

**ANNUAL STATEMENT FOR ACADEMIC YEAR 2023-24
IN RELATION TO IMPLEMENTATION OF
SEAT BELTS ON SCHOOL TRANSPORT (SCOTLAND) ACT 2017**

Name of the School authority: **Aberdeenshire Council**

Date of publication of this statement: 23 October 2023

The Act imposes a self-reporting duty on school authorities, who must prepare an annual statement relating both to their compliance with the duty relating to seat belts imposed by section 1 of this Act and also to the actions which they have been taking to promote and assess the wearing of seat belts by pupils travelling on their dedicated school transport services (for instance, the particular policies and procedures which authorities have in place to educate pupils about the wearing of belts and to measure their use).

	Actions	Outcomes
Compliance with the Fitting of Seat Belts	<p>Aberdeenshire Council's contracts for the provision of dedicated school transport services and combined school transport/Local Bus services (be they operated by public service vehicles (PSVs), taxis or private hire cars) have, since August 2010, specified a requirement for one seat belt per pupil on a one seat per pupil basis.</p> <p>Only vehicles with seat belts fitted to all passenger seats are deployed on home-to-school transport services operated 'in-house' by Aberdeenshire Council PSV minibuses.</p> <p>Contract compliance monitoring includes spot checks of seat belt provision, with any identified breach of contract subject to the Council's Contract Performance Monitoring System for the operation of passenger transport contracts.</p>	<p>Our contracted-in and in-house school bus fleet, including all vehicles operating combined school transport/Local Bus service journeys to/from schools on behalf of Aberdeenshire Council, remains fully fitted with seat belts.</p>

Promotion of the Wearing of Seat Belts

Aberdeenshire Council's Terms and Conditions of Contract for the operation of school transport and combined school transport/local bus services requires drivers of vehicles up to and including 16 passenger seats to 'ensure that seat belts are worn and adjusted appropriate to the age and weight of the pupil' and drivers of vehicles with more than 16 passenger seats to 'take such steps as are reasonably practicable to ensure that seat belts are worn and adjusted appropriate to the age and weight of the pupil'.

Aberdeenshire Council's guidance documents to Transport Providers and to Drivers of mainstream primary and secondary school transport services set out the operator and driver responsibilities regarding the wearing of seat belts, including, in the case of vehicles with 17 or more passenger seats, the options of pictograms, signs or text at each passenger seat to remind pupils and/or announcements by the driver.

Aberdeenshire Council's driver handbook, issued to all employees who drive 'in-house' reminds drivers of the need to ensure all pupils wear seat belts. This instruction is also incorporated in all Council Minibus Driver induction training.

Aberdeenshire Council has required the provision of seatbelts on school transport services since 2010 and, as such, education and

Outcomes from our promotional and educational actions have been incorporated within the outcomes from our assessment of seat belt use below

promotion of the use of wearing seatbelts is embedded into the literature provided to pupils and parents/carers. In addition, the wearing of seatbelts is included in school assemblies and similar briefings when discussing school bus safety.

In addition to the above, Aberdeenshire Council have produced a resource for Primary Schools to aid lesson planning around active and sustainable transport, including road safety topics. The Embedding Active and Sustainable Transport into Education (EASTiE) document provides links to resources as well as lesson plans linked to the curriculum for excellence.

Assessing Seat Belt Use

Aberdeenshire Council currently carries out an annual “hands up” survey to determine travel mode to and from school. An additional question has been added to the “Hands Up Survey” on the usage of seat belts and this has allowed the collation of baseline information.

The annual Hands Up Survey was carried out during the 2023/24 autumn term.

The results of the “hands up” survey is school specific and will enable the Council to target educational and promotional resource to schools where there is an indication of low use of seat belts.