



St. Brigid's Girls' National School

SCHOOL TRANSPORT POLICY

The Department of Education endeavours to provide suitable transport for pupils attending the AS class, The Orchard, in St Brigid's GNS. The scheme is administered by Bus Éireann as an agent of the Department of Education.

Application for School Transport

Existing Students

A form is sent to the parents / guardians of all applicable students at the end of the school year regarding travel requirements for the following year (see appendix). It is of the utmost importance that this form is promptly returned as there can be long delays in making changes once school restarts in September.

This information is required to update a computerised listing we receive from Bus Éireann. This must be checked for accuracy regarding address, date of birth, pupils who have left the school or are changing to public transport, etc.

New Enrolments

Parents / Guardians of students accepted for enrolment in St Brigid's GNS are required to complete 'Application for School Transport for Children with Special Educational Needs for School Year concerned' (NCSE Form (see attachment)). The Principal completes the 'Declaration of Principal' section and submits the application form to the Special Education Needs Organiser (SENO) together with relevant professional reports to support the application. The SENO completes the application form and makes certain recommendations to the council (NCSE) e.g. type of transport required, requirement for an escort, wheelchair access, etc. Transport may be refused if there is a school nearer to the student's home that meets the student's special education needs. The NCSE forwards its decision to School

Transport Section, Department of Education & Skills. School Transport forwards its decision to Bus Éireann. Bus Éireann organises transport and notifies the school.

The contractors hired by Bus Éireann to provide transport contact the parents.

When your child is offered a place in The Orchard class in St. Brigid's GNS, the school will endeavour to provide all information necessary to facilitate a smooth transition for your child to our school. You will be given an overview of how the school bus scheme operates, this will be at a face to face information sharing meeting or via a Zoom meeting or similar. The school passes on all contact details re your child to Bus Éireann in the final term of the school year prior to enrolment. The bus inspector and his/her team plan to include all new students (If required) on bus lists for the following September. Bus Éireann invites contractors to tender for the different routes and this is finalised where possible before school opens for the new school year.

The bus driver allocated to the route on which your child will travel will make contact with you in the days before school opens.

Arrangements will be made between you and the driver regarding times of collection and drop-off. Flexibility is necessary especially for the first few days until the driver has a clear view of how the route will work best for the comfort of all. It is important for you to have the number for both the driver and the escort and that a good working relationship is maintained.

You are asked to please give as much notice as possible if your daughter will not be attending school for any reason. If you need to collect your child early from school please text the bus staff so that they know not to wait for your child at home time.

Equally if your child is not on the bus in the morning and subsequently she is dropped to school please text bus staff to make sure they are aware they need to bring the student home.

A student is insured to travel only on the bus allocated to them and may not travel on a different bus. Please note, the bus or taxi can only collect and drop children to the address on the bus ticket. The driver is strictly not allowed to leave a child at a different address.

In the event of your moving to a new address, notice should be given, to the school as early as possible. The Dept. of Education needs to sanction a place on a new bus. There is a three-step process that happens: school contact the SENO and sends on the appropriate form; the SENO sends the form to the Dept. of Education for sanction and the Dept. sends it finally to Bus Éireann who try to find a new bus.

Note: Please be aware that occasionally a bus may not run for a variety of reasons, Mechanical failure, illness of bus staff, emergencies etc. Many of these situations will be outside of the control of the school. On such occasions, parents will need to make alternative arrangements.

Safety on school buses is of paramount importance to all involved in school transport.

Sometimes the Department of Education provides schools with a grant to pay salaries of escorts to supervise the students on the bus and ensure their safety and comfort. The bus escort gets to know the children and learns how to manage them in a respectful and caring way. See appendix "Responsibilities of an escort."

There is a legal requirement to wear seat belts on buses, and failure to wear the seat belt provided is regarded as a serious breach of safety and a disciplinary matter. For further information on this and for information on 'Behaviour on School Transport' see appendix 4.

Most behaviours of concern that arise on a school bus can be managed in a low-key fashion. Open communication between driver/bus escort /parents and school staff will assist in highlighting any worries a student has relating to bus transport and managing to allay their concerns and lead to a solution

Given the importance of safety on the school bus, parents should be aware that any serious misbehaviour, such as vandalism, or bullying, will lead to sanctions that may include an extended period of exclusion from the school transport service or in a more serious situation, permanent exclusion. The bus inspector is the person who makes the decision to suspend or exclude a student from school bus transport. It is unusual for such a situation to occur.

*For Bus Éireann 'Guidelines for Discipline and Procedures for Dealing with Alleged Misbehaviour on School Transport' see appendix attached.
This should be read by parent / guardian and explained to your daughter.*

Home Time /Collection Time

- All classroom staff need to know the parking area of the bus for each student in their classroom.
- Classroom staff leave their classroom with the students at 1.30 or 2.20pm to accompany their students to their bus and ensure safety of students en-route.
- Classroom staff hands over student to bus escort.
- Classroom staff informs bus staff if a student has been collected early and will not be using the bus.
- Students who are travelling in the buses wait inside the Orchard yard with their classroom staff until the bus arrives. They walk in single file to the bus with the SNA(s).
- Bus parks outside the school gate in the morning and evening.
- The class teacher is responsible for the overall supervision of transport. She/ he needs to be a visible presence in the mornings and afternoons at drop off and collection times.

Morning Drop Off for Students from Buses

- St. Brigid's GNS accepts responsibility for students of The Orchard class arriving in school at 09:10am.
- Buses drop off students outside the school gate on Woodfarm Drive.
- Should a bus arrive in the school prior to 9.10am the bus staff wait with the students on board until 9.10am.
- Bus pulls up at the school gate. Two SNA's are waiting. Students are facilitated by escort to alight safely from bus and proceed down the steps.
- The SNAs oversee the students alighting from buses and provide assistance if needed descending the steps.
- The class teacher will be in attendance for the arrival of buses and students and available to deal with queries and supervise the procedure.

Note to bus drivers and bus escorts:

Any documentation requiring signature should be presented, completed in full, to the Principal/Deputy Principal in the office area of the school. Undated/incomplete documentation will be returned for completion before signature.

Contact details re School Transport.

Department of Education: Fionnuala Hickey *School Transport Section* Department of Education
Portlaoise Rd, Tullamore, Co. Offaly, R35 Y2N5.
Email fionnuala_hickey@education.gov.ie +353(0)57 932 5461
Schools_transport@education.gov.ie

Bus inspector, 2023/24 Kevin Quinn. kevin.quinn@buseireann.ie
Contact schools.dublin@buseireann.ie or phone (01) 8302222.

SENO Address: Audrey O'Farrell(SENO) National Council for Special Education, Dublin Team 2, County Hall, Belgard Square North, Dublin 24, D24 YNN5, Contact Tel (01) 603 3403 or Audrey.ofarrell@ncse.ie

Responsibilities

The School:

- submits applications for transport for each new entrant to the Special Educational Needs Officer (SENO), stating number of wheelchair users
- employs the bus escorts, as sanctioned by Department of Education
- informs Bus Éireann of a new home address or other changes
- pass on reports of any safety concerns to Bus Éireann Inspector

Bus Éireann Inspector:

- gives contracts to bus companies to provide school transport
- assigns children to bus routes and gives contact details to the contractors
- contacts parents if a child's behaviour is causing ongoing danger to himself or others. In this case, parents will be asked to make their own arrangements for getting the child to and from school, until the situation is resolved.

The Bus Contractor:

- assigns a driver to the route
- informs parents of the time of morning collection

The Driver:

- **safe transport** of those on board the bus/ taxi, informing the school for any dangers due to behaviour or for other reasons
- **wheels wheelchairs/ buggies** up the ramp and secures them safely
- **time-keeping:** a 5-minute wait period only is allowed at each house. If a child is not brought to the bus within the 5-minute period, the driver must drive on to collect the next child and parents/ guardians will need to make their own transport arrangements that day
- **safe delivery home:** if a parent/ guardian is not at home to receive the child in the afternoon, the driver is obliged to leave the child at the nearest Garda Station.

The Bus Escort:

- meets the parent and child at the bus entrance
- assists the child to board
- secures the child's seatbelt
- watches over the safety and well-being of the children
- informs the school if aware of a child causing danger to themselves or others on the bus journey.

The Parent/Guardian:

- **provides a booster seat** if required for a child's safe travel
- **brings the child to the bus each morning**
- **receives the child at the bus in the afternoon.**
- **informs the escort/ driver in advance if their child will not be attending school** so the bus does not make a wasted journey
- **informs the escort/ driver in advance if their child will not be returning home on the bus**, i.e. when a child is collected from school.

NOTE: Please note that, for safety and insurance reasons, both driver and escort are not allowed to leave the bus to knock on your door or to deliver your child home.

Bus Transport: Changes or Concerns

- **If there is a family emergency**, you must arrange with the school that a named adult will be at your home to meet your son or daughter when the bus arrives.
- **If you are planning to move house**, please let the school know as soon as possible and we will contact Bus Éireann. It can take Bus Éireann a few weeks to arrange transport to and from the new address. The school is not responsible for the length of time this may take.
- **If you have any concerns about the safety of your child when on the bus/taxi, please speak first to the driver.** If you are still unhappy, please contact the school.

JOB DESCRIPTION OF BUS ESCORT

In addition to the listed duties the Bus Escort will undertake other duties pertaining to the role as may be decided/directed by the School Principal and/or the Board of Management and/or as may be dictated by the needs of the Employer/School. It is expected that the Bus Escort will on his/her own initiative, identify tasks/duties that need to be carried out as part of the role subject to the authorisation of the School Principal/Board of Management as appropriate.

The duties listed are not intended to be exhaustive or exclusive

1.00. The Bus Escort must:

- 1.01.** Ensure that s/he is on the school transport at the time of the first pick-up and last set down.
- 1.02.** Is responsible for the safety of children when opening and closing doors prior to “stop” and “move off”.
- 1.03.** Assist children to board and alight safely from the school transport.
- 1.04.** Ensure that all children are seated with appropriate straps and harnesses where provided.
- 1.05.** Ensure that each pupil is received by some responsible person at the set down point.
- 1.06.** Supervise the children travelling on the school transport and alighting from the bus.
- 1.07.** Maintain a good working relationship with the driver of the school transport.
- 1.08.** Act as liaison between the School Principal and/or class teacher and parents when required i.e. conveyance of messages and letters to parents.
- 1.09.** Observe confidentiality in all aspects of work.
- 1.10.** Be aware of particular disabilities of children on the school transport and be briefed by the School Principal and/or Deputy Principal on how to deal with same i.e. epilepsy etc.
- 1.11.** Perform any other duties relevant to the position of escort which may be assigned by the School Principal from time to time.
- 1.12.** Not leave the school transport unless under exceptional circumstances.
- 1.13. Ensure that his/her position on the school transport is where maximum control of the children is achieved.ie at the back of the bus**
- 1.14.** Report all concerns to the School Principal, Deputy Principal and/or Class Teacher.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF AN ESCORT

- Watches over the safety and well-being of the children
- shows reasonable flexibility in relation to hours of attendance to meet the needs of the work. Work during unsocial hours may be required

- Identifies training needs with your Board of Management and participate in training opportunities appropriate to the role.
- participates in the efficient flow of information within the organization by sharing and seeking information as appropriate
- undertakes other duties as may be requested by the Board of Management from time to time.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Who is the Bus Escort's employer and who should the escort report to?

The Board of Management concerned is the employer of the Bus Escort(s).

The Department Grant aids the Board of Management of special schools and classes to assist in defraying the cost involved in engaging a suitable person to act as escort on transport.

The Board of Management of the school to which the escort grant has been allocated has responsibility for employing the escort. The escort should report any problems on transport to the Principal/Deputy Principal of the school in which she/he is employed and the matter should then be communicated to the Principal of the school concerned. However, it is also considered that in the course of day to day work of the escort there will be informal contact with the staff/Principal of each school served by the transport service.

The School Transport Policy for St. Brigid's GNS was ratified by the Board of Management at the BOM meeting on the 6th June 2024.

Major/Minor Incident on the Bus Major

Incident

- Fall on bus leading to concussion
- Fracture of a limb
- Major cuts/bites – might need stitching – A&E attendance
- Bus stopped immediately in safe place
- Bus driver dial 999/112 wait for ambulance assistance
- Basic First Aid carried out by escort – appropriate to incident
- Contact School Principal/Deputy Principal immediately
- Contact Parents
- Re assure other pupils on bus.

Dealing with a Major or Minor injury to pupil/staff while on transport

Minor Injuries

- e.g.: cut, graze, bite to any part of body
- Fall – hit head etc.
- One pupil hitting another
- Stop bus do not continue journey
- Escort deals with injury – using Basic First Aid Kit on bus
- Re assure other pupils
- Have Bus Driver contact appropriate school to explain delay
- When injury dealt with and all parties are content – sitting and safety belts on proceed to school
- On arrival to school, Escort can give full explanation to School Principal/Deputy Principal/Class teacher/SNA
- Incident form to be filled out and parents contacted.

St. Brigid's GNS Bus Escort Report Form

Escort: _____

Student: _____ Date: _____ Time: A.M. P.M.

This student was involved in incident / incidents of:

- Hitting
- Screaming
- Spitting
- Refusing to sit on assigned seat
- Abusive / inappropriate language
- Other _____

St. Brigid's GNS Bus Escort Report Form

Escort Report Form

Escort: _____

Student: _____ Date: _____ Time: A.M. P.M.

This student was involved in incident / incidents of:

- Hitting
- Screaming
- Spitting
- Refusing to sit on assigned seat
- Abusive / inappropriate language
- Other _____

**It is very important that this form is returned to
the
Principal as soon as possible as
requests for transport for September
will be confirmed in May or June.
Late replies will cause delays in providing
transport.**

School Transport September 2024

Student's name and class:

From September 2024

I wish my daughter to (please tick **one** box):

Continue to travel on '**taxi**' transport to and from school

or

No transport required – will make own arrangements

Parent / guardian signature.....

Address:

..... Date:

Application for School Transport for School Year 20_/20_



An Roinn Oideachais
agus Scileanna
Department of
Education and Skills



C. <u>SCHOOL DETAILS</u>			
Name of School			
Address of School			
Eircode			
D. <u>SCHOOL TRANSPORT REQUIREMENTS</u>			
TimesPlease tick as appropriate	YES	NO	
School Roll Number			
The child's care and safety needs are such as to require the support of an escort			
Phone (If yes, please complete section F Number - application to assess the need for an Escort) Email address of School			
NameWheelchair of Principal access is required			
Please provide any information you may have which may assist in determining the transport arrangement required			
Signature of School Principal			
Date			
E. <u>REPORT OF SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS ORGANISER (SENO)</u>			
Please tick	YES	NO	
(i) The required professional report(s) submitted meet the Department of Education and Skills criteria for attending the relevant setting			
(ii) This school is the nearest to the child's home that is, or can be, resourced to meet the child's educational needs under Department of Education and Skills criteria			
(iii) Based on the information provided in professional reports made available to me I can report that this child cannot avail of mainstream school transport			
Any further information, (if any), which is relevant to this application:			
SENO Name			
SENO AREA			
Date			

1. This application for school transport should only be completed in circumstances where the child is not in a position to avail of a standard school transport service.
2. The NCSE is provided with this information to facilitate the allocation of school transport for children with special educational needs.
3. The professional report(s) required to support an application must be submitted with this form.
4. This application form will be forwarded by the SENO to School Transport Section, Department of Education and Skills (DES) for their decision on the provision of transport in accordance with the terms of the School Transport Scheme for Children with Special Educational Needs.

A. CHILD DETAILS

Name of child			
Home address			
Eircode			
PPSN			
Date of Birth			
Disability Category			
School Setting	Special School	Special Class	Mainstream School
Date child will commence in the School			
Class			

B. PARENTAL/GUARDIAN CONSENT

I/We, the undersigned, being the parent(s)/guardian(s) of the above named child, confirm that:

1. My child cannot avail of a standard school transport service.
2. I am aware that copies of this form and attached documents will be retained by the SENO and the school.
3. I consent to the information on this form and attached documents being shared with the DES.
4. I consent to the relevant information on this form being shared with Bus Éireann.
5. I am aware that, in the event of it being determined that a school nearer to my child's home is or can be resourced to meet my child's special educational needs, that my child will not be eligible for school transport under the terms of the School Transport Scheme for Children with Special Educational Needs.

Contact details for Parent(s)/Guardian(s)

Phone No(s)	
Email Address	
Parent/Guardian (Block Capitals)	
Parent/Guardian Signature	
Date	

School Transport

Application for Escort Support

1. This application for escort support should only be completed in circumstances where the child's care and safety needs while on school transport are such as to require the support of an escort.
2. The professional report(s) required to support this application must be submitted to the SENO.
3. This application form will be forwarded by the SENO to School Transport Section, Department of Education and Skills (DES) for their decision on the allocation of an escort.

Applications for Escort support will be considered under this scheme where the relevant professional reports set out that a child has significant care needs arising from: (i) a significant medical need, or (ii) a significant impairment of physical or sensory function.

F. BASIS FOR NEED FOR ESCORT SUPPORT						
Please tick the primary care needs of the child	Physical	Hearing/Visual	Medical	Personal Care	Behavioural	Other

Does the child currently have SNA support?	Yes
	No

Do professional reports indicate the requirement for an Escort?	Yes
	No

If you do not have professional reports indicating care needs as outlined above, please indicate why Escort support is required.	
--	--

G. DECLARATION BY PRINCIPAL AND SENO

I confirm, based on information made available to me that this child's care and safety needs while on school transport are such as to require the support of an escort.

Signature	Principal	SENO
Date		



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 S 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.

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

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:

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.

4. Investigation by Bus Éireann Personnel

The investigation by the Bus Éireann Inspector will involve:

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. 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.

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.

Interviewing the bus driver.

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.

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: ** Pupil warned as to future conduct.

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.

Withdrawal of the travel permit for a specified period or permanently, at the discretion of the Bus Éireann Manager.

Interviewing other students who travel on the bus.

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:

Danger to pupils, drivers and other road users.

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.