SCHOOL BUS POLICY

INTRODUCTION AND PRINCIPLES

Every effort is made to the ensure safety of all children whilst they are on the School bus either going to or from Faraday school as part of a daily bus service. Every adult who works on the bus has been trained to appreciate that they have a key responsibility for helping to keep children safe at all times and parents are asked to ensure that handover to the School bus staff and from the School bus is conducted safely and on a timely basis. This policy sets out, firstly, the procedures for maintaining safety whilst travelling on the bus and dealing with emergencies, including but not limited to: bus breakdown, adverse weather, buses running late and in the event of a child getting on the wrong bus and, secondly, what we do to ensure that a child is held safely if not collected.

This policy applies to all pupils, including those within the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS).

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

The policy deals with:

1. The staff responsibilities and training
2. Parents' responsibilities
3. Procedures for reserving a bus space
4. Procedure for pupils using the bus
5. Procedures for staff in ensuring children get onto the correct bus
6. Procedures for communicating with the bus
7. Procedures when a child is not collected on time
8. Procedures in the case of breakdown or accident

STAFF AWARENESS AND TRAINING

All relevant staff are aware of this policy through induction training. It is the responsibility of all staff to read the detail of the policy and act at all times according to its guidance.

Bus services are contracted with Waltham Forest Community Transport. Buses and drivers are provided by WFCT. All drivers have Midas Training, First Aid Training and hold enhanced DBS clearance. Services run with Passenger Assistants supplied by WFCT. All Passenger Assistants have Passenger Assistance Training and First Aid training and enhanced DBS clearance.

OTHER POLICIES

Please note the **Missing Child Policy and Procedures**, with which this policy is closely aligned.

PARENT RESPONSIBILITIES

It is the responsibility of parents to ensure they provide correct and updated contact information on a timely basis and know the procedures for handover of the child to school bus staff and collection of the child from the bus.

Parents must not leave children unattended at the bus stop before the bus arrives.

If parents are unable to pick up their child from the school bus in person and wish for someone else to do so, they must alert the School *in advance* by 11.45am on the day of travel at the latest, by sending an email to the School Office Manager, office@faradayschool.co.uk with the name of the adult who will pick up the child. It is of critical importance that parents/carers ensure that such persons identify themselves unmistakeably to staff and that the person is able to give the family passwords which have been provided to the School and or to provide photo identification of their identity upon request. In the event of a person not known to the School arriving to collect a child, it is school policy that they will not be handed over and instead will be brought back to school.

Any variations to the route or to timings must be negotiated with the School and not with the bus driver, WFCT or Passenger Assistant. Unless confirmation from the School is received in writing, parents cannot assume that their child has a space on the bus.

If a child is off sick from school, the School should be informed in writing via e mail, as per the procedures set down in the Parent Handbook. However, parents should also let the bus Passenger Assistant know by phone call or text that morning, to avoid buses waiting unnecessarily.

In accepting the service, parents make a commitment to be on time. Lateness causes delays to other children and to the School and there is very little leeway with timings. Parents arriving 3-minutes after the appointed time in the mornings must make their own way to school and the driver has been instructed not to wait. To ensure that the service runs punctually for all families. The bus will wait for no longer than 3-minutes at any allocated stop. Pupils that are uncollected within this time frame will be returned to school. In this instance it will be the parents' responsibility to collect their

child/children from school. A £15 late collection fee will be applied in instances where a child is returned to school for late collection.

Pupils travelling on the School bus are subject to the same rules as if they were in school and are expected to follow the School's codes of behaviour and conduct. Any child who is in breach of the school **Behaviour Policy** on the bus may be subject to the same disciplinary procedures, as if they were in school. Parents are also bound by the same codes of conduct applicable in school and bus staff will not tolerate any abusive behaviour. Any pupil and/or parent acting in breach of these rules may be asked to leave the bus, either on a temporary basis or as a permanent ban. There are no refunds for bus journeys not taken in this instance.

PROCEDURES FOR BOOKING AND USING THE BUS SERVICE

Reserving Spaces on the Bus:

- A form is sent to all parents 2-weeks before the end of the summer term.
- Forms must be completed by the end of the summer term.
- Places are allocated on the bus on a first-come, first-serve basis.
- Bus routes are planned in conjunction with WFCT with the aim of pupils spending no longer than 1 hour on the bus (subject to traffic).
- Requests for particular bus stops are accommodated wherever possible, however, they are subject to change year on year. **Parents should not apply for their child to attend Faraday School on the basis of having a space on the bus and/or a particular stop.**
- The time of specific stops may also change throughout the year. For example, a stop may be first on the route one year and then change to another position another term or academic year, resulting in a change of time to the stop. This may be to accommodate additional passengers and/or stops or to take into account traffic diversions. Pupils must commit to morning routes 5-days a week. Afternoon routes are more flexible, but priority will be given to full-time users.
- Final routes, including photographs of stops, are sent out to parents the week before the start of the Autumn Term.

Using the Bus:

- Parents are responsible for their children either: in the mornings until they are handed over to the Passenger Assistant or in the afternoons after the parent (or alternative nominated adult) has met their child from the bus.
- Parents must be at the stop at least 3 minutes before the Bus's estimated arrival time.
- Pupils should stand away from the kerb until the bus has come to a complete stop.
- Pupils must remain seated at all times and must wear a seat belt. The bus will not move until all pupils are secured in their seats.
- Pupils must not distract the driver at any time and take instruction as given from the PA
- No food or drink can be consumed on the bus
- The Passenger Assistant conducts a head count using the register provided from the school office.

- If a parent/carer arrives in a vehicle to drop off and/or collect a child from a bus and they do not catch the bus in time, they must then go to the School to drop off/collect their child. No attempt must be made to catch up with, or pursue the bus once it has started its journey. It is policy to not stop the bus once it has departed, except in an emergency and drivers have been instructed any attempts to catch up with the bus and or hail the bus to stop at non-scheduled stops will not be accommodated. Parents/carers must also not phone the School bus to request that it waits beyond the allocated time.

End of school day/getting on the bus:

- The bus register is completed by the School Office Manager daily.
- Class teachers have a termly timetable so they know which children are using the bus on a particular day.
- All children using the school bus wait outside the school office and are handed to the PA by a staff member. The register and a head count will be taken to double check that all the children using the bus are accounted for.
- No bus may leave school until staff are 100% certain that the correct pupils are all on the bus.
- Once the children are strapped into their seats the register will be completed for a second time and a headcount taken by the Passenger Assistant.

All Passenger Assistants carry a phone with all the numbers of the parents of children on the bus. There is a group set up so all parents can be contacted in the event that the bus is delayed for any reason. Additionally, all buses operate with a tracking system in place that enables WFCT to pinpoint the exact location of the bus(es) at any point along the journey. However, it may not always be possible to give parents real time updates. In the case of delays, it may not be possible for bus staff and/or Faraday staff to advise parents of a revised eta. By using the School bus, you agree to Faraday School sharing your contact details with the bus provider and to them storing your contact numbers on their bus phone. You will need to opt out if you do not agree, however, if you do opt out, you will then not be informed of any delays etc.

Communication:

- Passenger Assistants on the bus carry a mobile phone. The number is detailed in the e-bus pack at the start of term or emailed to parents in the case of changes to numbers.
- For any enquiries regarding the running of the bus on a day to day basis, i.e. the bus is running late or a parent will not be at the bus stop on time, a call should be made to the School bus number in the first instance. In the afternoons, a call can be made to the School office with any enquiries, if a parent is unable to get hold of the bus.
- If the bus is running late or there is a more serious problem, such as the bus has broken down, parents will be notified by text to the mobile number provided by the parent for emergency contact.
- In the case of the service not running, due to poor weather, a decision will be made by the Head Teacher, or another member of the SLT where appropriate, in conjunction with the bus company, to not run the bus. This will be communicated by email/text message before the start of the morning bus service and it will be the parents' responsibility to get their child to school. If

weather worsens during the day and the bus service is unable to run, parents will be notified via email and text. In this circumstance it is the parent's responsibility to collect their children from school or to arrange for their child to be collected by a trusted adult. See **School Closure and Adverse Weather Procedure**.

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When a child is not met from the bus stop:

- It is Faraday School's procedure to wait for no more than 3-minutes at a stop.
- If a parent/carer does not arrive within that time, the bus driver has been instructed to return the child to the School, where it is the parent's responsibility to collect the child before 5.30pm. After this time, including in the circumstances the bus returns after 5.30pm, an additional charge will be made to cover the childcare costs which will be incurred by the School.
- In the event that a child is uncollected from the bus the passenger assistant must contact the School immediately to ensure that the member of staff on lockup duty will remain with the pupil when they are returned to school. In the case that all the staff have left the School the bus driver and escort will have to remain with the child on the bus until they are collected. In these circumstances the Head Teacher, or a member of the SLT where appropriate, will be contacted and they will make every effort to return to the School or get another member of the teaching staff to return to oversee the supervision of the child.
- A child will only be handed over to a person/carer identified on the bus sign-up form as someone who is registered to meet the child, or to an agreed person who will provide photo ID on request on collection of the child.
- These procedures are set out clearly in the risk assessment prepared by the School

In the event of breakdown/accident:

- In the event of breakdown/accident, the driver will inform WFCT. The Passenger Assistant will notify the School.
- It is WFCT's responsibility to provide an alternative bus.
- Children will remain on the bus, if it is safe to do so, until the replacement vehicle arrives.
- If it is not safe for pupils to remain on the bus they will be led to a place of safety by the PA, who will remain with them at all times.
- If the breakdown/accident is on the afternoon bus and causes the children to arrive late at their stops, parents will be informed by the School and/or PA by text and/or email.
- In the event of accident, the PA is responsible for deciding if immediate evacuation of the bus is necessary, administering first aid and calling the emergency services.
- In the event of an accident, the procedures as set out in the Critical Incident Plan will be followed.

Alarie Drummonds
Head Teacher
September 2026

Review approved by Deborah Livsey CEO
New Model School Company Limited
September 2026

Next review date: August 2027