



MEDIA RELEASE

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Enhanced protection for consumers in school bus transport industry

The Consumers Association of Singapore (CASE) and the Singapore School Transport Association (SSTA) is pleased to launch the CaseTrust-SSTA joint accreditation scheme for school bus service providers to uplift the service standards of the school bus transport industry. Consumers will now enjoy enhanced consumer protection if their school bus service provider is accredited under the CaseTrust-SSTA accreditation scheme.

In view of the increasing amounts of prepayments reported lost by consumers due to business closures, CASE has been working with industry partners to enhance prepayment protection for consumers. With the launch of the CaseTrust-SSTA joint accreditation scheme for school bus service providers, all accredited service providers will be required to purchase a \$300,000 Performance Guarantee Bond that insures consumers' deposits and prepayments against winding up and/or liquidation of the accredited service provider.

In addition to the above, accredited school bus service providers must commit to the following:

- Ethical and transparent pricing tactics
- Five working days cooling-off period from the date of the signed agreement
- Proper dispute resolution procedures, which includes mediation at the CASE Mediation Centre in the event of disputes
- Undergo at least 40 hours of training for staff to meet satisfactory service standards
- Use the standard contract template approved by CASE and SSTA

Currently, there are 22 SSTA members who are in the process of being accredited (*see Annex*). Collectively, these 22 SSTA members offer school bus services to more than half of the primary schools in Singapore today.

Mr Lim Biow Chuan, President of CASE and Association Advisor to SSTA said, "The CaseTrust mark is given to businesses that have fair and ethical business practices. We strongly encourage more school bus service providers to come on board, as it will help to set them apart as consumer-friendly bus operators."

“CaseTrust accreditation signifies the school transport industry’s determination to provide better services and support to our consumers. Our accredited bus service provider members can operate in accordance with appropriate policies, regulations, and industry standards,” explained Mr Wong Ann Lin, Executive Council Chairman of SSTA. “The accreditation will also instil greater confidence among SSTA members, schools, parents and the general public as well as uplift the Association’s professional status and leadership in school transport trade too,” he stressed.

Lim Biow Chuan
President
Consumers Association of Singapore

and

Wong Ann Lin
Executive Council Chairman
Singapore School Transport Association

ANNEX - LIST OF SCHOOL BUS SERVICE PROVIDERS THAT WILL BE ACCREDITED UNDER THE CASETRUST-SSTA JOINT ACCREDITATION SCHEME

1. Annway Pte Ltd
2. AZ Bus Pte Ltd
3. Bedok Transport Pte Ltd
4. BT & Tan Transport Pte Ltd
5. Chang Cheng Pte Ltd
6. HDT Singapore Holding Pte Ltd
7. Hock School Bus Service
8. Hui Leong Bus Transport Services
9. Jed Bus Transport
10. Johnson Transport & Trading Pte Ltd
11. Kurnia Transport (S) Pte Ltd
12. Loh Gim Chong Transport
13. Promisedland Transportation Service
14. Rae Transport Services
15. Ren Quan Transport
16. Ric Tat Transport Service
17. San Hai Bus Transport Services
18. Sinbus (S) Transport Services
19. Sky Island Transport & Trading
20. SSTA Pte Ltd
21. STS Transport Management Pte Ltd
22. Sun-Gee Travel

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ON THE CASETRUST-SSTA JOINT ACCREDITATION SCHEME FOR SCHOOL BUS SERVICE PROVIDERS

What is the CaseTrust-SSTA Joint Accreditation Scheme for School Bus Service Providers?

The Consumer Association of Singapore (CASE) and the Singapore School Bus Transport Association (SSTA) collaborated to develop a joint accreditation scheme for the school bus service industry.

As part of the accreditation process, school bus service providers are subjected to a rigorous assessment process and a stringent set of criteria that are designed to lay the foundation for fair business practices.

Upon fulfilling the full set of requirements, school bus service providers will be presented with the CaseTrust mark. This signifies the business' commitment to improve service quality and commitment to fair trading practices.

What is the purpose of implementing the CaseTrust-SSTA Joint Accreditation Scheme for School Bus Service Providers?

The accreditation scheme was introduced, following the abrupt termination of school bus services by a school bus operator in 2015. Parents who had made advanced payment of up to two months of bus services for their children were unable to seek their refund as the school bus operator had ceased operations.

In a bid to enhance consumer protection, CASE and SSTA signed a Memorandum of Understanding on 11 November 2015 to develop a joint accreditation scheme.

This strategic move was intended to uplift the existing school bus industry's service standards and boost consumer confidence towards credible school bus service providers that are certified with fair and ethical business practices.

What can consumers expect from an accredited school bus service provider?

Consumers are protected with the following mechanisms:

- Five working days cooling-off period from the date of signing the agreement
- Clearly documented policies on services charges, termination and refund
- Proper dispute resolution mechanism implemented to assist consumers to seek recourse
- Insurance bond that protects consumers against winding up and/or liquidation of bus service provider
- CaseTrust-SSTA approved standard contract to be used for the transaction
- All staff members of the accredited school bus service provider are required to undergo at least 40 hours of training over a two year period

How are consumers protected in the event of a business closure?

Consumers shall be entitled to recover the unutilised portion of the prepayment made to the school bus service provider, via an insurance payout which would be activated in the unfortunate event of a business closure.

How long is the accreditation period?

Upon successful accreditation, the CaseTrust accreditation mark for bus service providers would be valid for four years.