

# Guiding Manual of School Transport in the Emirate of Dubai

Third Edition

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*HH Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum*  
**Vice-President & Prime Minister of the UAE and Ruler of Dubai**





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**Crown Prince of Dubai and Chairman of Dubai Executive Council**



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# INTRODUCTION



## Introduction

The Roads and Transport authority (RTA) has examined how to regulate the school transport in the Emirate of Dubai in a bid to bring it at par with the highest international standards.

The RTA Public Transport Agency, in turn, has conducted all the requisite studies with the aim of:

1. Supporting the industry, economy, and infrastructure of the Dubai emirate through effective participation and upgrading the level of services provided to Schools.
2. Ensuring safe and smooth transport for all male and female students of all ages in the emirate of Dubai by setting up international safety standards & measures applicable to all school buses in the emirate.
3. Preparing and implementing policies & procedures relating to streamlining school bus services as well as planning & implementing measures & procedures to ensure the efficiency & reliability of such services in the emirate of Dubai.
4. Effectively monitoring and supervising school buses by applying effective levels of service, licensing & maintenance standards, and safety systems.
5. Developing appropriate marketing strategies to enhance school bus services with a view to raising students' awareness of the services provided and attracting more students to use school transport services.
6. Following up applications, suggestions and complaints related to school transport in the emirate of Dubai and taking appropriate actions thereon.



# School Transport Regulation in the emirate of Dubai

## **School Transport Regulation in the emirate of Dubai**

Pursuant to the Order regulating School Transport in the emirate of Dubai No (2) for 2008, issued by the Dubai Government Executive Council, the RTA issued the Administrative Decision No. 353, regarding the Executive Regulation of the of above mentioned Order, in the light of which the RTA has issued the School Transport Guiding Manual in the Emirate of Dubai establishing the responsibilities of school managements, operators, school bus drivers, students and parents as regards the school transport, as detailed hereunder:

## Terminologies used

All the following terminologies apply to all contents of this Manual unless otherwise specified.

1. “Emirate” means the Emirate of Dubai in the UAE.
2. “RTA” means the Road and Transport Authority in the Emirate of Dubai.
3. “Agency” means the Public Transport Agency, at the Roads and Transport Authority in the Emirate of Dubai.
4. School Bus means a bus that accommodates more than 10 passengers including the driver, and transports students from and to school and nurseries or during school-organized trips.
5. “Inspector” means a qualified employee from the Public Transport Agency, responsible for inspecting school buses and drivers in the Emirate of Dubai.
6. “School Bus Driving Permit” means the document issued by the Public Transport Agency to a driver qualified to drive a school bus.
7. “Electronic Stop Rod” means an automatic device fitted with a sign used to alert other motorists that the bus is picking up and/or dropping off students.
8. “Operators” means a school or an entity in the emirate of Dubai licensed to exercise transport activity, and accordingly transports students and kids from and to schools & nurseries, or during any other student activities.
9. “The CEO of the Agency” means the CEO of Public Transport Agency.
10. “Manual” means the booklet that contains all information, specifications, conditions, and duties that should be observed by school buses, drivers, schools and bus operators.

## Practicing school transport activity

Under this Order, no entity is allowed to practice school transport activity in the emirate of Dubai, unless it complies with the stipulations and requirements of school buses, whether owned or rented by that entity, and ensure that the Type of vehicle stated in the bus ownership card must be «school bus». It is also prohibited to drive a school bus without a valid school bus driving permit, issued by the Public Transport Agency, and renewed annually, provided that the annual renewal application is submitted within 30 days from the permit expiry date.

## Specifications of Bus Exterior

1. The color of the bus shall be yellow, grade (RAL 1018 Zink Gelb GL841) without overlapping of any other color, unless the manufacturer cannot paint certain parts of the bus (i.e. the parts made of non-metallic material such as the front bumper etc) the color of such parts shall be black.
2. The phrase «School Bus» shall be written in black in Arabic and English, with a font size of no less than 80 inch (20 cm) in height. It shall be written between the upper hazard lights or at the uppermost part on the front and rear sides of the bus, and in the middle of both sides of the bus.
3. The size of the phrase «School Bus», together with the name of the operator or any other third party, shall not exceed 1500 square cm.
4. The school bus shall be fitted with an Electronic Stop Rod on the exterior side, directly behind the driver's door so that the word «Stop» is displayed outwards electronically, with two red lights flashing when the bus stops.
5. The bus must be fitted with light indicators system as follows:
  - Dual red light indicator on the uppermost part of the front/rear sides of the bus.
  - Dual yellow light indicator on the uppermost part of the front/rear sides of the bus.

- All light indicators shall start giving alerting indicators when the bus stops.
6. All buses shall place the “School Bus” sign on the right front side and the left rear side of the bus. The sign should be made of a reflective material, and measure 25 × 25 cm for large-size buses, and 17 × 17 cm for mini-buses.
  7. Window tinting of school buses shall not exceed 30%, and the window can be opened up to 10 cm maximum, whether from top or sideways; curtains are forbidden.
  8. It is strictly prohibited to place bars on windows internally or externally.
  9. The bus number shall be written on the uppermost side of the right side of the bus rear side and the left of its rear side.
  10. The mirrors system shall show all sides of the bus.

### **Specifications of seats and bus interior**

1. The number of seats specified by the manufacturing company must be adhered to, and no collapsible middle seats to be used.
2. The side hand rests, ashtrays, arm support, and any other solid materials must be removed from the back side of seats.
3. Each school bus must be fitted with a cooling system adjusted to operating at a temperature not exceeding 24 degrees Celsius.
4. There must be a compartment for bags, provided that it neither obstructs students' movement nor falls on students in cases of sudden stop, accidents or during the normal bus movement.
5. The two doors of the bus must be fitted with hand rails to assist the boarding process.
6. The floor of the bus aisle must be covered by inflammable and non-slippery rubber.
7. The door opening and closing mechanism must be controlled by the driver, and the electronic control is preferred.

## Bus Safety Standards

1. Maximum speed of the school bus shall not exceed 80/kph, with a speed control device installed, conforming to the specifications and conditions specified by the Emirates Authority for Standardization & Metrology.
2. Each bus must contain first aid kit proportionate to the number of seats.
3. The bus must be fitted with a manual fire extinguisher, as follows:
  - a) One 6-kg fire extinguisher if the school bus is less than 10-meter long.
  - b) Two fire extinguishers if the school bus is 10-meter long or more.
  - c) The extinguishers must be suitable for all kinds of fires and placed in a designated place near the driver's seat, with a sign indicating that place.
4. The lifespan of the school bus must not exceed 15 years as of the date of manufacturing.
5. The school bus must have emergency exits proportionate to the number of passengers, with clear signs indicating these exits provided there must be no hindrances impeding students' movement in emergency cases.
6. The bus must have 2-buckle safety belts fitted to all front-open passenger seats such as front seats, and middle seat in the last row. The driver's seat must be fitted with a 3-point safety belt.
7. There must be no sharp edges in interior & exterior sides of the bus.
8. The school bus must have emergency exits proportionate to the number of passengers, in addition to one emergency exit in each side of buses with more than 16 seats. The exit door and driver's door are not considered as emergency doors.
9. All seats must have elevated back rests of at least 71 cm high. The distance between seats shall not be less than 64 cm and the size

of the seat shall not be less than 40 cm (a single seat) and 90 cm (double seats). Triple-seats are prohibited in school buses.

10. All seats must be padded from all sides and made from shock-absorbing & fireproof pads.
11. There must be secure emergency exits on the right, left, back and top sides of the bus, as follows:
  - a. One exit on each side of the bus plus one roof exit, for buses that accommodate 28 – 50 passengers.
  - b. Two exits on each side plus two roof exits, for buses that accommodate more than 50 passengers.
  - c. The aisle width shall not be less than 40 cm for buses that accommodate no more than 16 passengers; and 50 cm for buses that accommodate more than 16 passengers.

In addition to the above specifications, all seats of nursery buses must be fitted with triple buckles safety belts.

## **Responsibilities of Schools and Operators**

In order to advance school transport service to excellent standards in the emirate of Dubai, the following responsibilities shall be assumed by each school principal in the emirate:

1. Appoint a qualified individual as a direct bus supervisor, and provide all students' parents with his/her contacts details.
2. The direct bus supervisor must map out the routes of the school bus, and get them approved by the school principal.
3. Allocate seats to students at the beginning of the academic year in co-operation with the school principal and driver, and ensure that each student has a designated seat for the entire year.
4. Provide a means of communication between the driver and the direct supervisor throughout the trip.
5. Designate the front seats for boys and back seats for girls. Mixed random seating is forbidden. Gender-separated buses are preferred, if possible.



6. Appoint a female conductor for each bus, with exception of male students only buses, from class 6 up to the secondary level.
7. Oblige the female conductor to attend the prescribed training courses at the Agency.
8. Oblige the female conductor to display the ID issued by the Agency, and show it on demand.
9. Carry out regular bus maintenance per each 10,000 km maximum, and produce a register & submit supporting documents to the Agency's inspector.
10. Issue drivers with an official uniform, and ensure they maintain personal hygiene, and maintain good conduct before students.
11. School buses are allowed to transport passengers other than students, provided that the «School Bus» phrase is removed or covered, and the «School Bus» sign is covered.
12. It is prohibited to carry out any maintenance works, repairs or leaving any spare parts or tools of any kind inside the school premises, near school walls or school surroundings.
13. Provide the Agency with a proof of maintenance, be it bills, or maintenance contracts with approved auto workshops on demand.
14. Obtain a bus operation permit from the bus operators/owners, be it the school or any other entity, amend the bus ownership to reflect a «School Bus» and present the documents to the Licensing Agency's official.
15. Amend all school bus specifications to fit the school bus specifications stated in this Manual.

### **Responsibilities of School Bus Drivers:**

1. Use the Electronic Stop Rod when picking up/dropping off students.
2. Cover the «School Bus» phrase when using the school bus in any other activity.

3. Wear the official uniform while practicing school transport activity, and maintain clean attire.
4. Abstain from smoking, eating and drinking while driving.
5. Keep the school bus in a clean condition.
6. Arrive on or in time and inform the direct supervisor in case of any delay.

All school bus drivers in the emirate of Dubai shall report to Drivers' Training and Qualification Department at the Agency, located at Al Aweer Public Bus Station, to obtain a "School Bus Driving Permit" noting that issuing the permit is subject to the following conditions:

- a) The driver must hold a UAE driving license, and a permit of the same license category.
- b) The driver must have attended and completed the «School Bus driver's Basic Course».
- c) The driver's age should not be under 25.
- d) The driver must be of a good conduct with no history of criminal records.
- e) The driver must present the traffic points report issued from the concerned bodies.
- f) The driver must have a disease-free certificate, and submit a proof of drug-and alcohol-free status.
- g) The driver must be literate in both English and Arabic languages.
- h) The driver must pass the theoretical test prepared by the Agency, regarding the subjects covered by the training course.
- i) The permit must be associated with the bus operator, which is entitled to submit an application to the Agency for cancellation of drivers permits upon service termination.

To renew a school bus driving permit after the lapse of one year of issuance, the following conditions shall be observed:

1. The driving permit must not have been expired more than a month ago, otherwise a new application shall be submitted.

2. The driver must submit a disease-free certificate, together with a proof of drug-and-alcohol-free status.
3. The driver must present the black points report, however, the Agency is entitled to accept/reject any application if it deems the driver may pose a risk to students.
4. The driver must complete the «School Bus driver's Course» organized by the Agency, which reproduces in brief the contents of the basic training course.
5. The driver must pass the theoretical test prepared by the Agency, regarding the subjects covered by the training course.

### **Responsibilities of Students and Parents:**

Parents and students shall assume the following responsibilities:

1. Parents have to deliver their children to the school bus or the assembly point at the specified time. If there is a delay on their part, parents have to deliver their children to the school, without holding the driver accountable.
2. Parents should help in training and educating their children on the importance of traffic safety, and how to wait and ride the school bus.
3. Parents should notify the school administration of any offence or negligence from the driver.
4. The driver may return the students to the school if no one came to collect them upon returning at home, under the responsibility of the parents.
5. Students should maintain the bus cleanness and notify the school management or their parents of any offences committed by the driver or students.
6. The school principal is solely entitled to deny any student the school transport service if he/she makes one of the following offences:

- a. If a student causes the school bus to delay more than three times during the academic year.
- b. If a student violates any safety rules or poses danger to others during the bus trip.
- c. If a student refuses to ride the bus from the students gathering point agreed upon in advance by the school administration.
- d. If a student leaves the school bus before reaching his/her designated drop off point without prior permission.
- e. If a student continues to make troubles during bus trips, with more than three cases reported against him/her.

The Agency invites all parents of students to participate in the courses organized by the Agency to educate students and parents on how to use school buses and the importance of school transport.

### **Responsibilities of Female Bus Conductors**

1. Help students boarding/alighting from the school bus.
2. Maintain students' safety and usher them to their seats.
3. Help students cross the street and ensure they are collected by their families.
4. Ensure, at the end of the trip, that the bus is empty and all students have departed the bus, taken their bags, and their personal belongings.
5. Quickly deal with emergency cases and contact the concerned parties to take necessary actions.

### **The candidate female conductor should satisfy the following conditions:**

1. Should be of a good conduct.
2. Should be at least 25 years old.

3. Should be medically fit.
4. Should hold at least the General Secondary Certificate or equivalent.
5. Should pass the theoretical test for the job prescribed by the Agency.

### **Procedures of obtaining School Bus Ownership**

**Step 1:** Satisfy the school bus specifications as per the Guiding Manual.

**Step 2:** Report to one of the Licensing Agency's Offices to submit the "Bus Ownership" application.

**Step 3:** Produce the bus ownership when requested by inspectors.

### **Procedures of obtaining School Bus Driver Permit**

The following procedures should be followed for obtaining a "school bus driver" Permit:

**Step 1:** The applicant must satisfy the following conditions:

- a. Must be a holder of a heavy bus driving license.
- b. Must be of at least 25 years old.
- c. Must be literate in both English and Arabic.

**Step 2:** Must hold a "No criminal precedents certificate" from Dubai Police.

**Step 3:** Must obtain the black points report from Dubai Police.

**Step 4:** Must undergo a medical test and obtain a disease-free certificate, as well as drug-and-alcohol-free status.

**Step 5:** Documents have to be submitted to Drivers Qualification & Training Department at the Public Transport Agency located at Al Aweer Station for enrollment in the "School Bus Driver" course.

## Procedures of obtaining Female Bus Conductor Permit

The following steps must be adhered to:

**Step 1:** The applicant must satisfy the following conditions:

1. Should be at least 25 years old.
2. Should be a holder of at least the General Secondary Certificate or equivalent.

**Step 2:** Perform a medical test and obtain a medical fitness certificate.

**Step 3:** Documents have to be submitted to Drivers Qualification & Training Department at the Public Transport Agency located at Al Aweer Station for enrollment in the “School bus driver” course.

## Offences and Fines

Pursuant to Articles No. (5) and (10) of Order No. (2) for 2008 regarding school transport in the emirate of Dubai, issued by HH Sheikh Hamdan Bin Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Crown Prince of Dubai and Chairman of Dubai Executive Council, and without prejudice to any stricter penalty provided for under any other legislation, violators of the provisions of this Order, its Executive Regulation, decisions or instructions issued pursuant thereto, shall be subject to the penalties stated in the table annexed to this Manual. The RTA's employees and inspectors assigned by the Chairman of the Board and Executive Director for this purpose, shall have the capacity of enforcement officers in proving the actions violating the provisions of the said Order Manual, its Executive Regulation, and decisions issued pursuant thereto. Under this capacity, they are entitled to undertake the inspection duties, and issue enforcement reports & fines necessary in this regard.

## Offences and Fines Table

S.N.	Type of Offence	Fine in AED
1.	Operating a school bus without permit	AED 500
2.	Operating a school bus for more than one month after the expiry of the permit	AED 100
3.	Failing to place the bus permit in the designated place.	AED 50
4.	Driving the school bus by an unlicensed driver or a driver with an expired permit	AED 500
5.	Refusing to produce the driver's permit to the enforcement officer	AED 500
6.	Failing to comply with bus exterior specifications	AED 150
7.	Failing to comply with the seats or bus interior specifications	AED 200
8.	Failing to comply with the safety standards and specifications	AED 300
9.	Violating the driver's commitments prescribed under the Order or its Executive Regulation	AED 50
10.	Violating the responsibilities of schools and bus operators provided for in the Order and its Executive Regulation	AED 100
11.	Failing to operate the bus Electronic Stop Rod when the bus stops to pick up /drop off students	AED 200
12.	Failing to remove or cover the phrase "School Bus" when using the school bus for activities other than transporting students	AED 200
13.	Operating the Electronic Stop Rod when using the school bus for activities other than transporting students	AED 200

## Questions and Queries

1. For questions on how to obtain “School Bus” ownership, you can contact any of the Vehicle Licensing offices at the Licensing Agency, RTA.
2. For questions on how to obtain a school bus driver permit, you can contact the Drivers Training and Qualification Department at the Public Transport Agency, RTA, located at Al Aweer.
3. For question on how to obtain a no objection certificate, you can contact the Planning & Business Development Department at the Public Transport Agency, RTA, located at Muhaisna 4.

For more inquiries, please call 8009090 or  
send e-mail via: [schoolbus@rta.ae](mailto:schoolbus@rta.ae)