



QUEENSLAND
GOVERNMENT

Transport and Main Roads

Safe travel of school students

Guiding principles
& stakeholder actions

1 Introduction

The Queensland Government is committed to the safety of all children using the public transport network. Some school students have been exploiting the Government's position on the safe travel of school students by not paying the correct fare or showing inappropriate behaviour while on the bus, knowing they will not be refused travel.

This has been causing operational issues for bus operators as dangerous behaviour by students can compromise the safety of the journey and continued fare evasion means a loss of revenue. This type of student behaviour will no longer be tolerated.

There are however other genuine circumstances where children unintentionally have insufficient bus fare or do not have an understanding of the network and whose safety should not be compromised by those students who choose to exploit the system.

The Queensland Government acknowledges that there is no simple solution to these complex operational issues. A collaborative approach by all stakeholders involved in the safe travel of school students is required to educate students on appropriate bus behaviour and to reinforce this message throughout the student's schooling.

2 Purpose

The purpose of this document is to outline the Queensland Government's position on safe travel for school students. The document contains guiding principles to assist those with responsibilities for school students travelling on buses. It encourages key stakeholder groups to take ownership of responsibilities and work in collaboration to ensure students are behaving in the appropriate manner while travelling to and from school. In addition, actions have been identified which can be implemented by each stakeholder group to support the guiding principles. Stakeholder actions are outlined in **Appendix 1**.

3 Key Stakeholder Groups

It is recognised that four key stakeholder groups contribute to the safe travel of school students:

1. Parents/carers and school students
2. Operators, industry and bus drivers
3. Queensland Schools
4. Queensland Government

An effective partnership between these key stakeholder groups is critical to encourage and reinforce appropriate behaviours.

The *Code of Conduct for School Students Travelling on Buses* (code of conduct) is an existing resource that clearly states the roles and responsibilities of these stakeholder groups. If utilised properly the code of conduct is a valuable tool for managing student behaviour issues by outlining expected behaviour, possible consequences for misbehaviour and the process for implementing consequences. All stakeholders need to work in collaboration and take ownership of their roles and responsibilities under the code of conduct for it to be effective.

It is important for bus operators and schools to develop and maintain positive working relationships. Open communication between operators and schools will enable issues to be addressed promptly. To help facilitate positive relationships, some bus operators have school liaison officers who visit schools in the local area to educate students on using the bus network. The school liaison officer works with schools to develop solutions to address topical student issues being experienced.

Government and school principal support of operator decisions in relation to action taken under the code of conduct will reinforce to students that breaching the code of conduct is unacceptable. Parents/carers also need to take responsibility for the behaviour of their school-aged children, ensuring students are aware of the requirements for bus travel outlined in the code of conduct.

In areas where student fare evasion and behaviour issues become prevalent, localised student conduct consultative committees may be established. These committees are run by the Department of Education, Training and Employment regional staff and can include representation from schools, P&Cs Queensland,

the Department of Transport and Main Roads, the Queensland Police Service, the bus operator and relevant driver union. Membership of committees can be customised to most effectively address the issues being experienced.

4 Parents/Carers and School Students

Guiding Principle:

Parents/carers and school students are responsible for ensuring students conduct themselves in the appropriate manner to enable safe and comfortable travel on public transport for all

Sub-principles

1. Parents/carers

- a) Parents/carers provide skills, knowledge, attitudes and behaviours to their school-aged child to ensure safe travel on the public transport network
- b) Parents/carers provide their school-aged child with requirements for travel such as the correct fare and identification

2. School students

School students take ownership of their actions while travelling on buses and have the correct fare, identification and display appropriate behaviour

All school students have the right to a safe journey using public transport. They also have responsibilities in ensuring the manner in which they travel allows a safe and comfortable journey for all commuters and the bus driver. Parents/carers are responsible for the behaviour of their school-aged child/ren and should ensure that appropriate behaviour is displayed by their child/ren while travelling to the bus stop and waiting for the bus.

Parents/carers influence their child/ren's attitudes and behaviours and should provide them with the necessary skills and knowledge for safe bus travel. Parents/carers should provide their child/ren with the correct fare and identification, knowledge of the bus service and an understanding of expected behaviour while travelling on the bus.

The code of conduct outlines the roles and responsibilities of school students, clearly articulating expected behaviour standards. School students are required to abide by the rules in the code of conduct when travelling on the bus. If a school student is found to be in breach of the code of conduct the bus operator may choose to take action against that student. This can range from a warning to refusal of bus travel dependent on the breach. The bus operator will determine the appropriate action to be taken in consultation with the student's parents/carers and school. Parents/carers should cooperate during this process.

Parents/carers can actively support the guiding principles by discussing the code of conduct with their child/ren to ensure they are aware of their rights and responsibilities and consequences for misbehaviour. Information sheets for students and parents/carers on the code of conduct are available at <http://translink.com.au/travel-information/network-information/school-transport/safe-travel>. Parents/carers of children found to be in breach of the code should cooperate with the school and bus operator in implementing the agreed consequences and ensure their child/ren show appropriate bus behaviour in future.

Parents and Citizens' Associations will provide a valuable communication channel between schools and parents/carers by distributing information to remind parents of requirements under the code of conduct and any issues that arise with bus behaviour at the respective school.

The Department of Transport and Main Roads may provide assistance for school travel through the School Transport Assistance Scheme for students that meet certain criteria. More information on this scheme can be found at <http://translink.com.au/tickets-and-fares/other-tickets/school-tickets-and-fares>.

5 Industry, Operators and Drivers

Guiding Principle:

The bus industry together with operators and drivers provide safe public transport services for school students

Sub-principles

1. Industry and Operators

The bus industry and operators assist drivers to provide safe travel for school students through operational guidelines, training and a supportive work environment

2. Drivers

Bus drivers take appropriate action to ensure school students are provided bus travel in a safe environment

The role of bus drivers is to transport students to and from school in a safe environment. Bus drivers should be able to focus on driving the bus and not on controlling misbehaving students.

Bus drivers have the right to feel safe, be treated with respect and not be threatened by dangerous actions of school students travelling on buses. It is also expected that bus drivers treat school students with courtesy and use non-discriminatory and appropriate language and actions at all times. Mutual respect between drivers and school students will ensure a pleasant journey for all.

The rights and responsibilities of bus operators and drivers in providing bus services to school students are outlined in the code of conduct.

The correct procedure for bus drivers to follow is outlined in the code of conduct. It is important that action be taken as close as possible to the time of the breach, whether it is a simple caution to the student, recording the incident on the driver's records or reporting the breach to the bus operator.

Operators should ensure that drivers of school services or general routes that service schools are adequately trained in the code of conduct and are capable of effectively managing student behaviour while school students are on the bus. Operators should have operating procedures in place to assist drivers manage school students in a range of scenarios.

The *Code of Conduct for School Students Travelling on Buses/Managing Student Behaviour on Buses* package, which is available by contacting the local TransLink office, is a useful resource to assist drivers.

Further training of drivers may be required and implemented at the discretion of operators based on the type of issues being experienced in the region. Additional training may include methods for conflict resolution, de-escalating confrontational situations or training specific to managing student behaviour.

6 Queensland Schools

Guiding Principle:

Principals and teachers of Queensland schools will provide ongoing education to school students on appropriate behaviour while travelling on public transport

Principals and teachers at all Queensland schools, public and private, are responsible for taking measures and appropriate action to address student behaviour issues, while also proactively educating and reinforcing appropriate behaviour.

Principals assist in enforcing the code of conduct and support the bus operator in implementing consequences for school students who continue to behave inappropriately on the bus while attending or representing the school, which includes travel to and from the school.

While parents/carers have ultimate responsibility for their child/ren, principals should also ensure the safe behaviour of school students while waiting to travel home on the bus. Schools will ensure supervision at school bus collection points where appropriate and in accordance with industrial instruments.

Under the *Education (General Provisions) Act 2006*, all state schools are required to hold school behaviour plans. Similar behaviour plans may be held by private schools. These plans can incorporate expected student behaviour while travelling on buses. School behaviour plans are required to be provided to parents/carers of students attending the school and all new students through school enrolment packs. Schools can request all parents/carers and students to sign a copy of the behaviour plan as a commitment that students will behave in the acceptable manner.

The code of conduct, accompanied by an information sheet for parents/carers and students, can also be included in enrolment packs for new students. Providing this information in enrolment packs is an opportunity to introduce parents/carers and students to requirements under the code of conduct at the beginning of the student's education with each school.

Educating school students from an early age and reinforcing the same message as they continue through their schooling will be the most effective way of ensuring appropriate behaviour of students while travelling on buses. A number of resources are available for schools to use during classes that focus on the bus safety message, including:

- The Code of Conduct for School Students Travelling on Buses
- Really Cool Bus Rules Program
- Be Smart Be Cool Travel Safe Program
- Bus It Safe Program
- Road Safety Matters
- The Code Zone magazine

The Bus It Safe Program is an initiative developed by Caboolture Bus Lines. Since its development, Caboolture Bus Lines has made the resource available for other bus operators to use to educate students.

Caboolture Bus Lines was also involved in the development of the Be Smart Be Cool Travel Safe Program in collaboration with the Queensland Government. This program is delivered by Caboolture Bus Lines at its depot to educate students from local schools.

Students may also be engaged to develop further education resources which target topical issues. Student involvement can be an effective way of capturing the attention of students as they have been developed by their peers.

The same message as provided to students during classes can be reiterated at school assemblies and distributed to parents through such channels as school newsletters or through P&Cs Queensland. An information sheet for principals and teachers on the code of conduct is available at <http://translink.com.au/travel-information/network-information/school-transport/safe-travel>. Suggested safe bus travel messages to provide to students is at **Appendix 2**.

7 Queensland Government

Guiding Principle

The Queensland Government provides an overarching function to guide stakeholders in their role in providing safe public transport travel for school students through developing and promoting resources and mechanisms

The Queensland Government contracts bus operators to deliver bus services throughout Queensland. Government also provides education resources for stakeholders involved in the safe travel of school students. In regions where issues arise with student travel, Government works in collaboration with operators and schools to implement actions in response to such issues.

Government provides resources to assist operators manage the behaviour of students while travelling on buses, such as the code of conduct and training material for understanding how to apply the code of conduct. Government also provides materials, resources and mechanisms for educating school students on public transport safety. These resources are listed above in Section 6 'Queensland Schools'.

The Department of Transport and Main Roads and the Department of Education, Training and Employment are the key government agencies involved in providing these resources and are responsible for ensuring the training material for operators and education material for schools remains current and available. Available material will be reviewed as needed or if there are any related shifts in Government policy. The Queensland Government will also ensure that industry is made aware of any new education materials developed for schools.

The Department of Education, Training and Employment will actively promote resources to school principals and teachers as they become available. Further information on currently available resources can be obtained from the TransLink website at <http://translink.com.au/travel-information/network-information/school-transport/safe-travel> or from the Queensland Government website at <http://www.qld.gov.au/transport/public/school/resources/index.html>.

To reinforce this approach, the code of conduct includes information sheets with consistent messaging on expected standards of bus travel behaviour that can be distributed through a number of different channels, such as schools, P&Cs Queensland and social media. This messaging will clearly outline the expected behaviour of students and identify the type of unacceptable behaviour that will result in action being taken against the student.

The Queensland Police Service (QPS) can also play a role in educating students on appropriate behaviour. Positive relationships between QPS and schools will aid in developing student respect for police officers from a young age. QPS can educate students through initiatives such as Adopt-a-Cop, School-based Police Officers and District Crime Prevention Coordinators visiting schools.

8 For further information

For more information or a copy of the code of conduct and education resources visit the Department of Transport and Main Roads website at <http://translink.com.au/travel-information/network-information/school-transport/safe-travel> Alternatively, information can be obtained from schools or the following school transport offices –

Location	Office	Postal address	Phone
Brisbane (Brisbane northside)	532 Beams Road Carseldine Qld 4034	PO Box 156 Zillmere Qld 4034	07 3863 9848
Ipswich (including Brisbane south and west)	2 Colvin Street North Ipswich Qld 4305	PO Box 631 Ipswich Qld 4305	07 3813 8613
Gold Coast (including Brisbane south east)	Southport Transit Centre 34-36 Railway Street Southport Qld 4215	PO Box 10420 Southport BC Qld 4215	07 5585 1857
Mooloolaba	1 Parkyn Parade Mooloolaba Qld 4557	PO Box 111 Mooloolaba Qld 4557	07 5452 1800
Darling Downs	1-5 Phillip Street Toowoomba Qld 4350	PO Box 629 Toowoomba Qld 4350	07 4639 0727
South West	56-58 Gregory Street Roma Qld 4455	PO Box 126 Roma Qld 4455	07 4622 9509
Wide Bay / Burnett	Bright Street Maryborough Qld 4650	PO Box 371 Maryborough Qld 4650	07 4122 6115
Rockhampton	31 Knight Street North Rockhampton Qld 4701	PO Box 5096 Red Hill Rockhampton Qld 4701	07 4931 1539
Mackay	44 Nelson Street Mackay Qld 4740	PO Box 62 Mackay Qld 4740	07 4951 8673
Townsville	21-35 Leyland Street Garbutt Qld 4814	PO Box 7466 Garbutt BC 4814	07 4758 7544
Cairns	Corporate Tower 15 Lake Street Cairns Qld 4870	PO Box 6542 Cairns Qld 4870	07 4045 7085

Appendix 1 – Actions

Implementation of actions listed below is dependent on issues being experienced in the area. In general, student fare evasion and misbehaviour issues are localised within metropolitan areas, particularly in south-east Queensland where mass transit services are provided. These issues do not tend to be prevalent in regional areas where there is familiarity between school bus drivers, students and parents/carers. As such, some actions listed below would not be required in regional areas but may be useful in metropolitan areas where student behaviour issues are being experienced. When determining which actions would be appropriate to implement, factors to consider include the frequency of issues experienced, the number of students, schools and bus services involved and the category of inappropriate behaviour displayed.

Stakeholder Group		Actions
Parents/carers and school students	Parents/ carers	• provide correct bus fare to child/ren
		• ensure child/ren are aware of rights and responsibilities and consequences for misbehaviour under the code of conduct
		• cooperate with the school and bus operator in implementing agreed disciplinary action if required
	School students	• pay the correct bus fare
		• be aware of rights and responsibilities under the code of conduct
		• show appropriate bus behaviour
	P&Cs QLD	• utilise communication channels to distribute information to remind parents of requirements under the code of conduct and any issues that arise with bus behaviour at the respective school
		• promote the use of bus safety education resources and messaging at schools
		• include information on the code of conduct in area coordinator training
Bus industry, operators and drivers	Drivers	• undertake training on bus driver roles and responsibilities under the code of conduct
		• promptly follow the relevant procedures in response to any student breach of the code of conduct
	Bus operators	• support drivers and work with schools and parents/carers to implement consequences when dealing with students that breach the code of conduct
		• ensure drivers of school services or general routes servicing schools are appropriately trained in implementing the code of conduct
		• where possible and if feasible, allocate the same drivers to the same school services or general route services
		• where deemed appropriate, further training of drivers may be required and implemented by operators, eg conflict resolution, de-escalating confrontational situations, or student behaviour management
		• where possible and if feasible, present at school assemblies on the importance of bus safety

Stakeholder Group		Actions
	Industry groups and unions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • implement school liaison officer positions in collaboration with local schools to run bus safety based activities with students • utilise existing communication channels to promote available training and resources to operators and reinforce the importance of driver knowledge of the code of conduct • utilise existing relationships with community organisations, such as the Daniel Morcombe Foundation, to reinforce the importance of appropriate bus behaviour to school students and parents/carers
	Queensland Schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • distribute messaging to students through school assemblies • invite bus operator to present at school assembly on the importance of bus safety • provide information (e.g information sheets via school newsletters) on the code of conduct to parents • expected behaviour of students while travelling on buses will be included in school behaviour management plans • inclusion of safe bus travel message in enrolment packs • utilise available education resources to educate students on appropriate bus behaviour • engage high school students to develop new education resources on appropriate bus behaviour • support the bus operator in implementing consequences for school students who breach the code of conduct • host lunches inviting bus drivers from the local bus operator to attend and interact with school students • discuss with local bus operator implementing a school liaison officer position to run bus safety based activities with students • school principals will ensure the appropriate level of supervision at school bus collection points where appropriate and in accordance with industrial instruments
	Queensland Government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • undertake blitz operations on school services where bus operators experience behavioural or fare evasion issues • actively promote to school principals and teachers the available resources which focus on the bus safety message • inform industry when new education programs are being developed for schools • develop and provide consistent messaging on the code of conduct to schools and P&Cs Queensland for distribution to parents or for use on social media such as facebook and twitter • form student behaviour consultative committees in collaboration with other stakeholder groups • develop and implement pilot programs consisting of a number of actions to address issues that have become prevalent in particular in regions as required • utilise initiatives such as Adopt-a-Cop, School-based Police Officers and Crime Prevention Officers to develop relationships between Queensland Police Officers and students

Appendix 2 – Information sheet for principals and teachers

Messages for school assemblies on the safe travel of school students on buses

- The actions of students misbehaving on buses can affect the ability of drivers to concentrate and compromises the safety of the journey.
- All students who travel on the bus are expected to know and abide by the rules outlined in the *Code of Conduct for School Students Travelling on Buses*.
- The code outlines what behaviour is required from students while waiting for the bus and while travelling on the bus.
- Examples of appropriate behaviour include paying the correct fare, respecting other people and their property, waiting for the bus in an orderly manner, remaining seated in a calm manner while on the bus and refraining from creating unnecessary noise.
- Students should not forget to be nice to the driver and say thank you when they leave the bus.
- The code also outlines unacceptable student behaviour that will not be tolerated, including fare evasion, wilful damage of property, disrespect, verbal and physical violence towards the driver and other passengers.
- There are clear consequences in the code for students that display such behaviour.
- Students will be held responsible for their behaviour and if deemed to be in breach of the code, provisions will be enforced.
- Depending on the extent of the breach, consequences for misbehaviour range from a warning to a student being refused travel on the bus.
- Principals are working with the Department of Transport and Main Roads and the Queensland Police Service to identify students who continue to misbehave and refuse to pay the correct bus fare.
- The parents of any student found to be in breach of the code will be notified and the student will be held accountable for their actions.
- Following the code will mean a safe, comfortable journey for students and the other passengers.

