



Thomond Primary School

School Transport Policy

School Transport: Supporting Safe, Respectful and Inclusive Travel

Introduction

The Board of Management of Thomond Primary School recognises that school transport is an essential support for many pupils attending the school, particularly those availing of the School Transport Scheme for Children with Special Educational Needs.

The school is committed to working collaboratively with families, bus escorts, transport providers and relevant agencies to ensure that pupils travel safely, with dignity and in a manner that promotes independence, wellbeing and inclusion.

This policy has been developed to provide clarity regarding the operation of school transport for pupils attending Thomond Primary School and to outline the roles and responsibilities of all parties involved.

The policy should be read in conjunction with:

- Thomond Primary School Code of Behaviour
- Child Safeguarding Statement and Risk Assessment
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Department of Education School Transport Scheme
- Bus Éireann Code of Behaviour for Children Availing of Transport under the School Transport Scheme

Aims

The aims of this policy are:

- To promote the safe transportation of pupils to and from school.
- To provide clear and transparent procedures regarding school transport arrangements.
- To clarify the responsibilities of parents/guardians, pupils, bus escorts and school personnel.
- To promote positive behaviour and respectful interactions while travelling.
- To support pupils with additional educational needs in accessing education safely and successfully.
- To ensure that school transport arrangements operate in accordance with child safeguarding and health and safety requirements.

Provision of School Transport

School transport is provided by the Department of Education through Bus Éireann and its contracted transport providers.

Eligibility for transport is determined by the Department of Education and/or Bus Éireann in accordance with the criteria of the School Transport Scheme.

Thomond Primary School does not determine eligibility for transport and is not responsible for the allocation of routes, collection times or transport personnel.

All transport routes serving Thomond Primary School are supported by a Bus Escort.

The school works closely with transport providers and families to support the safe and effective operation of transport arrangements for pupils.

Concerns Regarding School Transport

Thomond Primary School is committed to working collaboratively with parents/guardians, transport personnel and relevant agencies to support the safe and effective operation of school transport.

Parents/guardians who have concerns regarding school transport arrangements should contact the Principal in the first instance.

Concerns relating to transport routes, eligibility, collection times, transport personnel or other operational matters may need to be referred to Bus Éireann and/or the relevant transport provider, as appropriate.

The school will endeavour to assist families in addressing transport-related concerns but is not responsible for decisions regarding eligibility, transport routes or the allocation of transport personnel.

Roles and Responsibilities

Parents / Guardians

Parents/ Guardians have responsibility for:

- Ensuring their child is ready for collection at the agreed time and location.
- Informing the school and bus escort if their child will not be travelling.
- Providing up-to-date contact details and emergency contact information.
- Informing the school of any medical, behavioural, communication or sensory needs which may impact transport arrangements.
- Supporting their child in understanding and following transport expectations.
- Ensuring that a responsible adult is available to receive their child at the designated drop-off point where required.

Parents remain responsible for their child until the child is handed over to the bus escort each morning and become responsible again once the child has been handed over at the agreed drop-off point.

Parent / Guardian Conduct

Thomond Primary School values positive and respectful relationships between parents/guardians, school personnel, bus escorts and transport providers.

Parents/guardians are expected to communicate in a respectful and courteous manner at all times.

The following behaviours are not acceptable:

- Verbal abuse.
- Threatening or intimidating behaviour.
- Aggressive or confrontational conduct.
- Harassment of school staff, bus escorts, drivers or other parents.
- Use of offensive, discriminatory or abusive language.
- Behaviour which compromises the safety or wellbeing of pupils, staff or transport personnel.

Where concerns arise regarding the conduct of a parent/guardian, the matter will be addressed in accordance with the school's Parent Complaints Procedure, Child Safeguarding procedures, Health and Safety procedures and/or other relevant school policies and procedures.

The Board of Management may take appropriate action, in accordance with school policies and principles of fair procedure, where the behaviour of an adult presents a risk to the safety, wellbeing or dignity of pupils, staff, bus escorts or members of the school community.

Incidents involving threats, intimidation, harassment or aggression may be reported to the appropriate authorities where necessary.

Pupils

Pupils travelling on school transport are expected to:

- Follow instructions given by the bus escort and driver
- Remain seated while the vehicle is moving
- Wear a seatbelt where provided
- Treat fellow pupils, escorts and drivers with respect
- Use appropriate language and behaviour
- Respect the vehicle and the property of others
- Avoid behaviour that may distract the driver or place themselves or others at risk

The school recognises that some pupils may require additional support to understand and meet these expectations.

Bus Escorts

Bus Escorts play an important role in ensuring the safety and wellbeing of pupils during transport.

Bus Escorts are responsible for:

- Supervising pupils while travelling.
- Assisting pupils to board and disembark safely.
- Ensuring that pupils are seated safely and wearing seatbelts where provided.
- Supporting safe transitions between home, transport and school.

- Reporting concerns or incidents to the school.
- Maintaining confidentiality in relation to pupils and families.
- Ensuring that pupils are safely handed over between parents/guardians and school personnel.

Bus Escorts are entitled to carry out their duties in an environment that is safe, respectful and free from intimidation, abuse, harassment or threats.

School Personnel

School personnel are responsible for:

- Receiving pupils safely on arrival at school.
- Escorting pupils to transport at the end of the school day where appropriate
- Liaising with families and transport personnel regarding concerns
- Recording and responding to incidents in accordance with school policies
- Promoting positive behaviour and safe travel practices

Collection and Drop-Off Procedures

Morning Arrival

- Pupils are supervised by the bus escort until arrival at school
- Pupils are handed over directly to school personnel
- Relevant information may be communicated between the bus escort and school staff where necessary

Afternoon Departure

- Pupils are escorted to the designated collection area by school personnel where appropriate
- Pupils are handed directly to the bus escort
- Responsibility for the pupil transfers to the bus escort once handover has taken place

For safeguarding reasons pupils will not be left unsupervised during arrival or departure

Positive Behaviour on School Transport

School transport is regarded as an extension of the school day, and pupils are expected to comply with the standards of behaviour outlined in the school's code of behaviour.

The school promotes positive behaviour through:

- Clear expectations and routines
- Positive reinforcement
- Consistent communication between home and school

- Individualised supports where appropriate
- Collaborative problem-solving when difficulties arise

Misconduct and Safety Concerns

The safety of all pupils, escorts and drivers is of paramount importance.

Examples of behaviour which may give rise to concern include:

- Refusal to remain seated
- Failure to wear a seat belt
- Inappropriate language
- Bullying, harassment, or intimidation
- Damage to property
- Throwing objects
- Interference with safety equipment
- Physical aggression
- Leaving the vehicle without permission
- Any behaviour which places the pupil or others at risk

All incidents will be addressed in a fair, proportionate and supportive manner.

The school recognises that some behaviours may be influenced by a pupil's age, stage of development, communication needs, sensory profile, or disability-related needs. Such factors will be taken into consideration when responding to incidents.

Responses to behaviour will be proportionate and consistent with the school's commitment to inclusion and equality.

Serious or Repeated Misconduct

Where behaviour presents a significant risk to the safety of the pupil, other passengers, the bus escort or the driver, the school will work collaboratively with parents/ guardians, transport personnel, and relevant agencies to address concerns.

Supports may include:

- Consultation with parents / guardians
- Positive behaviour support strategies
- Risk assessment and planning
- Liaison with relevant professional and support services

In circumstances where a pupil's behaviour presents an immediate and serious risk to the safety of passengers or transport personnel, temporary alternative arrangements may be required pending review by the relevant transport authorities.

Serious or repeated misconduct may be referred to Bus Éireann and/or the Department of Education in accordance with the School Transport Scheme Code of Behaviour.

Sanctions under the School Transport Scheme may include:

- Verbal warning
- Written warning
- Temporary suspension from transport
- Withdrawal of transport for a specified period
- Permanent exclusion from the school transport scheme

Any such sanctions are applied in accordance with the procedures of Bus Éireann and the Department of Education.

Child Safeguarding and Health & Safety

All School transport arrangements will operate in accordance with:

- Thomond Primary School Child Safeguarding Statement and Risk Assessment
- Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post primary schools
- Relevant Department of Education circulars
- School Transport Scheme guidelines
- Thomond Primary School Health and Safety Statement.

The welfare and safety of pupils remain the primary consideration in all transport-related decisions.

The Board of Management recognises its duty of care towards employees and will take all reasonable steps to protect bus escorts and staff from abusive, threatening or aggressive behaviour.

Implementation and Review

This policy will be implemented following ratification by the Board of Management.

The policy will be reviewed as required or as soon as practicable following any significant change to the Department of Education guidance, School Transport Scheme procedures, Bus Éireann requirements or school practice.

Ratification and Communication

This policy was formally approved by the Board of Management of Thomond Primary School on the 9th June 2026.

The policy will be made available to staff, parents/ guardians, bus escorts, and members of the school community through the school's usual communication channels.

Signed: 

Michael Condon
Chairperson of the Board of Management

Date: 09/06/2026
