of OCC's Supported Transport team call	01865 323500

Or: Contract Monitoring and Complaints Team	qmcc@oxfordshire.gov.uk
If there is an urgent risk call	999

Coach Driver Code of Conduct

Coach Drivers must:

- **Read the code of conduct; failure to abide by it may result in cancellation of the driver's OCC Transport ID badge and authorisation to work on Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) transport contracts.**
- **Be aware that any information regarding an incident or specific driver and/or passenger assistant will be shared with other organisations where deemed appropriate.**

Approved Transport providers must:

- Read the code of conduct to ensure an understanding of what is expected of coach drivers working with their company.
- Ensure that these guidelines are read and understood by all staff working on Oxfordshire County Council transport contracts for their company.
- Update the Supported Transport Service with any staffing changes and respond to requests from Supported Transport regarding staffing information in a timely manner.
- Return all OCC Transport badges that are no longer in use to Supported Transport so these can be disposed of. Alternatively, photo evidence of the cut-up badges should be provided to the DBS & Vetting team.
- **Note that failure to abide by the Code of Conduct may result in removal of OCC transport contracts.**
- **Acknowledge that any information regarding an incident or specific driver will be shared with other organisations where deemed appropriate.**

Purpose of code of conduct:

- All adults who come into contact with children and adults in their work have a duty of care to safeguard those children and adults. As with other occupations, coach drivers working with vulnerable people are expected to show high standards of behaviour.
- This code of conduct has been written to explain how drivers are expected to behave to safeguard themselves and the passengers they are transporting on OCC transport contracts. The code of conduct is not a job description or a replacement of the job requirements which should be set out by a company a driver is working for.
- Although this code of conduct aims to cover a wide range of areas, it is recognised that it isn't exhaustive and that professional judgements will need to be made in situations not covered by the code of conduct or that directly go against the guidance given by their employer. **It is expected that in these circumstances coach drivers will inform their manager who can then contact the Supported Transport Service and seek further advice.**

Oxfordshire County Council Badges:

- In order to drive on an Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) transport contract, coach drivers need to obtain an OCC Transport ID badge. They will also have to provide evidence that they have undertaken appropriate Safeguarding & Disability Awareness training within the past 3 years as well as any other training deemed necessary and requested by OCC.
- Drivers must always wear their valid OCC Transport ID badge when working on OCC transport contracts and must show this if requested to do so.
- Coach drivers who work for more than one company will require an OCC Transport ID badge for each company (up to a maximum of 3 different companies). Drivers should not work on any OCC contracts for a company unless they have a valid OCC Transport ID badge for that company in their possession.
- If an OCC Transport ID Badge is lost or stolen, the driver must inform their manager who will contact the DBS & Vetting Team at transport.safeguarding@oxfordshire.gov.uk who will deactivate the old badge and issue a replacement.
- If a coach driver is no longer working with a company who carries out transport for OCC, their badge will be deactivated and can no longer be used. They must ensure their OCC Transport badge is returned to their old provider or directly to the Supported Transport DBS & Vetting Team.

- If the details are incorrect on your OCC Transport ID badge, drivers must inform their manager who will arrange for the DBS & Vetting Team to reissue a new badge.

Appearance:

- You should be clean with presentable appearance.

Picking Up and Dropping off Passengers:

- The instructions that you receive from your manager or OCC must be adhered to. In the instance that instructions cannot be adhered to, please contact your manager who will then contact the the OCC Supported Transport Team for instructions.
- Arrive at the pickup or drop off point at the correct time.
- If you are running late, please inform your manager as soon as possible.
- If a child attempts to board the bus without their bus pass in the morning journey, they **must** be transported to school. In the situation where this isn't possible, and the bus is already full you must contact your manager who will contact Supported Transport immediately. This policy should also be practiced for the afternoon journeys as far as possible. If a child who travels on your bus repeatedly does not have their bus pass, please inform the school and Supported Transport Team who will be able to take further action.
- On reaching the correct destination, please ensure that passengers are handed over to a responsible adult. **Do not leave vulnerable individuals unescorted in any circumstances unless specific instruction or approval to do so has been given by OCC Supported Transport Team.** If there is no responsible adult, the child should remain on a vehicle while the driver completes the rest of their journey. The driver should then return to the stop where the child was meant to be collected. If the parent/guardian still isn't there to collect the child, the driver should inform their manager who will ring the relevant Supported Transport Team; the driver will then receive instruction on how to proceed.
- If a driver thinks a primary school child has got off the bus without a responsible adult there to collect them, they should contact their manager who will contact the Supported Transport Team immediately.
- Give reasonable assistance with any loading or unloading of luggage before or after a journey.
- The Driver shall not at any time when driving the vehicle cause or permit the vehicle to be parked in a position that causes unnecessary danger or obstruction (e.g. double parked, parked at or close to a road junction).

- Drivers must be helpful and polite to all individuals they come in to contact with, remaining mindful that whilst working on all OCC Transport contracts, you are ambassadors of OCC and your behaviour should remain professional at all times to reflect this.

Transporting the Passengers:

- Whilst driving on an OCC transport contract, you must not convey any unauthorised passengers.
- Do not accept any travel amendments or instructions directly from passengers. All changes to travel arrangements must be approved by the relevant Support Transport Team first.
- All seatbelts must be worn as per legislation.
- You should not make any unauthorised stops on your journey unless there is an emergency; in this instance, you should inform your manager or controller as soon as possible who will inform the relevant OCC Supported Transport Team.
- If a passenger runs away while you are transporting them, contact your manager who will contact the relevant Supported Transport team immediately.
- If your vehicle breaks down whilst transporting children, ask the children to remain on the bus (unless there is an immediate risk e.g. fire) until the next course of action is agreed with your manager. If a child does not remain on the bus and walks off, inform your manager who will inform the Supported Transport Team immediately.
- If you are involved in an incident or road traffic accident whilst working on an OCC Transport contract, you must report this to your manager as soon as possible. Your manager must then inform the relevant OCC Supported Transport team immediately.
- Smoking in or around a vehicle is prohibited (this also applies to the use of e-cigarettes). Do not smoke at a destination or near a destination where you are either picking up or dropping off passengers. All OCC school sites and establishments are non-smoking environments.
- Do not use a handheld mobile phone whilst transporting passengers. This is against the law. Hands free usage should be limited to transport contract related use.
- It is forbidden for a coach driver to be in possession of or have consumed any illegal substances or alcohol before/while driving. This is against the law.

- Be aware some passengers with additional needs will carry a passenger passport. Where this is the case, your manager should pass on the information on the passport to you; please make sure you read and understand the information that is given to you. If you think a passenger you transport should have a passenger passport, please contact your manager.
- All drivers will adhere to and be aware of the highway safety code and road traffic regulations. Failure to abide by these rules could result in prosecution.

Behaviour with Passengers:

Coach drivers should be clear in their communications with passengers to avoid any misinterpretation of motives or inappropriate behaviour. This means drivers **must not**:

- Make discriminatory remarks relating to age, gender, sexuality, disability, race, religion, or appearance.
- Share personal information with their passengers or request or respond to any personal information shared by the passenger. If a passenger shares information which causes you concern, please inform your manager as soon as possible.
- Share/exchange telephone numbers with passengers. However, it is acceptable to share/exchange telephone numbers with parents/carers but please recognise that text messaging is not an appropriate response to an emergency situation.
- Under any circumstances, give or take details of any blogs or personal websites or use any form of electronic communication to send messages to a vulnerable passenger. This includes social networking sites such Instagram, Facebook, TikTok, Snap Chat or any other form of electronic communication.
- Use foul or inappropriate language in front of any passenger or parent/carer of a passenger.
- Use their position of power to force or indoctrinate passengers into following a political, spiritual, or religious belief. This could be seen as a form of 'radicalisation' and will be treated as a safeguarding issue. If you think a passenger, you are transporting may be showing signs of being 'radicalised' please contact the Supported Transport team.
- Take photographs of passengers even if it is at their request.
- Use any device to take photographic content on any OCC establishments or school sites.
- Provide or receive any form of gift, no matter how small or invaluable.

- Have sexual relationships with passengers or attempt to engage in a relationship with a passenger.
- Have any form of communication with a passenger which could be misinterpreted as sexually suggestive, this includes making sexual remarks to a passenger.
- Discuss your own sexual relationships with or in the presence of a passenger.
- Look after/keep safe a passenger's personal belongings (e.g. mobile phone, iPad or money).
- Keep written details/notes on the passengers you convey unless instructed to do so by OCC Supported Transport. If asked by school staff to keep notes, please consult with Supported Transport immediately.
- Physical contact should be limited to assisting a passenger in and out of a vehicle if needed. Parents and school staff are responsible for assisting students to/from the vehicle so there should be no routine requirement for hand holding. However, it is recognised that there may be other rare circumstances where physical contact will need to be used (e.g. to stop a passenger running away or hurting themselves) to reduce the risk of harm to a vulnerable passenger. The driver is expected to exercise professional judgement in these situations and be prepared to explain, if necessary, why physical contact was used.
- If a child is misbehaving on the bus (e.g. bad language, violent behaviour) please report this to your manager who will inform the OCC Contract Monitoring and Complaints team. Do not attempt to punish or sanction the student(s) in question yourself.

Confidentiality:

Coach drivers will have access to confidential information about passengers they transport through verbal communication with their controller/manager or written documents e.g. passenger passports. Any details or documents drivers are provided with must be kept confidential. This means that coach drivers **must**:

- Be clear about what information can be shared and in what circumstances it is appropriate to do so, in line with 'General Data Protection Regulations 2018'.
- Treat information they receive about passengers in a discreet and confidential manner.
- Not promise to keep secrets to passengers or ask the passengers to keep secrets under any circumstances. If a passenger shares information like this, please inform your manager as soon as possible.

- Pass on any concerns regarding allegations of abuse of passengers to their manager without delay.
- **Never** use any information you receive about a passenger to intimidate, humiliate, or embarrass the passenger involved.

Useful Contact Numbers if a coach driver has any concerns about a passenger:

If any driver has a concern about the child or vulnerable adult being at risk of any form of abuse, they must act on this. Either inform your manager or OCC's Supported Transport Team if appropriate or contact one of the following:

To report specific concerns about the abuse or neglect of an adult , call Social and Health Care	0345 050 7666
If you are worried that your manager or any other professional (e.g. teacher) may be abusing a child, call the Local Authority Designated Officer for Child Protection (LADO)	01865 810603
If you are concerned that a child may be being abused by someone other than your manager or another professional (e.g. parent). Please contact the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)	0345 050 7666
To discuss general safeguarding concerns for the particular attention of OCC' s Supported Transport team call	01865 323500
Or: Contract Monitoring and Complaints Team	qmcc@oxfordshire.gov.uk

If there is an urgent risk call	999
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