

MEMO

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From:	Eva Platzer RES-HTL	Visa:
To:	Ralf Lange, Michael Mallon (SAC members)	
Copy:	Stijn Vandersmissen RES-HT	

Subject: ESTEC School Bus Policy - school year 2026 - 2027

This policy paper will stipulate the rules concerning the school transport, the terms and conditions and the rules concerning the parents' contribution.

ESA facilitates the access to a bus transportation service for children of ESA staff attending several defined international schools, irrespective of whether the staff member benefits from education allowance. The service is also provided under the same conditions to contractors, provided there are seats available and at no additional cost basis, to be confirmed case-by-case. The service is performed by a professional bus company, in line with the requirements of Dutch law.

1. Eligibility for ESTEC School Bus Service

As a baseline, a bus route will be set up and maintained if there are eight children or more using a particular route to an *Independent International School* and/or an *International Department of a Dutch School* part of the “Dutch International Schools (DIS)” in the vicinity of the establishment. If the number of children drops below eight but stays above five, the existing bus route will be continued for **one** school year only.

To be eligible for the ESTEC school bus service, children of ESTEC staff must be aged 4 or above, and attending nursery school or higher in one of the eligible schools.

In case bus transport has been set up for a bus route in the morning, transport will in principle also be set up for the afternoon route, irrespective the number of children. Nevertheless, where the school has more than one end time, for budgetary reasons, it can be decided to combine the transport. In general, this will mean that transport is available after the last end time of that day.

The actual provision of the school bus service to children will always be within the boundaries of the available fixed budget.

2. Children under 12 and children aged 12 years and above

The school bus company is responsible for the safety of children in its care, in the context of Dutch law. Therefore, different rules are applicable to children under the age of 12 and children aged 12 years and above.

Children under the age of 12:

- In the morning, on the way to school, the school bus company is responsible for all children from the moment they enter the school bus (generally at their registered pick-up point) until they are dropped on school premises or handed over from the driver to the designated school representative.
- In the afternoon, on the way back, the school bus company is responsible for all children from the moment they are collected by the bus driver from the school premises or handed over by the designated school representative until they are delivered to a registered parent or carer (the latter being also a sibling older than 12) at the drop off point. In case no registered parent or carer is at the Home Stop at the time of drop-off, the driver will inform the school bus company planning office (service coordinator) and then continue driving. The planning office will contact the parent(s) and emergency contact(s) to arrange pick-up of the child at another stop or at the school bus company premises.
- Parents of child(ren) aged 9 to and including 11 can submit a waiver to the bus company (using the waiver text below) to exempt their child(ren) from being subject to the requirement in the bullet above and allow them to be dropped off without a parent or carer present at their drop off point (like children of 12 and above).

WAIVER TEXT

I, (name and surname) am fully aware that the ESTEC School Bus Policy requires children under the age of 12 to be met by an adult at the nominated bus stop. However I agree that the bus company drops off(name of the child)... at the drop-off point...(location)... during the period ...(start date + end date)...., both dates included, even if there is no carer or parent present at that drop-off point to take over the child, and that I am legally able or authorised to waive all claims for possible liabilities against the bus company and against ESA in this respect, and that I waive all claims for possible liabilities in this respect against the bus company and against ESA by means of the signature of the present document... (name-surname + date + signature).'

IMPORTANT NOTE: should you decide to make changes to the list of carers or to use the waiver, changes will come into force as soon as the bus company will confirm to you that they have updated the profile of your child(ren) and make all the necessary changes.

Children aged 12 and above:

- The responsibility of the school bus company starts when the children get on the bus and ends when they are dropped off at their drop-off point (no parent or carer needs to be present).

3. Registration and enrolment process

The bus company is responsible for setting up a two-step registration and enrolment process for parents, including the following:

- Parents submit an online registration form to the bus company, to express their interest;
- Parents will receive an automatic confirmation;
- In the course of the planning process, parents will receive the information whether the registration can be accepted, in view of their address;
- After the planning process (see below), the bus company sends an enrolment form to the parents who expressed their interest by submitting a registration form.
- The enrolment is
 - the acceptance of the service;
 - the commitment to payment of the associated fee, for staff as a deduction via the payroll;
 - the acceptance of terms and conditions of the bus company, including their privacy policy;
 - the acceptance of the (shared) responsibility to form with other parents a parent representation, consisting of one or more persons per bus line.

4. Planning of bus lines, location of bus stops, timetables

The information collected from the parents who have registered their children is the basis for the planning of the bus lines, the bus stops and the timetables by the bus company.

It will aim at maximising the number of children served within the boundaries of the available budget and aim at limiting the end-to-end duration of each bus line to one hour maximum.

Particularly in the morning, a bus stop may be created if at least three children will make use of the stop. On the way back after school, additional bus stops might be accommodated closer to home. Specific request for additional bus stops (e.g. en route stops) will be considered on an ad hoc basis.

The Parent representatives for the concerned line will review the bus company's proposed planning and negotiate optimisations prior to the bus company publishing the approved plan to all parents and inviting them to enrol their children.

5. ESTEC School Bus Safety Rules

To maintain a safe, orderly environment on the bus and at the bus stop, children are expected to observe the School Bus Safety Rules set by the bus company. Parents are required to instruct their children to respect the following rules.

1. All children travelling on the ESTEC school bus must show their ESTEC school bus pass when boarding. The driver must deny transportation to children who do not have a bus pass.
2. Each child must be at the bus stop at least 5 minutes before the scheduled departure time. The bus will not wait after the scheduled time.

3. Children must always adhere to the bus driver's instruction to ensure that all passengers travel safely.
4. Each child must be seated immediately upon entering the bus.
5. Seatbelts must always be worn by all children travelling on the school bus. Parents are responsible for instructing their children to always wear their seatbelts. Children are not allowed to stand or move while the bus is in motion. The bus company will not be liable for any damage when children are not wearing the seatbelts provided.
6. No child is allowed to enter or leave the bus until it has stopped. Children may enter or leave the bus only upon bus driver's signal. Roof hatches and doors are only to be opened or closed by the bus driver.
7. Children are not allowed to eat or drink on the school bus.
8. The possibility of using the school bus may be denied to any child who does not conduct himself/herself in a safe and orderly way. This includes:
 - Throwing objects in the school bus is forbidden
 - Disrupting the driver in any way whilst the bus is in motion is forbidden.
 - The bus driver reserves the right to assign seating for any passenger who is, in any way, disruptive.
9. Any object deemed to be unsafe cargo on the bus will be denied (e.g. skateboards, radios, jam boxes or glass). The driver has the authority to deny transportation to children with such articles in their possession.
10. The driver or bus company bears no responsibility if items brought onto the bus are lost, stolen or damaged.
11. Vandalism of school buses may result in suspension of the child's use of the ESTEC School Bus and parents may be held financially liable for the cost of repairing damage to school buses.
12. Before using a bus other than the assigned bus, children need to have permission from the bus company's Service Coordinator. He will instruct the driver of the school bus about any changes. Children must always identify themselves to the driver with their school bus pass.
13. Vehicles may be equipped with video surveillance; this will be indicated by a sign on the front door of the vehicle. This is only possible within the boundaries of Dutch law on protection of personal data.
14. All vehicles used for ESTEC carry the name: Brouwer's Tours, Taxi Brouwer or Holland Rijnland Regio Taxi and have an ESTEC sign in front of the windshield.

15. Parents driving their car in the vicinity of the school bus stops are required to be very careful and beware of children who may be on the road or crossing the street.
16. Friends of ESTEC children, who do not have a ESTEC School bus pass, are not allowed on the school bus.

6. Parents Contribution

Following an agreement with the Staff Association Committee at the CJC in 2014, parents contribute to the cost. The parents' contribution is 30% of the cost per child per year.

Accordingly, the ESTEC Administration will calculate annually per situation on 1 September the average cost of the bus service per child per year and will inform the parents in the publication for the registration for the school bus for the next school year. At the stage of the enrolment the parents commit to pay the parent contribution.

From the second child signed up for the bus service, a reduction of 50% will be applied on the parent contribution calculated along the rate above.

The contribution is due for a complete school year, irrespectively of how many times the bus is used or in which period. However, if a child will start the use of the service after the 1st of January of the school year, the contribution will be limited to 50% of the contribution for that complete school year.

The parent contribution will not be chargeable to the ESA Education Allowance.

The parent contribution will be reassessed each year and will be communicated to the parents before registration.

At the moment of enrolment, ESA-staff authorise ESA Human Resources to manage the payment of the parents' contribution via the payroll. The relevant amount will be deducted from the salary in 2 instalments in December and in June. Contractors pay the same amount in one payment to be completed before end of October to the bus company.

7. Parent representatives

At the beginning of the school year, the parents making use of a bus line organise themselves by setting up WhatsApp or Signal groups for communication and coordination purposes. They can also make use of the Schoolbus Forum set-up by SAC in the ESA 365 IT-environment. The parents share the responsibility to appoint a Parent representative per bus line, or a group of parents taking the role of representation.



These parent representatives are in charge of communicating with the bus company on behalf of the users of the bus line, taking into account the interests of all users. They approve the planning of the bus lines, bus stops and timetables before the enrolment stage. During the school year, if the needs change, the parent representatives discuss with the bus company the necessary adjustments.