

Clogheen Kerry Pike N.S



Transport policy

September 2022

The Department of Education & Science endeavours to provide suitable transport for pupils attending the ASD classes in Clogheen/Kerry Pike N.S. The scheme is administered by Bus Éireann as an agent of the Department of Education & Science.

Application for School Transport

Existing Students

A form is sent to the parents / guardians of all 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 Clogheen/Kerry Pike N.S 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 Clogheen/Kerry Pike N.S 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 contact 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 child 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 he/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 taxi/ bus allocated to them and may not travel on a different taxi/bus. Please note, the bus or taxi can only collect and drop children to the address on listed. 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 Eireann 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 the taxi/bus is of paramount importance to all involved in school transport. 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 list of “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 .

Most behaviours of concern that arise on a school bus can be managed in a low-key fashion. Open communication between driver/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 child.

Responsibilities

The school

- Submits applications for transport for each new entrant to the SENO
- Employs bus escorts as sanctioned by the 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
- Class teachers will have the timetable for September planned before the end of the school year and report this information to parents and taxi companies as appropriate
- Liaise with bus escort regarding any disruption to service

Bus Éireann Inspector

- Gives contracts to bus/taxi companies to provide school transport
- Assigns children to bus routes and gives 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 Driver

- Safe transport of those on board the bus/taxi, informing the school of 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. Parents/Guardians will have to make their own arrangements for transport that day.
- The driver will contact the parents in the days before school re-opens to inform them of the planned times for collection and drop off
- Safe delivery home – a parent or guardian must be there to collect the child from the taxi on arrival.

The Bus Escort

- Meet the parent and child at the taxi door
- Assist the child to board the taxi
- Secures the child's seatbelt
- Watches over the safety and well-being of the children
- Inform the school if aware of a child causing danger to themselves or others on the journey
- Must ensure that they are on the bus at the time of first pick up and last set down
- Are responsible for the safety of the children when opening and closing doors
- Assisting children to board and alight safely from the taxi
- Making sure all the children are seated with appropriate straps or harnesses where provided
- Ensure that each pupil is received by some responsible person at the set down point
- Maintain a good working relationship with the driver of the bus
- Observe confidentiality in all aspects of work

- Unless under exceptional circumstances, the escort should never leave the bus
- The escorts position on the bus should be where maximum control of the children is achieved
- Report all concerns to the Principal/ Deputy Principal/Class Teacher
- If escort is unavailable for any reason then they must contact the school principal as soon as possible and text the parents if the service will be disrupted.

Parents

- Provide appropriate safety seats, harnesses for the child's safe travel
- Bring the child out to the bus in the morning
- Receives the child from the bus in the afternoon
- Informs escort/drivers in advance if their child will not be attending school
- Informs the escort/driver in advance if their child will not be returning home on the bus
- Notify the school of any family emergencies and give the name of an adult that will be at your home address to receive your child

NOTE

- Please note that for safety and insurance reasons, both the driver and the escort are not allowed to leave the bus to knock on your door or deliver the child to the door.
- Please be aware that occasionally the taxi may not run for a variety of reasons, mechanical failure, illness of staff, emergencies etc. Many of these situations will be outside of the control of the school. On such occasion's parents will need to make alternative arrangements

During drop off and collection

- Classroom staff will be waiting to collect children from the taxi at 9:05am
- Classroom staff will walk the children to the taxi at 2:30pm
- Students will be accompanied to and from the bus to ensure safety at all times
- Classroom staff hand over students to the bus escort

Arrangements will be made between the driver and parents regarding collection/ drop off times. Flexibility is necessary, especially during the first few weeks 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.

The taxi will arrive at school in the morning is 9:05am and children will be collected at 1:40pm (infant day) or 2:30pm – these times have been decided to allow a safe and happy transition to and from school for all the children.

Ratified by The Board of Management at its meeting on Monday 25th January 2023

Signed:

John Horgan
Chairperson Board of Management

Gerard Hartnett
Principal

Parent(S): _____
