



Reading Football Supporters' Society Limited,  
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[www.star-reading.org](http://www.star-reading.org)

## **COACH TRAVEL POLICY**

<b>Date of Review</b>	<b>Reason for review</b>	<b>Amendments</b>
10/10/2013	New Policy Approved	None
13/04/2016	Periodic Review	New format and revised para. 5.6.1 & 12.5
11/08/2016	Policy Update	Para. 5.6.1
08/06/2017	Policy Update	Revised para. 11.3
12/04/2018	Policy Update	No changes
09/01/2020	Policy Update	Various
10/02/2022	Policy Update	Para. 5.5
14/07/2022	Policy Update	Annex 1
08/12/2022	Policy Update	Revised Para. 10.2
13/07/2023	Policy Update	Para. 5.1 and various minor changes

### **1. Introduction**

1.1. This document is drafted in accordance with the Rules of Reading Football Supporters' Society Limited and sets out the Coach Travel Policy initially adopted pursuant to a resolution at a Board Meeting held on 10<sup>th</sup> October 2013 and subsequently updated.

### **2. Definitions**

2.1. Definitions of the terms used in this policy are laid out in a separate Definition of Terms document, which should be read in conjunction with this policy.

### **3. Aim**

3.1 STAR aims to provide affordable travel by coach for supporters of Reading FC who are members of STAR to attend Reading FC first team away matches.

3.1.1 This policy applies to all passengers travelling on coaches arranged by STAR.

3.1.2 Travel on coaches arranged by STAR is normally limited to members (but see Section 10).

3.1.3 Additional rules and/or clarification are issued for 'Children & Young Persons' (Section 11) and 'Disabled Persons' (Section 12).

3.2 STAR does not guarantee to provide coaches for travel to all or any Reading FC away matches.

3.3 In the event that the Football Club offers to pay for coach travel for Reading fans to some or all away games, STAR would aim to run these on the basis that all travellers are STAR members and abide by the STAR membership rules. Any other conditions to be agreed with Reading FC.

#### **4. General Information**

4.1 Details (including prices) will be published on STAR's website ([www.star-reading.org](http://www.star-reading.org)), the online travel booking portal (<https://star-reading-onlinetravel.ecwid.com/>) and, whenever possible, on STAR's social media sites and on notices outside STAR Base and around the Football Stadium.

4.2 The current guidance on the website ('Welcome to STAR Travel') forms part of this document. It includes specific guidance relating to Covid precautions.

4.3 A telephone information line will be available (**07919 931716**) from 6.00 pm to 8.00 pm Monday to Friday (except during Reading FC first team matches). Messages can be left outside of these times.

4.4 An email enquiry service is available at [travel@star-reading.org](mailto:travel@star-reading.org) and [onlinetravel@star-reading.org](mailto:onlinetravel@star-reading.org) for online booking enquiries.

4.5 STAR does not purchase or sell tickets for Reading FC matches. Supporters are responsible for acquiring their own match tickets.

#### **5. Booking and Payment**

5.1 Bookings are normally taken at STAR Base, which can be found behind the East Stand of the Football Stadium, opposite Gate 7. STAR Base will open approximately three hours before Reading FC first team home matches, depending on the date and time of the match, closing 15 minutes before kick-off. It will reopen at half time, though this is limited to members seated in the East Stand due to access. After full time, STAR Base will reopen for all members. STAR Base may also be open for travel bookings on some evenings, dates and times of which will be published on the STAR website. Travel bookings can also be made online when available, using the online travel booking portal: <https://star-reading-onlinetravel.ecwid.com/>. By exception, travel bookings may also be made at STAR organised events, where publicised. **Travel bookings CANNOT be made via Reading FC at any time.**

5.2 Coach tickets will be sold on a first come – first served basis

5.3 Members will be required to produce their STAR membership card when booking coach tickets. For bookings made online, all Membership names and numbers need to be recorded at time of booking, before the order is processed.

5.4 Members may book for groups but, at the time of booking, must produce (/record in online bookings) the STAR membership cards relating to all those in the group.

5.5 Payment may only be made by credit or debit card, cash or by a cheque made payable to Supporters' Trust at Reading. Payment for online bookings is undertaken using the Stripe Payment Processing Platform - accepting debit or credit cards and Google/Apple Pay on mobile devices.

5.6 STAR does not guarantee that refunds or credit for cancelled bookings will be made unless:

- STAR is unable to provide the service at all;
- all available coach seats have been sold and the seat in question can be re-sold; or
- in the event that the full allocation of match tickets has been sold by Reading FC and the passenger has not been able to purchase a match ticket.

5.6.1 Where late postponement of a league match occurs, (i.e. the postponement of a match so close to the kick-off time that STAR incurs costs levied by its travel partner), credit for travel to the re-arranged fixture will be given. Cup matches are not included for any credit, but the Board may decide to include them on a discretionary basis.

5.6.2 The Operations Manager will consider (at his absolute discretion) offering a refund or a credit for another trip on a case by case basis in other scenarios.

5.7 In the event that passengers are unable to travel, they should notify the travel or online travel team (by visiting the shop or by emailing [onlinetravel@star-reading.org](mailto:onlinetravel@star-reading.org)) and, if within 24 hours' notice, also notify the Operations Manager in person, by email ([travel@star-reading.org](mailto:travel@star-reading.org)) or by telephone on 07919 931716.

5.8 Coach tickets are not transferable.

5.9 By purchasing tickets to travel, passengers will be responsible to STAR for any and all claims arising out of, or from any damage to, the coach or any damage to property on the coach that they cause.

## **6. Travel.**

6.1 Passengers will be required to produce their STAR membership card and coach ticket when boarding the coach prior to travel. Passengers failing to produce a valid STAR membership card and coach ticket may be prevented from travelling without recourse to any refund.

6.2 Passengers will have been allocated a specific coach at the time of booking. If, for operational reasons, coach allocations are changed STAR will endeavour to publish information on the change(s) on its website and will provide stewards to direct passengers at the pick-up point(s).

6.3 Specific coach seats are not allocated. Passengers should occupy the same seat for all legs of their journey.

6.4 Unless otherwise notified, all coaches will depart from and return to the Football Stadium. The pick-up point is the bus stop at car park 1.

6.4.1 Those travelling from the Football Stadium may normally park their vehicle at the Stadium (at owner's risk).

6.4.1.1 Vehicles are to be parked in Car Park No1 only (unless advised to the contrary at the time of booking or by Reading FC or STAR stewards on arrival at the Football Stadium).

6.4.1.2 Vehicles parked in any other part of the stadium complex (including the hotel) are liable to be clamped.

6.5 When possible, arrangements will be made for at least one coach to pick-up and drop-off passengers at an alternative designated point in Reading (please see section 11.3 below). Passengers wishing to be picked up or dropped off at an alternative point must request it at the time of booking so that they can be provided with a ticket for the appropriate coach.

6.6 Additional pick-up and drop-off points may be available on some journeys; details of which will be published on STAR's website and on notices in the STAR Base (please see section 11.3 below). Passengers wishing to be picked up or dropped off at a published additional point must request it at the time of booking so that they can be provided with a ticket for the appropriate coach.

6.7 Coaches will not pick up or drop off passengers other than at published stops.

6.8 It is the responsibility of passengers to ensure their arrival at the pick-up point in good time. If passengers require to collect tickets or membership cards, then they should arrive a minimum of 30 minutes before the advertised departure time. PCFs must be registered at least 24 hours before travel departure; they are not accepted on the day. Coach departure time will not normally be delayed to await passengers. However, if a passenger's arrival at the pick-up point is likely to be delayed (e.g. because of traffic congestion), the Operations Manager should be notified (**07919 931716**), so that advice may be given and a decision on whether to delay coach departure can be made.

6.9 After the match, it is the responsibility of passengers to return to the coach immediately. Departure is often determined by the local police; who will not permit the coach departure to be delayed beyond what they consider to be a reasonable time.

6.9.1 Passengers who do not return to the coach are responsible for making their own return travel arrangements.

6.9.2 STAR accepts no liability for passengers who do not return to the coach before it departs.

6.9.3 In the event that the coach is compelled to leave before all unaccompanied young persons have returned to it their parents or legal guardian will be informed and a steward will remain at the pick-up point. In these circumstances parents or legal guardians of the young person(s) will be responsible for reimbursing STAR for any expenses incurred.

6.10 On longer journeys, coaches may make scheduled rest stops. The driver may be required to take a break away from their vehicle because of driving hours' regulations. When this is the case all passengers must leave the coach so that it can be secured.

6.10.1 Following a rest stop, it is the responsibility of passengers to return to the coach at the stipulated time.

6.10.2 At rest stops, STAR members are to conduct themselves in accordance with any local rules imposed by the venue owner or operator (see also Section 9).

## **7. Safety**

7.1 It is a requirement under the Road Traffic Act (1988) and the Motor Vehicles (Wearing of Seat Belts) (Amendment) Regulations 2015 that seat belts (where available) are always worn by

individuals at all times whilst the coach is in motion (unless a valid certificate signed by a medical practitioner is held stating that it is inadvisable on medical grounds for the individual to wear a seat belt).

7.2 If a child is required to travel in a car or booster seat, it is the responsibility of the accompanying adult passenger to provide a child restraint (seat, booster seat, etc.) appropriate to the age of the child, to enable them to have a safe and comfortable journey.

7.3 Passengers must be able to board onto, alight from and travel in coaches in accordance with legal requirements, health and safety regulations, the coach operator's own policies and any STAR rules and policies that may from time to time be issued.

7.3.1 Passengers who cannot comply with the above criteria should consult the Travel for Disabled Members conditions outlined in Section 10 below.

## **8. Security**

8.1 Passengers may leave personal possessions on the coach at rest stops and at the destination. However, passengers who do leave their possessions on the coach do so at their own risk. Neither STAR nor the coach operator accepts liability for the loss or damage of any personal possessions left on coaches. (At the destination it is likely that following disembarkation coaches will be parked away from the ground so may not be accessible until after the match).

8.2 Prohibited Items. The following items are prohibited on coaches:

8.2.1 Alcohol. It is an offence under the Sporting Events (Control of Alcohol etc.) Act 1985 to carry or consume alcohol on a coach operated on behalf of STAR. It is also an offence under the Act for STAR to knowingly cause or permit alcohol to be carried on a coach operated on its behalf. Any passenger who boards a coach (at any stage of the journey) will be required to leave any alcohol in their possession behind. If the passenger refuses to do so they will not be permitted to travel. If the passenger is an unaccompanied young person their parents or legal guardian will be informed and a steward will remain at the pick-up point. In these circumstances parents or legal guardians of the young person(s) will be responsible for reimbursing STAR for any expenses incurred. Any passenger found carrying alcohol on board a coach will have it confiscated and will not be permitted to book to travel on coaches operated by STAR in the future.

8.2.2 Weapons. It is prohibited to carry any object that can be used as an offensive weapon.

8.3.3 Other Material. Any material that may be used to cause offence or which affects the reputation of STAR adversely is prohibited.

## **9. Conduct**

9.1 Passengers must conduct themselves appropriately at all times whilst travelling with STAR; abiding by the terms of this policy and the coach operator's own regulations.

9.2 Passengers should not engage in any activity that is detrimental to the interests or safety of fellow passengers or STAR.

9.3 Any passenger whose behaviour is deemed inappropriate by STAR may be prevented from future travel on coaches organised by STAR.

## **10. Stewards and safeguarding**

- 10.1 STAR will provide a sufficient number of stewards to travel on every coach. Stewards can be identified by a badge that will be worn prominently.
- 10.2 All stewards will have been subjected to a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check.
- 10.3 All stewards will have agreed to abide by a code of conduct (Annex 2) and will have attended a briefing by the Operations Manager.
- 10.4 STAR will ensure that a steward is available on site at the Football Stadium 30 minutes before the advertised departure time of coaches and for 15 minutes after the arrival of the coaches on return to give time for parents or legal guardians to drop off or collect their young persons. (STAR will not be able to guarantee that a steward will be available at any other pick-up or drop-off point).
- 10.5 Stewards' duties will be defined by the Operations Manager, but predominantly they are responsible for the smooth operation of the coach and particularly for the safety and security of all passengers. They are authorised to remove any passenger who is in contravention of the rules or whose actions constitute a threat to the safety or security of fellow passengers.

## **11. Children and Young Persons**

- 11.1 Passengers under the age of 14 years must be accompanied by a passenger of 18 years or older.
- 11.2 Young persons between the ages of 14 and 17 years may travel unaccompanied provided that:
- 11.2.1 they have been authorised to travel by a parent or legal guardian (see Annex 1);
  - 11.2.2 the parent or legal guardian has undertaken to make arrangements for the young person's collection from the drop-off point;
  - 11.2.2 the parent or legal guardian provides a contact telephone number on each occasion that the young person travels, so that they can be contacted (the contact telephone number is to be confirmed at the time of booking); and
  - 11.2.3 parents or legal guardians accept liability for any damage caused by the young person and additional expenditure incurred by STAR resulting from the actions or omissions of the young person.
- 11.3 To maximise their safety and to ensure that a steward will be available to accompany them, unaccompanied young persons will only be able to travel from and return to the Football Stadium.
- 11.4 Young persons will be given notice of the expected time of arrival at the Football Stadium in order for them to contact parents or legal guardians to arrange for them to be collected.

## **12. Travel for Disabled Members**

- 12.1 STAR aims to comply fully with both the provisions and spirit of the Equality Act 2010. STAR operates its travel policy for all members and will ensure that, as far as practicable, the scheme does not discriminate against any disabled members irrespective of the nature of the impairment.
- 12.2 Where required, STAR will aim to provide an adapted vehicle for those members who are unable to make use of unadapted coaches.
- 12.3 Further guidance, including booking details, is published on the STAR web site ('Welcome to STAR Travel') - [www.star-reading.org](http://www.star-reading.org) - or can be obtained from STAR Operations Manager in person, by email ([travel@star-reading.org](mailto:travel@star-reading.org)) or by telephone on 07919 931716.

12.4 It is the disabled member's responsibility to inform STAR of any special needs that they may have, which is related to any disability or impairment. This applies whether travelling on adapted or unadapted coaches. Ideally, this should be done at the time of booking so that coach stewards can ensure that disabled members' needs are met.

12.5 The requirement for a passenger to be a member of STAR does not apply to a Personal Assistant (PA) should one be required. A vulnerable person must have one-to-one support.

### **13. Review**

13.1 This policy will be reviewed by STAR's Board annually, but members can call for it to be reviewed at any time by contacting the Secretary.

## Annex 1

For the current version of the Parental/Legal Guardian Consent Form, please see the Coach Travel Section of the STAR web-site [www.star-reading.org](http://www.star-reading.org).

## Annex 2

# Code of Conduct for Coach Stewards.

We anticipate that we will be very busy this season. We want to ensure that travelling with STAR is a safe and enjoyable experience for all. We therefore require all STAR representatives stewarding coaches to follow certain procedures as prescribed in this document. Our travel partners this season are Horseman Coaches and each coach will have two stewards.

### **Before departure and for the duration of the journey**

1. We require that whilst people are queuing, the stewards oversee an orderly and courteous queue and that people board the coach in such a manner.
2. If a STAR membership number is not on the list, it is the steward's responsibility to ask to see the Membership Card and that the number is then recorded on the list. In some cases an envelope may be attached to the list, please ensure that the intended recipient is given this.
3. If the vehicle is full, please ask any single travellers to sit together to ensure that families are not separated where possible.
4. All stewards will be issued with a current ID badge, these badges are only to be worn whilst stewarding a coach and not at any other time. All previous season badges are invalid and are not to be used.
5. It is the responsibility of the stewards, before the coach departs, to make sure that all passengers are aware of the No Alcohol rule and that seat belts are worn. **This is mandatory.**
6. Coaches are to be kept in good order and all rubbish is to be placed in bags/bins provided.
7. Coaches will stop at predetermined service stations for passenger comfort and to comply with Driver Regulations. Some destinations will be serviced by coaches with toilet facilities. In most cases coaches will have two way radios but we would expect that at least one steward would be in possession of a mobile phone.
8. In the event of any unforeseen circumstances (*coach breakdown/accidents etc.*), STAR expects both stewards to stay with the vehicle until the problem is resolved. Once the coach organiser has been informed, all parties can then discuss what action is to be taken. The health and safety of the passengers is paramount, with particular reference to unaccompanied minors.



### **On Arrival at Destination**

On arrival, please make sure that your passengers know where they are to re-board the vehicle after the game. They are expected to return promptly, as we leave on Police/Ground Steward instructions. Please make sure you have checked your passenger list before departure.

### **On arrival back at Reading**

People are expected to disembark at the same place they boarded the vehicle unless previously agreed. Any alternatives are at the discretion of the Coach Organiser and Horseman Coaches; the coaches will not deviate from their approved route. Only Coach number 1 will be allowed to drop off at the Town Centre stop. (West Street, Primark) Stewards must check the coach for any lost property, rubbish or damage after all passengers have departed the vehicle.