

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF EDUCATION
DEPARTMENT OF SCHOOL EDUCATION AND LITERACY
RAJYA SABHA
STARRED QUESTION NO. 108
ANSWERED ON – 29/07/2026**

Safety guidelines for school transport vehicles

108 Ms. Swati Maliwal:

Will the Minister of *Education* be pleased to state:

- (a) whether Government has prescribed safety guidelines for schools regarding vehicles used to transport children, including seating capacity and overloading norms;
- (b) whether instances of overloading of school vans/buses have come to the notice of Government;
- (c) whether Government proposes to take up the matter with State Governments to ensure strict enforcement of safety norms for school transport vehicles, including imposition of penalties on erring vehicles; and
- (d) the steps being taken to sensitize schools and transport operators on child safety in commute?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF EDUCATION

(SHRI PRALHAD JOSHI)

- (a) to (d): A statement is laid on the table of the House.

STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO PARTS (a) TO (d) OF THE RAJYA SABHA STARRED QUESTION NO. 108 ANSWERED ON 29.07.2026 ASKED BY HON'BLE MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT MS. SWATI MALIWAL REGARDING "SAFETY GUIDELINES FOR SCHOOL TRANSPORT VEHICLES"

(a): Education is in the concurrent list of the Constitution of India and majority of the schools are under the administrative control of the respective State Governments/UT administrations. However, guidelines/advisories have been issued from time to time by the Government of India and other Government bodies regarding the safety and security of school children including transportation facility provided by the schools. The following guidelines/manual contain provisions relating to safety of school children in the transportation by school vehicles; among others:

(i) The Department of School Education and Literacy (DoSE&L), Ministry of Education (MoE) has issued "*Guidelines on School Safety and Security*", which, *inter alia*, contain provisions for fixing the accountability of the school management in the matter of safety and security of children studying in government, government-aided and private schools. These guidelines were circulated to all States/UTs/Autonomous Bodies of DoSE&L on 01.10.2021. The guidelines detail the accountability of various stakeholders in ensuring the safety and security of children in schools including the transportation from their homes to their schools and back. The guidelines may be seen at: <https://www.dsel-education.gov.in/static/uploads/2025/09/030dc1481679f10a3018775630d9e6be.pdf>

The relevant provisions relating to school transport in the "*Guidelines on School Safety and Security*" are as follows:

- *Para 5.19(h): "All vehicles used by children for transportation to and from the school should have a fitness certificate and the school's name, address and telephone number should be prominently displayed on these vehicles."*
- *Para 5.19(i): "Parents may be encouraged to use school buses rather than private vans, if found economically equally or more viable. Schools should also ensure adequate and regular maintenance of school vehicles."*
- *Para 5.19(j): "There should be a responsible staff member assigned to be in the school bus/vehicle to make a safe arrangement for transporting, boarding and deboarding of children to and from the school bus."*
- *Para 4.10(m): "...In case of sexual offence against children in the school premises/school transport during/before/after school hours, and the school management/individual fails to report the commission of an offence under sub-section (1) of section 19, action may be taken under POCSO Act, 2012 against school management/individual."*

(ii) The National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR) released "*Manual on Safety and Security of Children in Schools*" in 2016-17. The manual may be seen at:

https://ncpcr.gov.in/public/viewPdf/165650391762bc3e6d27f93_manual-on-safety-and-security-of-children-in-schools-sep-2021.pdf.

The manual defines a *School Bus* (as per the Section 2(zc) of the Central Motor Vehicle Rules, 1989 issued by the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways) as, “a vehicle with a seating capacity of thirteen passengers and above excluding driver designed and constructed specially for school going children.”

The manual also lays down aspects related to safety in school transport viz. exterior of the school bus (paint colour), fixture and furniture of the bus (windows/doors/speed controlling devices), manpower in the bus (qualified attendant, police verification of the staff), facilities in the bus (first aid box, alarm bell/siren), permits (driving license of the driver, fitness certificate of the vehicle) and arrangements in the schools (safe boarding/deboarding, halts of the bus, driver uniform, parking space for the bus, periodic feedback from children).

(iii) The Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) had issued guidelines for transport facilities in schools vide circular dated 23.02.2017. As per the circular, these guidelines should be scrupulously followed and complied with by all affiliated schools. The guidelines may be seen at: https://www.cbse.gov.in/cbsenew/Press_Notes/2017/07.%20Safety%20of%20School%20children%20in%20the%20school%20bus.pdf

(b) & (c): Education being a subject in the concurrent list of the Constitution of India, the DoSE&L, MoE, advises the State Governments and UT Administrations, as and when required, to ensure the safety and well-being of students in accordance with the department's *Guidelines on School Safety and Security, 2021*.

As informed by NCPCR, four such complaints have been received pertaining to the overloading of school vans/buses during the last three years which were forwarded to the concerned authorities for taking necessary action. The commission has also issued a letter dated 25.04.2022, requesting the State Transport Departments to conduct a comprehensive safety audit of school transportation, including school buses/auto-rickshaws/mini-vans, and all other vehicles used for transporting children to and from schools.

(d): The following steps have been taken to sensitize schools and transport operators on child safety:

(i) As informed by the NCPCR, the commission has been conducting various sensitisation and awareness programmes on child safety, involving a wide range of stakeholders, including Head Masters/Principals/teachers of government and private schools, members of School Management Committees (SMC), Cluster Resource Centre Coordinators (CRCCs), Block Resource Centre Coordinators (BRCCs), District Education Officers and officials from traffic police, transport department. During the last three years, NCPCR has conducted 72 such district level workshops on NCPCR's *Manual on Safety and Security of Children in Schools*. Besides, 24 district level awareness and sensitisation workshops were conducted on the subject of safe and secure transport facilities for children in school. It is an ongoing exercise.

(ii) As informed by Kendriya Vidyalayas Sangathan, the schools regularly sensitize parents during Parent-Teacher Meetings (PTMs) and other interactions about the importance of ensuring safe transportation for their wards. Parents are advised to avoid overloading of school vehicles, ensure that the vehicle is driven by a valid driving licence holder, and verify

that the driver is competent to safely operate the vehicle. They are also encouraged to ensure that the vehicle complies with the applicable safety norms and regulations prescribed by the concerned authorities.

(iii) The textbooks developed by the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) provide adequate space to traffic rules, road safety and other safety concerns to sensitise students, teachers and schools by integrating these topics in the school curriculum.
