



New Parent/Carer Guide:

Hello Parents/Carers!

It's time for the new school term, and for a lot of students that means a new transport provider. This handy guide will provide you with answers to some of the common questions we receive or worries you may have, either being new to school transport or to our company.

At AAA we have been doing Home to School transport for many years. We transport hundreds of students daily. Across our School Transport team alone, we have a combined experience in this industry of over 46 years, so you can be assured that we are an experienced team who are working hard to ensure your child's safety, security, and comfort on transport with us.

We understand that start of term can be very stressful and unsettling, so we are here to help you in any way we can. Please bear in mind that our highest priority is the safeguarding of the students who are in our care, which will sometimes dictate whether we can or can't do something, or the timeframe that we can do it in. In all instances, we will follow the guidelines, which are part of our prior agreement with the Local Authority, who we operate this transport on behalf of. Below we have some basic rules that we must abide by, as well as your obligations relating to the transport as the parent/carers, and our obligations as the transport provider.

Basic Rules

1. All addresses and timings are set – Changes can only be approved by the Local Authority.

This rule is in place to safeguard your children. All parties involved must have the same information on this, so that there can be no confusion or ambiguity – this is paramount for your child's safety. For example, any changes must be made through the official channels (the Local Authority in the first instance) to ensure that the request is being made by the correct person (legal guardian on the student), and to ensure that the correct information is passed on to all parties. This means that your child's whereabouts is always accounted for, by all parties (Parent/Carer, Transport Provider, the School/College, AND the Local Authority).

If you would like to change the time or address, you would need to go through council, this request could take up to 10 working days to approve, so we recommend letting them know as soon as you can.

2. 5-minute waiting time.

After the taxi has arrived, the vehicle can only wait 5 minutes, at which point they will then move onto the next stop/school. You will have 5 minutes to come out, and in that time,



you may get a call from us just confirming the taxi is outside. If you are not out after those 5 minutes, then the driver will move on.

The driver cannot wait any more than 5 minutes, as this can delay other students in the same school run or for another school run the driver may be doing after, so this also applies to those in single transport. For example, If the driver has 5 students and waits 10 minutes for each student, that will be 50 minutes added on top of the travel time – this could be excessive, meaning they are late to school, and will be unmanageable for many of the students in our care.

Whilst we try to be flexible at the start of term, allowing all to settle into the new transport arrangements, please be considerate of others when it comes to being ready and punctual for the transport.

3. Conflict in the taxi will not be tolerated:

This rule applies to all people in the taxi. If the driver deems the situation to be unsafe, due to violence, abuse from passengers or passenger actions putting anyone at risk (including themselves), it may be deemed that the safest course of action is to drop the passenger at Home, School or in some situations, at a Police Station (Please refer to parent obligations below with a fuller explanation of this). An example of conflict arising in the transport is a child removing their seatbelt/refusing to put the seatbelt on. This is unacceptable, and the driver will be unable to continue with the journey, due to it being unsafe.

Please also note that there is a Zero Tolerance Policy in regard to how our Driver's, Passenger Assistants and Staff in our office are treated. We are here to help you, and will always treat you with respect and dignity, please do the same for us too.

4. College transport: Students may have up to a 30-minute wait after their finish time for a collection:

This is guidance we follow from the Local Authority. If 2 or more students finish within 30 minutes of each other, we are asked to send one vehicle for those students, meaning the student who finishes earlier will need to wait up to 30 minutes for their taxi to arrive. In our experience, this can get very confusing, with the number of changing timetables during the first half term of College commencing. For example, it may even be the case that initially your child doesn't have to wait after their finish time, but if another child changes their timetable, this could result in your child needing to wait up to 30 minutes. So, please prepare your child for this scenario.

If you have any concerns about this, please feel free to contact us, and we will do our best to help and explain this to you.



Parent/Carer Obligations:

- **This is a curb-side service** -You will need to walk your children out to the transport. You are also responsible for putting their seatbelt on if they are not able to do this themselves. This is the same for the journey home, you will need to come out and collect your children from the taxi.
- **Parent/Carer must be home to collect the student from Transport** - We cannot leave your child at your house if no one is there. If no one is home and we have been unable to contact you (which we will attempt multiple times on the provided contact number(s)) the protocol is to take the student back to the school if they are open, or to the Police station. Both are deemed by the Local Authority to be safe places for students.
- **You need to be reachable by phone** -We need to be able to contact you while your child is on transport with us, so please provide us with the best contact number for us to contact you on. We advise you to give us a secondary phone number, as a back-up too.
- **Keep our School's Team in the loop** -We have found that over time parents have built good working relationships with either their driver or passenger assistant (if they have one), which we do encourage. However, you still always need to let our office know if your child doesn't need transport, whether it is sickness or a holiday. This can also include any changes to your contact details. We, therefore, ask if you could let us know of ANY changes as well, you can call us on 01707 333666 or email us Schools@aaataxis.com.
- **Treat the Transport team and staff in the office with respect, being reasonable and not placing unrealistic service demands on transport** - We expect all customers and staff to behave in an acceptable and respectful manner. Any incident in which a driver/PA/Staff member in the office is abused, threatened, or assaulted in circumstances relating to their work is unacceptable and not tolerated. Please note that demanding to speak to a specific team member can be unrealistic, so please follow our lead in any discussions that may be ongoing.



Transport Provider's Obligations:

- **Provide a Regular Driver/PA** - We will get a regular Driver/PA confirmed as soon as possible, as we appreciate this is the most ideal situation for all. Please be aware that this can be a bit of trial and error during the first few weeks of transport beginning, and reasons to change a driver/PA may be out of our hands. It may not be a perfect fit at first, but please be patient whilst your child and the driver are getting used to each other, as well as the new transport. We recognise that it will be the first time we have your child as a passenger, and their first time as a passenger for us, so it can take time to get things settled down.
- **Timely transport** – At the start of term, we will provide you with a rough 10-minute window of the morning collection time (i.e., 08:10am-08:20am). Please note, initially this can be a very rough indication, as we may need to adjust it as we settle into the route, to ensure we are getting all students to school on time. The driver will still be trying different routes to see which is the best fit for your journey, so this can also take some getting used to. During the settling down period, of the first few weeks of transport, please be patient with us, as this is when we are juggling the students getting used to transport, the school's timings, and the routing. Student's timetables can also change a lot – in some instances a few times a week for a 3–4-week period. Whilst this may not be for your child, it could be a child who is sharing transport with your child, so we expect that things will take a bit of time to settle down. However, we do expect the pick-up timings to be set after this. If for any reason this changes, we will inform you as early as possible.
- **Steady communication** – We will always do our best to keep you updated with everything. Please note that at the start of term, things can take a little longer to be sorted out, or changes can happen unexpectedly, so the timeframe that you are being informed of something may not be as long as we would hope for in ordinary circumstances. As soon as we know something has happened to your school run, from the driver running late, to a Passenger Assistant change, we will contact you to make you aware of the situation at hand.
- **Provision of a Passenger Assistant** - Passenger Assistants are provided by us as the request of the Local Authority. Therefore, not everyone will have a passenger assistant assigned to their route, usually it is students under a certain age, or students who need extra medical help. If you feel your child needs a passenger assistant, please contact your Local Authority.



- **Treat the Students and Parents/Carers with respect, equally and being reasonable** - We expect all staff and customers to behave in an acceptable and respectful manner. All students and parents/carer shall be treated with equal respect, in line with the Equality Act 2010.

Every start of a new school year is intimidating, but with steady of communication and some patience from both us and parents/carers, we can start your child's transport journey on the right foot.

If you have any questions, you can check our website in the "School Transport" section for our FAQ's.

If you still have further questions, please email us on: Schools@aaataxis.com alternatively you can call **01707 333666** to speak to the School's Team – PLEASE NOTE: At the start of term, we are much busier than usual, and due to the volume of incoming calls, we may not be able to answer your call immediately, so please leave your message and we will contact you back ASAP.

Let's have a good school year!

The AAA Schools Team