

School return revives warning over unlicensed drivers

TDT | Manama
Mohammed Darwish

After seven months away from their classrooms, 157,000 children return to government schools today, with parents told to check that anyone paid to drive them is licensed. Private schools re-summed lessons earlier this week, a few days ahead of the public-school system. Government schools reopen after safety checks, repairs and preparations by the Education Ministry, following months in which teaching was moved on-line during the Iranian attacks on Bahrain.

Last year, two cases involving unlicensed school transport put children at risk.

In October 2025, a four-and-a-half-year-old boy died after being left for several hours inside a closed private car used to take children to schools and kindergartens. The woman driving the car told prosecutors she had been taking children for payment without a licence. The vehicle was also not licensed for passenger transport.

A month later, a girl was left asleep inside another unlicensed private car after it broke down. The vehicle was then lifted on to a recovery truck with the child still inside.

The driver realised she was there only after receiving a telephone call asking where she was. Prosecutors later ordered his



detention while the case was investigated.

Shura Council member Lina Habib, deputy head of the woman and child affairs committee, said parents must check both the driver and vehicle before paying anyone to take their children to school.

‘A parent’s responsibility begins with checking that the vehicle and driver hold the licences required by the relevant authorities to transport students,’ she told The Daily Tribune. Knowing the driver personally, or relying on recommendations from friends and relatives, is not enough, she said.

Habib said Bahrain’s traffic rules treat vehicles according to their use and place those carrying schoolchildren under specific rules.

Parents should be able to check easily that licences are valid and that both the driver and vehicle are licensed to carry

pupils, she said.

‘This deserves continued legislative and regulatory attention, especially when it involves children in kindergarten and primary school, who require the greatest degree of care and protection,’ Habib said.

She said punishment should match the seriousness of an offence and take repeat breaches into account.

Road checks, cameras, digital records and government databases can help catch drivers carrying pupils for money without permission, she added. Habib said Bahrain already has rules governing school transport. She called for them to be kept under review as safety needs change.

Parents are also responsible for checking that the transport they choose is lawful and safe, she said.

‘Using an unlicensed vehicle or driver does not carry only a traffic risk. It can also have civil liability and insurance consequences if an



“Parents must check that the vehicle and driver are licensed to transport students.”
- LINA HABIB, DEPUTY HEAD OF THE WOMAN AND CHILD AFFAIRS COMMITTEE AT THE SHURA COUNCIL



“Transporting children is a responsibility before it is a business.”
- LAWYER JASSIM AL ESSA

accident occurs,’ Habib said.

Schools should also tell families how to check transport licences, warn them about unlicensed operators and report suspected breaches to the authorities, she added.

Lawyer Jassim Al Essa said anyone who regularly carries students for payment without the required licence can face up to six months in jail and a fine of between BD100 and BD1,000.

The penalty is laid down in Article 46 of the Traffic Law, which covers public transport carried out without the required licence or in breach of its terms.

‘Transporting children is a responsibility before it is a business,’ Al Essa told The Daily Tribune. ‘A licence is not simply a piece of paper. It is one of the protections meant to keep chil-

dren safe.’

He said carrying pupils for money cannot be treated as a private arrangement between driver and parents when the law requires a licence.

Licensing allows checks on the vehicle, driver and safety rules, he said, while using a vehicle for a purpose other than that stated on its licence can bring a separate penalty of up to six months in jail and a fine of between BD50 and BD500.

Al Essa said a crash involving unlicensed school transport can also raise questions over compensation, insurance cover and criminal liability.

‘Price or convenience should not decide how a child gets to school,’ he said. ‘Safety must come first, then obeying the law.’

Committee Reviews School Readiness and Road Safety



Shaikh Khalid bin Abdulla Al Khalifa, Deputy Prime Minister, chaired the 313th meeting of the Ministerial Committee for Development and Infrastructure Projects. The Committee commended His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa’s speech marking the start of the 2026–2027 academic year. It also praised the government’s measures, led by His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, Crown Prince and Prime Minister, to ensure educational continuity during the exceptional circumstances caused by the Iranian attacks.

Also the Committee congratulated teachers, administrative staff, parents and students on the new academic year and reviewed preparations to improve roads surrounding educational institutions, ensure smooth traffic flow and enhance safety.

It also reviewed preparations for the maintenance and rehabilitation of government schools as part of efforts to ensure a safe and suitable educational environment for the new academic year.

15-Year Jail Term for ‘Dead Drop’ Drug Trafficker

Court upholds BD10,000 fine, deportation and confiscation of seized items

TDT | Manama
Rehab Mohammad

The High Criminal Court of Appeal upheld a 15-year prison sentence and a BD10,000 fine against an Asian national convicted of importing large quantities of narcotic substances and distributing them in Bahrain using the “dead drop” method.

The court also upheld an order to deport the defendant from Bahrain after he completes his sentence and to confiscate the seized items.

According to the case details, the defendant met an individual of the same nationality who lived abroad and was involved in selling narcotic substances in Bahrain. In return for his assistance, the defendant was promised BD1 for each sale.

He subsequently began receiving smuggled narcotic substances from abroad, along with empty bottles, through the “dead drop” method. He would fill the bottles with the substances and distribute them at different locations on several occasions. He received a total of BD200 for the sales he carried out.

The defendant was later contacted by the same unidentified person and asked to receive a postal package containing 5,000 ml of narcotic substances.

However, the operation was foiled after a customs officer at the airport detected the package while carrying out routine duties. An X-ray scan showed an area of unusually high density inside the package.

The authorities coordinated an operation to arrest the in-

tended recipient. At the agreed time and location, a delivery employee arrived accompanied by security officers. The defendant appeared and received the package, after which officers immediately arrested him, identified themselves and informed him of the purpose of the operation.

A search of the defendant and an inspection of the package resulted in the seizure of 62 containers with liquid narcotic substances, 20 additional containers with traces of narcotic substances, five bags with empty containers intended for distribution, and an electronic shisha head containing 433.76 ml of liquid substance.

Investigations found that the defendant was part of a network involved in importing narcotic substances and smuggling them through sophisticated methods in postal packages from a European country.

After the substances arrived in Bahrain, they were distributed among network members, stored, and divided into smaller quantities before being placed at various locations for collection using the “dead drop” method in exchange for financial compensation.

Investigators also found that the defendant retained part of the substances for personal consumption.

During Public Prosecution investigations, the defendant admitted to selling narcotic substances. Searches of his mobile phones also uncovered conversations, photographs and video clips linked to the sale of narcotic substances.

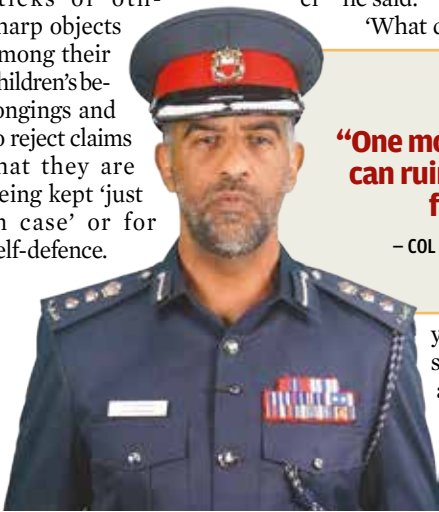
Parents Warned Over Teen Knife Carrying

Hidd police chief says one angry clash could wreck a young person’s future

TDT | Manama
Mohammed Darwish

A knife or stick found in a teenager’s pocket, drawer or car should be taken away at once, the head of Hidd Police Station warned, saying one burst of anger could end with a young person in prison and a family’s hopes wrecked.

Colonel Dr Osama Bahar urged parents to act when they find knives, sticks or other sharp objects among their children’s belongings and to reject claims that they are being kept ‘just in case’ or for self-defence.



“One moment of anger can ruin a teenager’s future.”
- COL DR OSAMA BAHAR

you see these things and still fail to take the right action?”

Colonel Dr Bahar said parents must neither encourage children to carry such items nor

He said the problem could not be called widespread in Bahrain, where people had long lived in peace, but warned that a single case could bring grave harm to a family and the community.

‘What does it mean to you, as a father, a mother or anyone in the family, when you see a stick, a knife or any sharp object in your son’s car, in a drawer, in his pocket or in his hand, and you stay silent?’ he said.

‘What does it mean to us when

soften what they are by calling them something else.

‘Do not say, “Keep it as a precaution. You might need it one day to defend yourself,”’ he said.

‘Bahrain is safe, and God willing it will remain safe. So why would you allow a teenager or a child to have these things?’

He warned that no parent could know how a teenager would react in anger, particularly during a fight involving other young people. ‘Can you guarantee what his reaction will be when he loses his temper?’ he said. ‘Can you guarantee that he will not ruin his future through teenage recklessness, or use these things in a fight when someone else is carrying a sharp object?’

Colonel Dr Bahar said some parents wrongly taught children to be ready for fights and saw physical force as a virtue.

Some, he said, excused knives, sticks or other dangerous items by telling their children, ‘You never know. One day you might need it.’

‘The father does not realise that the day his son uses that stick, knife or sharp object, everything the fam-

ily has put into that boy could be lost,’ he said. ‘You could end up visiting him in prison.’

Parents, teachers and other adults have a duty to take such items away and challenge the ideas that lead young people towards fights, he said.

‘You have to take these things out of his hand and take the thought of fighting and violence out of his head,’ Colonel Dr Bahar said.

He warned against dressing violence up as ‘strength’, ‘reputation’ or ordinary teenage behaviour.

Colonel Dr Bahar stressed that such conduct was not a mark of Bahraini society.

‘Bahraini society has been peaceful for generations,’ he said. ‘People love calm, safety and peace. But one case like this can hurt the whole community.’

He called on parents, uncles, other relatives, teachers and anyone who saw such behaviour to step in.

‘If you see it in his hand, hidden in his car or anywhere else, take it away from him,’ he said. ‘And take out of his mind any thought of using it for violence against others.’

Calls to Remove Unlicensed Workshops

Residents of Hamad Town’s Block 1209 have complained about the alleged use of undeveloped residential plots as unlicensed workshops and warehouses.

Northern Governorate Municipal Council member Abdullah Mubarak Al Qubaisi said he received several complaints regarding noise, heavy trucks and machinery entering residential areas, and potential environmental and safety risks.

He warned of risks associated with large trucks and heavy machinery entering residential

neighbourhoods to load and unload goods and equipment. This activity endangers pedestrians, children and residents, while also damaging internal roads and infrastructure not designed to withstand the weight of heavy vehicles.

Al Qubaisi coordinated with the relevant municipal, commercial, housing and environmental authorities to call for urgent inspections of the sites.

He urged authorities to identify



unlicensed activities and issue immediate removal notices for violations, stressing the need to protect residents’ safety and quality of life.