

# DRAFT HOME TO SCHOOL TRANSPORT POLICY

“If you or someone you know needs help to understand or read this document, please contact us”:

**Email:** [education.transport@rotherham.gov.uk](mailto:education.transport@rotherham.gov.uk)

## Slovak

Ak vy alebo niekto koho poznáte potrebuje pomoc pri pochopení alebo čítaní tohto dokumentu, prosím kontaktujte nás na vyššie uvedenom čísle alebo nám pošlite e-mail.

## Kurdish Sorani

## كوردی سۆرانی

نەگەر تۆ یان کەسێک کە تۆ دەیناسی پێویستی بەیارمەتی هەبێت بۆ ئەوەی لەم بەنگەنامە یە تێیگات یان بیخوینیتەو، تکایە پەيوەندیمان پێوہ بکە لەسەر ئەو ژمارەییە سەرەوہدا یان بەو نێمەییە.

## Arabic

## عربي

إذا كنت أنت أو أي شخص تعرفه بحاجة إلى مساعدة لفهم أو قراءة هذه الوثيقة، الرجاء الاتصال على الرقم اعلاه، أو مراسلتنا عبر البريد الإلكتروني

## Urdu

## اُردو

اگر آپ یا آپ کے جاننے والے کسی شخص کو اس دستاویز کو سمجھنے یا پڑھنے کیلئے مدد کی ضرورت ہے تو برائے مہربانی مندرجہ بالا نمبر پر ہم سے رابطہ کریں یا ہمیں ای میل کریں۔

## Farsi

## فارسی

اگر جناب عالی یا شخص دیگری که شما اورا می شناسید برای خواندن یا فهمیدن این مدارک نیاز به کمک دارد لطفاً با ما بوسیله شماره بالا یا ایمیل تماس حاصل فرمایید.

APRIL 2016

## REGENERATION AND ENVIRONMENT

### CORPORATE TRANSPORT UNIT

Passenger Services Team, Hellaby Depot, Sandbeck Way,  
Hellaby, Rotherham S66 8QL Fax 01709 823042

Principal Officer – Education Transport

**E-mail: [education.transport@rotherham.gov.uk](mailto:education.transport@rotherham.gov.uk)**

Useful Contacts	Contact
To enquire about a zero fare bus pass	<b>Search for “zero fare bus pass” at <a href="http://www.rotherham.gov.uk">www.rotherham.gov.uk</a> and complete the on-line enquiry form.</b>
To enquire about special educational needs and/or disability transport	<b>Search for “special needs transport” at <a href="http://www.rotherham.gov.uk">www.rotherham.gov.uk</a> and complete the on-line enquiry form.</b>
To cancel or amend existing transport provision	<b>Contact</b> <a href="http://www.rotherham.gov.uk/info/200086/schools_and_colleges/587/cancel_or_change_school_transport">www.rotherham.gov.uk/info/200086/schools_and_colleges/587/cancel_or_change_school_transport</a>
South Yorkshire Passenger Transport Executive Traveline / Enquiries	<a href="mailto:traveline@sypte.co.uk">traveline@sypte.co.uk</a>  Tel. 01709 515151
Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub	<b><a href="mailto:MASH-referral@rotherham.gcsx.gov.uk">MASH-referral@rotherham.gcsx.gov.uk</a></b>  Tel. 01709 336080
<u>Other South Yorkshire Local Authorities</u>  Barnsley – School Transport  Doncaster – Pupil Support and Transport  Sheffield – Home to School Transport	<a href="mailto:schooltransport@barnsley.gov.uk">schooltransport@barnsley.gov.uk</a>  <a href="mailto:transport&amp;pupilsupport@doncaster.gov.uk">transport&amp;pupilsupport@doncaster.gov.uk</a>  <a href="mailto:customerservicecentre@sheffield.gov.uk">customerservicecentre@sheffield.gov.uk</a>

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## 1 INTRODUCTION

### **The Statutory Duty to provide free transport assistance to eligible learners**

Section 508B of the Education Act 1996 (amended by the Education & Inspections Act 2006) deals with the duty on local authorities to make such travel arrangements as they consider necessary to facilitate attendance at school for “eligible” children to “qualifying schools”. Schedule 35B of the Act defines “eligible” children. The duty applies to home to school travel arrangements at the start of the day and school to home travel arrangements at the end of the day. It does not relate to travel between educational institutions during the school day.

Parents/Carers are responsible for ensuring that their children attend school regularly. Section 444 of the 1996 Act outlines the situations in which a parent/carer may have a defence in law against a prosecution by a Local Authority for their child’s non-attendance at school. Section 444(4) provides a parent/carer with a defence if he or she proves that the Local Authority has not fulfilled its statutory duty to make suitable arrangements for home to school transport for those that are eligible. Further information regarding home to school transport and the statutory duties to which Local Authorities must have regard are contained within the “Home to School Travel and Transport Guidance” 2007 issued by Department for Education to accompany the Education and Inspections Act 2006, and the “Home to School Travel and Transport Guidance” 2014 which replaces it.

This Policy explains the criteria used in establishing a learner’s eligibility for transport assistance for those living in the Rotherham Authority following a request for this to be provided.

This Policy is correct at the time of publication. It should not be assumed, however, that there will be no changes to this information before the start of, or during the school year. Every effort will be made to update this Policy in a timely manner according to changes in statutory duties.

Key information submitted for assessments and reviews will be treated in a confidential manner and may be shared with the transport operator/provider of home to school Transport.

If there is a change in individual circumstances, such as change of address or change in needs, it is the responsibility of the parent/carer to inform the Passenger Services Team to ensure the necessary review is undertaken.

## 2 TRANSPORT ASSISTANCE AND ELIGIBILITY

### **Transport assistance may consist of one of these options:-**

- i) A zero fare bus pass which entitles a pupil to free bus travel between the nearest bus stop to their home address and their registered school base.
- ii) Refunded travelling expenses according to the cheapest available public transport route for those learners able to access public transport services.
- iii) Mileage expenses in accordance with the Council’s current rate, for pupils requiring special arrangements, provided that the pupil is unable to access any existing Local Authority transport. Mileage expenses will only be paid for journeys for which the pupil is in the vehicle.

- iv) Free or subsidised travel on a coach, minibus, taxi or specially adapted vehicle if the learner is unable to travel by public transport due to the distance, their mobility, or effect of their complex special educational needs (see section 2.08).

## **Eligibility to Free Transport Assistance – Mainstream**

### **2.01 Pupils under the age of 5 years**

There is no statutory duty to provide transport assistance to children under the age of 5 years. Parents/Carers are expected to accompany children under the age of 5 years to their early year's provider and on public transport.

Currently, there is no charge for children under the age of 5 years to travel by public transport if accompanied by a parent/carer paying full fare. Financial assistance is not given to parents/carers for their personal transport costs when they accompany their child to early year's provision. The bus operator may charge the concessionary fare to a child under the age of 5 years if they are travelling with older siblings paying a concessionary fare.

### **2.02 Pupils aged 5-7 years**

For pupils aged 5, but less than 8 (on 1st September) attending their nearest appropriate qualifying school\* or any alternative catchment school determined by the Local Authority), free transport assistance (usually a zero fare bus pass) will be provided where the distance between home and school is more than 2 miles (otherwise referred to as the lower statutory qualifying distance). For pupils issued with a zero fare bus pass, parents/carers are responsible for ensuring their child's safety by making appropriate arrangements for their child to be accompanied to and from the nearest bus stop and during the journey.

### **2.03 Pupils aged 8-16 years**

For pupils aged 8-16 (on 1st September) attending their nearest appropriate qualifying school\* or any alternative catchment school determined by the Local Authority), free transport assistance (usually a zero fare bus pass) will be provided where the distance between home and school is more than 3 miles (otherwise referred to as the upper statutory qualifying distance). For pupils issued with a zero fare bus pass parents/carers are responsible for ensuring their child's safety by making appropriate arrangements for their child to be accompanied to and from the nearest bus stop and during the journey.

\*The nearest appropriate qualifying school is one with places available that provides education appropriate to the age, ability and aptitude of the child.

The distances of "more than 2 or 3 miles", referred to above, are measured using a computerised mapping system. This is from the front door of the home address to the nearest designated school entrance by the nearest available walking route (see section 2.06v for more details).

## **Raising the Participation Age**

From the summer of 2013 a change was made which increased the age to which pupils/students must continue their education or training until at least their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday.

This change does not extend the entitlement for the provision of free transport assistance beyond age 16 as it does not mean that the student has to stay at school; they may choose to work full time and study part time, continue full time study at school or college, be involved in part time training whilst volunteering or follow an apprenticeship. There is no change to the statutory school age which remains at 5 to 16 years.

More information about Raising the Participation Age can be obtained from the Department of Education website at [www.gov.uk/government/collections/raising-the-participation-age](http://www.gov.uk/government/collections/raising-the-participation-age)

Post 16 students are also advised to read the “Transport Policy - Learners Aged 16-19 years in Further Education which gives details of various transport options available to this age range. This Policy can be read and downloaded from the Rotherham Council website by searching “Further Education Transport Policy”.

#### 2.04 **Pupils attending denominational schools**

Free transport assistance to denominational schools has previously (historically) been provided on a discretionary basis to pupils meeting the distance criteria. However, there is no statutory duty to provide it except for eligible secondary aged pupils from low income families. Changes to Policy were made in September 2013 following consultation. From this date only new applications for secondary aged denominational pupils who qualify under low income criteria will receive free transport assistance (see section 2.07).

Pupils already attending denominational schools prior to this date who are in receipt of free transport assistance will continue to receive this; for primary aged pupils up until the end of Y6, and for secondary aged pupils up until the end of Y11. If individual circumstances change, e.g. a change of address or school, pupils will need to be re-assessed for entitlement and free transport assistance may be withdrawn for those pupils no longer qualifying.

#### 2.05 **Pupils not attending their nearest appropriate qualifying school\* or any alternative catchment school determined by the Local Authority)**

The Local Authority recognises its obligations under the School Standards and Framework Act 1998, as amended by the Education Act 2002, to comply with parental preferences regarding choice of school. In order to ensure the efficient use of its resources the Local Authority will only provide free transport assistance where the school attended is the nearest appropriate qualifying school\*, or any alternative catchment school determined by the Local Authority, from the pupil’s main home address.

Parents/Carers who apply for a place in a school for their child/children which is not the nearest appropriate qualifying school\*, or any alternative catchment school determined by the Local Authority, will not be provided with free transport assistance, regardless of the distance involved, unless the low income criteria applies (see section 2.07).

\*The nearest appropriate qualifying school is one with places available that provides education appropriate to the age, ability and aptitude of the child.

**Please note that the ultimate responsibility for the safety and conduct of any pupil during the journey to or from school rests with parents/carers.**

#### 2.06 **Exceptions**

Exceptions to this policy may be made in the following circumstances:-

- i) A zero fare bus pass may be given to pupils who attend a school outside Rotherham, providing that it is the nearest appropriate qualifying school\* to the home address, beyond the statutory walking distance and is within South Yorkshire.
- ii) If a pupil is permanently excluded from their school and attends an alternative base of educational provision (which is located beyond the appropriate qualifying distance from the home address), a zero fare bus pass may be allocated via Rotherham Pupil Referral Unit.
- iii) Pupils from low income families (see section 2.07).
- iv) A pupil attending their nearest appropriate qualifying school\*, or any alternative catchment school determined by the Local Authority, who has a temporary medical condition affecting their mobility may be provided with free transport assistance. Parents/Carers who wish to request such assistance should apply on-line, along with supporting formal medical evidence, to [education.transport@rotherham.gov.uk](mailto:education.transport@rotherham.gov.uk)
- v) Consideration for providing a zero fare bus pass for pupils attending their nearest appropriate qualifying school\*, or any alternative catchment school determined by the Local Authority, will be made if the route is not considered available to walk. When assessing the safety of an “available route”, only the potential risk created by traffic, the highway and topographical conditions will be considered. Set criteria have been established by Road Safety GB in “Assessment of Walked Routes to School” guidelines. These criteria and assessments are common to all the South Yorkshire Authorities. A zero fare bus pass will not be issued where an assessed available walking route to school (determined by the Local Authority in accordance with the above guidelines) exists. Details of “Assessment of Walked Routes to School” can be found at [www.roadsafetygb.org.uk/news/2105.html](http://www.roadsafetygb.org.uk/news/2105.html)
- vi) Transport assistance may be available for pupils whose parents/carers have disabilities. Where it is a condition of the availability of the walking route that they are accompanied, but their parents/carers disabilities prevent this, alternative arrangements will be considered. These disabilities may include dual sensory impairment or physical difficulties.

## 2.07 Pupils from low income families

The Education and Inspections Act 2006 introduced free transport assistance for qualifying pupils from low income families. Those who qualify are pupils entitled to **Free School Meals** or from families in receipt of **Maximum Working Tax Credit**. Pupils from “low income” families meeting these criteria will receive free transport assistance (usually a zero fare bus pass) on condition that:



- i) Pupils aged 8 to 10 years attending their nearest appropriate qualifying school\* (unless an alternative appropriate school has been determined by the Local Authority), where the distance between home and school is more than 2 miles.
- ii) Pupils aged 11 to 16 years attending any 1 of their 3 nearest appropriate qualifying schools\*, where the distance between home and school is more than 2 miles, but not more than 6 miles.
- iii) Pupils aged 11 to 16 years attending their nearest appropriate denominational school on grounds of religion or belief, where the distance between home and school is more than 2 miles but not more than 15 miles.

The distances referred to in section 2.07 are measured as:

- Up to 2 miles – as per the statutory walking distance, along the nearest available walking route.
- From 2 miles up to the 6 mile or the 15 mile upper limits – along road routes passable by suitable motorised transport.

\*The nearest appropriate qualifying school is one with places available that provides education appropriate to the age, ability and aptitude of the child.

**To make an application for free school meals please contact the Council's Benefits Section via [www.rotherham.gov.uk/info/200008/benefits](http://www.rotherham.gov.uk/info/200008/benefits)**

**To make an application for Working Tax Credit, please contact the Tax Credit Helpline on Tel. 0845 300 3900.**

## **2.08 Eligibility to free transport assistance – Pupils with Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities (SEND)**

### **Pupils under the age of 5 years**

Parents/Carers are usually required to take children under the age of 5 to their early year's provider. If, however, a child is assessed as requiring specialist transport, parents/carers will be requested to make subsidised contributions towards this transport, for those attending non statutory education. The cost will (currently) be a maximum of £1.40 per day, but if families qualify under low income criteria (see section 2.07) then no charges will be applied.

### **Pupils aged 5 to 16 years**

Pupils with SEND will have their individual transport needs assessed against set criteria taking into account the distance, their age, mobility and the effect of their complex needs on their ability to travel. This may include:-

- Complex communication difficulties
- Severe and complex learning difficulties
- Complex learning and behavioural difficulties
- Physical and medical difficulties
- Dual sensory impairment

Under the provisions of paragraph 3 of Schedule 27 to the Education Act 1996,



parents/carers may express a preference for a child with an EHC Plan or Statement of SEN to attend a school which is not the nearest suitable school identified by the Local Authority. If the Local Authority considers that it would be incompatible with the efficient use of its resources to provide and fund home to school transport to the more distant parental preference, it may name both schools within the child's EHC Plan or Statement of SEN (paragraph 9.214 of the SEND Code of Practice), on the express condition that parents/carers accept, and continue to accept, liability for arranging and funding home to school transport.

### **Disabled Persons Pass**

A Disabled Persons Pass may be available to some Rotherham residents following assessment of qualification and allows free travel on buses, trams and trains within South Yorkshire and some cross boundary services. Severely disabled people who are unable to travel without assistance may also qualify for a special disability pass, which enables a carer to travel with them free of charge. More details are available on the Local Authority website [www.rotherham.gov.uk](http://www.rotherham.gov.uk) and searching for Disabled Persons Pass. Applications may be made at any library or contact centre. Further details are also available on the Travel South Yorkshire website [www.travelsouthyorkshire.com](http://www.travelsouthyorkshire.com)

### **SEND Pupils attending Respite Care**

There is no statutory duty within national Home to School Transport guidance to provide free transport assistance to respite care placements. Free transport may be provided where pupils can be accommodated on existing home to school transport provision and this does not incur any additional cost to the Local Authority.

### **SEND Pupils in Public Care**

When a pupil with an EHC Plan or Statement of SEN becomes a "Looked After Child" (LAC), funded by Rotherham Local Authority, the transport to and from their school or registered educational base will be organised and funded from the Home to School Transport budget provided that they reside within the Rotherham boundary.

Were that LAC is fostered outside the Rotherham area the funding for their home to school transport will be provided by LAC Social Care, irrespective of whether their educational placement is within or outside the Rotherham area. LAC's who are the financial responsibility of a Local Authority other than Rotherham need to refer to their home authority for the provision and funding of home to school transport.

Requests for transport assistance to settings other than the registered educational base need to be authorised and funded via the child's Social Work Service Manager.

## **2.09 Appeals**

The decision regarding refusal of free home to school transport assistance is based upon information available to officers at the time of the decision. Parents/Carers have the right to appeal against the Authority's decision not to provide free transport assistance if they feel that an error has been made in the assessment of the entitlement, distance measurement, route safety or there are **exceptional or compelling circumstances** that breach this Policy.

### **Appeals against the Local Authority's refusal to issue a zero fare bus pass**

Parents/Carers must, in writing, within 20 working days of the original decision, request a

review of the original decision which will be undertaken by a Senior Officer (**Stage 1 Review**). The Senior Officer will respond in writing within 20 working days of receipt of the parental request either upholding or overturning the original decision. This will explain the reasoning behind the review decision and unless the original decision is overturned, offer the parent/carer the opportunity to escalate their appeal be heard by an independent panel, (**Stage 2 Review**).

Parents/Carers will be provided with a Notice of Appeal form, which must be completed and returned within 20 working days of the Stage 1 Review letter. This should be accompanied by any other relevant evidence or medical reports that the parent intends to rely upon. A Notice of Appeal Form can be obtained from [education.transport@rotherham.gov.uk](mailto:education.transport@rotherham.gov.uk) but this will not be provided unless the preceding appeals route has been followed.

Following receipt of the completed Notice of Appeal form, a Statement of Appeal will be prepared by the Local Authority and both this and the completed Notice of Appeal will be sent to Democratic Services, together with any other relevant correspondence. Democratic Services will then convene a Zero Fare Pass Appeals Panel meeting comprising of Local Councillors, who will make a decision regarding the appeal and decide whether a zero fare pass should be issued. Parents/Carers will be invited to attend this meeting which will also be attended by Transport Officers, Legal Officers and Administrative Officers. Our Democratic Services Officer will make contact with you when the date/time of the Appeal Panel meeting has been established, to which you will be invited to attend, and you will be forwarded copies of all relevant paperwork.

The decision regarding issue of a pass will be made only by the Councillors present and this decision will be communicated to you shortly after the Panel meeting has taken place. Any decision made by the Councillors will be effective for the complete academic year following which entitlement will be reviewed for the next academic year. You will then again have the right to appeal this decision if necessary.

If there is a change in individual circumstances during the academic year, such as change of address or change in needs, it is the responsibility of the parent/carer to inform the Passenger Services Team to ensure the necessary review is undertaken at that stage.

### **Appeals against the Local Authority's refusal to provide other types of transport assistance**

Parents/Carers must, in writing, within 20 working days of the original decision, request a review of the original decision which will be undertaken by a Senior Officer (**Stage 1 Review**). The Senior Officer will respond in writing within 20 working days of receipt of the parental request either upholding or overturning the original decision. This will explain the reasoning behind the review decision and unless the original decision is overturned, offer the parent/carer the opportunity to escalate their appeal be heard by an independent panel, (**Stage 2 Review**).

Parents/Carers will be provided with a Notice of Appeal form, which must be completed and returned within 20 working days of the Stage 1 Review letter. This should be accompanied by any other relevant evidence or medical reports that the parent intends to rely upon. A Notice of Appeal Form can be obtained from [education.transport@rotherham.gov.uk](mailto:education.transport@rotherham.gov.uk) but this will not be provided unless the preceding appeals route has been followed.

Following receipt of the completed Notice of Appeal form, a Statement of Appeal will be prepared by a Senior Officer and both this and the completed Notice of Appeal will be presented to a member of the Senior Management Team for review. If the member of the

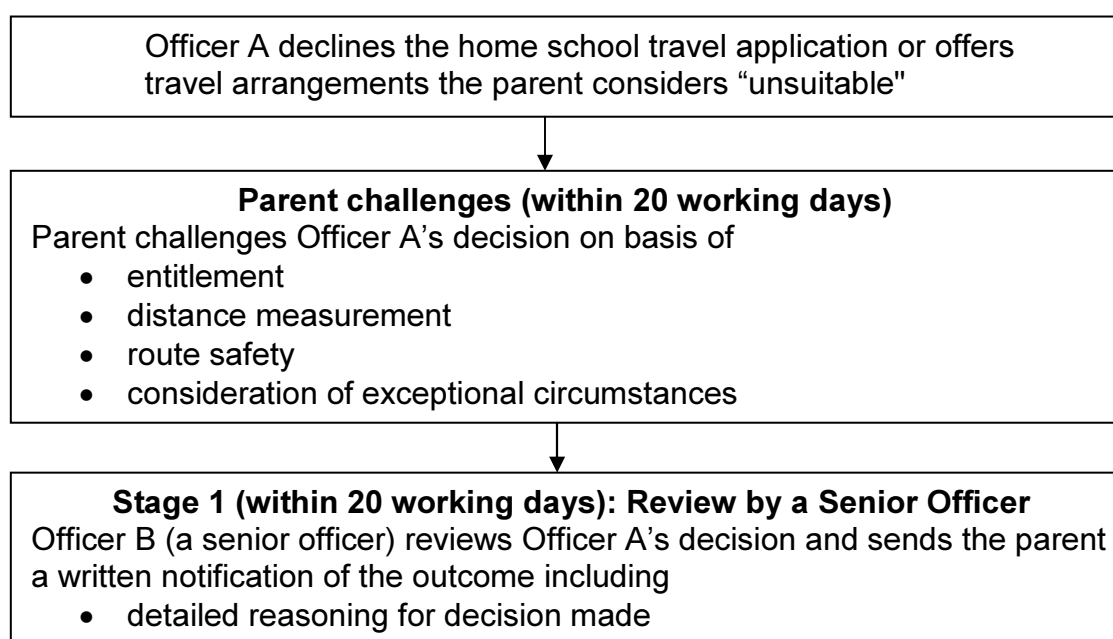
Senior Management Team upholds the Appeal, transport assistance will be provided accordingly. If the member of the Senior Management Team rejects the Appeal it will be passed to a Director to review. Both the member of the Senior Management Team and the Director will have had no involvement in the original transport decision to ensure an independent Appeal hearing. The Directors decision will be final and will be communicated to the parent/carer shortly after the Appeal hearing has taken place.

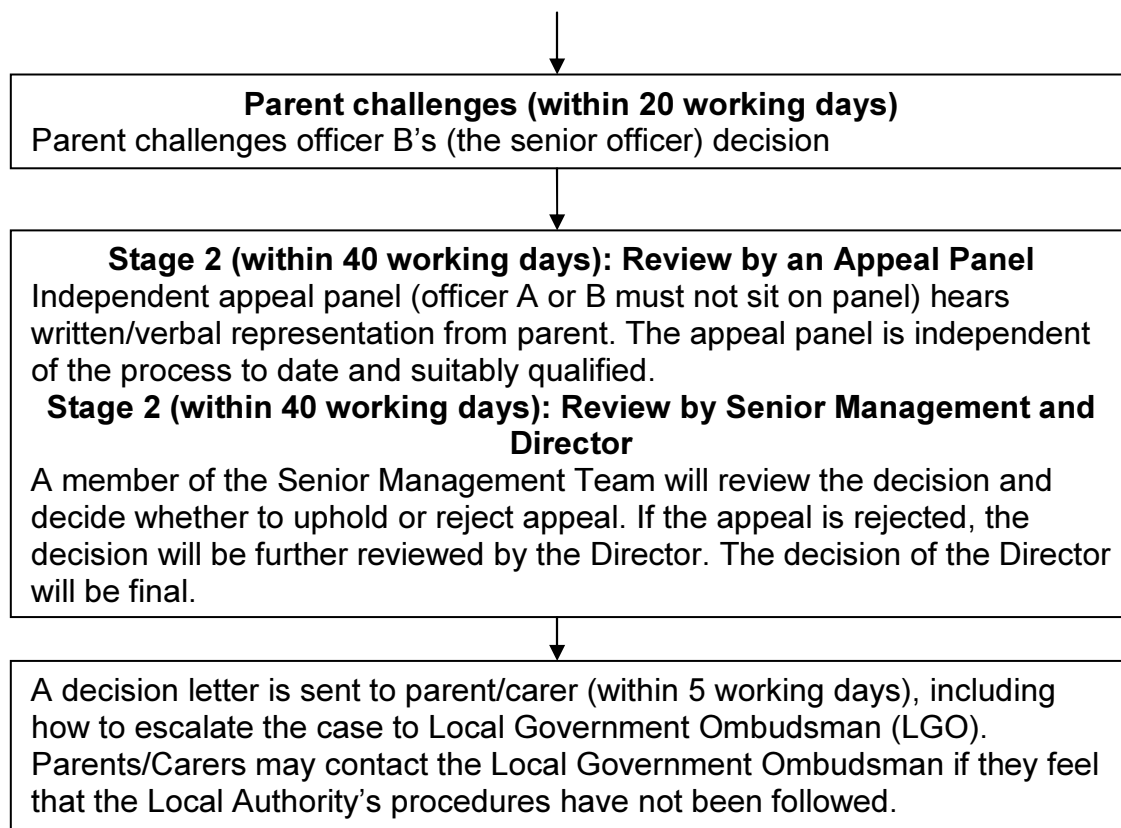
### Appeals Timings

Within the “Home to School travel and transport guidance” July 2014 issued by the Department of Education, recommendations regarding timings of Appeals procedures were made. These timings are recommended and not compulsory. Although many appeals will be dealt with much sooner than the timings stated, more complex cases may take longer.

Further information in relation to appeal timings can be obtained from the flowchart below.

### Home to School Travel and Transport – Flowchart of the Appeals Process





### 3 PARENTS/CARERS GUIDELINES - MAINSTREAM TRANSPORT

#### Provision and Conditions

The majority of Rotherham pupils assessed as entitled to transport assistance are issued with a zero fare pass allowing them to travel free by public transport to/from school. Where specific buses are provided for mainstream home to school transport, these may be run commercially by the operators or on contract to the Local Authority. In both instances, these are registered services available to the general public and as such parents/carers should consider the need to accompany the pupil as necessary.

- 3.01 A pupil's home address is considered to be the one that is in receipt of Child Benefit. Pupils in receipt of free transport assistance will have their eligibility re-assessed following a move of address or circumstances as this may affect both the identity of the qualifying school and the distance.
- 3.02 The distance between the pupil's home and school is measured using a computerised mapping system. This is from the front door of the home address to the nearest designated school entrance by the nearest available walking route.
- 3.03 Pupils who do qualify for a zero fare bus pass (see section 2) will continue to be assessed and reviewed each school year.
- 3.04 Dual residence or parents/carers work and family commitments will not be regarded as valid reasons for determining entitlement to transport assistance. A pupil's home address is considered to be the one that is in receipt of the Child Benefit.
- 3.05 Where it is not possible for pupils to travel by public transport, the Local Authority may consider other arrangements.
- 3.06 Secondary aged pupils, not qualifying for transport assistance through the Local Authority need to obtain a concessionary fare pass issued by South Yorkshire Passenger Transport Executive (SYPTTE). The MegaTravel (Proof of Age) Pass allows the holder to travel at the concessionary fare on buses trams and trains in South Yorkshire. Further information and application forms are available from the Travel South Yorkshire website [www.travelsouthyorkshire.com](http://www.travelsouthyorkshire.com) or the Rotherham or Meadowhall Interchanges, or contact Traveline on Tel. 01709 515151.
- 3.07 Pupils attending a school in Rotherham, who live outside the Rotherham boundary, must apply to their home Local Authority, for assistance.
- 3.08 It is the responsibility of parents/carers to meet other transport needs

including travel to and from work placements, breakfast and after-school clubs, extra-curricular activities, transitional travel or any other arrangements they make with the school.

- 3.09 The ultimate responsibility for the safety and conduct of any pupil during the journey to and from school rests with parents/carers. Some pupils may need to be taken to the bus stop and supervised until the bus arrives. Similarly, these pupils may need to be met on their return journey. Pupils who are unaccompanied between home and bus stops should follow a safe route known to the parents/carers.
- 3.10 Parents/Carers are expected to explain to their child that it is important to behave while they are travelling on transport. Parents/Carers who apply for a zero fare pass sign to accept the Code of Conduct that the pupil will follow. If any pupil persistently endangers their own safety, or that of others, by not following the Code of Conduct, transport assistance will be withdrawn.
- 3.11 In the event of a pupil exhibiting persistent, deliberate, disruptive or dangerous behaviours (including physical and verbal abuse), the Local Authority may exclude you child from using school transport or withdraw a zero fare bus fare. Additionally, the bus operator can refuse entry to the vehicle for such pupils and in some circumstances the Police may be involved. Parents/Carers will be expected to make their own arrangements to ensure their child attends school.

Guidance entitled "Promoting Positive Behaviour by Pupils on Public Transport in South Yorkshire" has been developed by Local Authority Education Transport Officers, South Yorkshire Passenger Transport Executive, South Yorkshire Police and Transport Operators and can be accessed at

<http://www.travelsouthyorkshire.com/onboard/teachersbehaviour>

- 3.12 It is against the law to smoke on buses, coaches, minibuses and in taxis.

## **4 PARENTS/CARERS GUIDELINES – SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND/OR DISABILITIES (SEND) TRANSPORT**

### **Provision and Conditions**

Many secondary aged pupils who have been assessed as requiring transport assistance, other than a zero fare bus pass, will receive support for independence and mobility training as part of their school curriculum. The aim is to reduce their reliance on individual transport in Key Stages 3/4. Plans to encourage independent travel will be considered at the earliest opportunity by the school working in partnership with parents/carers.

- 4.01 Pupils in receipt of transport assistance will have their eligibility re-assessed following a change of address or circumstances, as this may affect both the identity of the qualifying school and the distance. Dual residence or parents/carers work and family commitments will not be regarded as valid reasons for determining entitlement to transport assistance. A pupil's home address is considered to be the one that is in receipt of the Child Benefit.
- 4.02 Transport assistance may be reviewed on a term-by-term basis. Any recommended changes to a pupil's transport arrangements will be considered by the Local Authority. Changes, for various reasons, may be necessary during the school term and you will be informed of these as soon as possible. Where individual transport is ceased, pupils may be eligible for a zero fare bus pass, provided they live beyond the statutory walking distance (see section 2).
- 4.03 Pupils issued with a zero fare bus pass will access free transport which will operate from and to the bus stops nearest to the pupil's home. Parents/Carers should ensure the pupil's safety by making appropriate arrangements for them to be accompanied to and from the nearest bus stop as appropriate.
- 4.04 It is the responsibility of parents/carers to meet other transport needs such as travel to and from work placements, breakfast and after-school clubs, extra-curricular activities, transitional transport or any other arrangements they make with a school.
- 4.05 Pupils who are assessed as requiring transport on a coach, minibus or taxi will be picked up and dropped off at named points near their home address. If the pupil is not at the boarding point at the agreed time in the morning, the transport will continue its journey to avoid late arrival at schools. If the pupil is collected from home please ensure they are ready to board the vehicle at the agreed time.
- 4.06 Pupils who attend a residential school (e.g. a term-by-term basis) outside Rotherham named in their EHC Plan or Statement of SEN will be allocated a maximum of 6 return journeys to/from their place of education. No additional journeys will be funded by the Local Authority.



- 4.07 Some parents/carers may wish to use their own vehicle to transport their child to and from school. They may be entitled to claim a fuel allowance, when no spaces are available on existing transport, or where no contracted transport provision exists. This will only be paid for the journeys **when the eligible child is travelling in the vehicle**. Further information can be obtained from [education.transport@rotherham.gov.uk](mailto:education.transport@rotherham.gov.uk)
- 4.08 Any special transport equipment, seating, restraints, or training required due to the pupil's physical, medical or behavioural needs which require supervision during travel will usually be arranged by the Local Authority. In some circumstances, an agreed written individual transport care plan will be required to be signed by the parent/carer before the pupil can travel on any contracted vehicle.
- 4.09 Where a vehicle collects a pupil from the home address, drivers will not usually be expected to leave the vehicle and bring the pupil from the house. It is the responsibility of parents/carers to ensure their child's safety by making appropriate arrangements to accompany their child to and from the designated pick up point, and to see them safely onto and off the vehicle. In exceptional circumstances, agreed by the Local Authority, a passenger assistant/driver may assist with movement of the pupil if they are specifically trained to do so.
- 4.10 If your child will not be going to school for any reason, such as illness or holiday, you must inform the Passenger Services Team as soon as possible to prevent unnecessary charges being made (especially if your child travels alone). You must inform the Passenger Services Team in advance when you need the transport to start again (**please note that 24 hours voicemail is available**).
- 4.11 If your child is due to receive medical treatment which affects their mobility and fitness to travel, you must inform the Passenger Services Team, [EDS-PassengerTransport@rotherham.gov.uk](mailto:EDS-PassengerTransport@rotherham.gov.uk) at least 10 working days in advance so that an updated transport assessment can be undertaken. Your child may be refused transport provision until this assessment has taken place and it is deemed safe for them to travel.
- 4.12 If a pupil is transported in a wheelchair, it is the parents/carers responsibility to ensure that this is in good condition and free of defects. This also includes any wheelchair harness. Any defects should be reported and rectified by contacting Wheelchair Services at [Rotherham.wheelchairs@rothgen.nhs.uk](mailto:Rotherham.wheelchairs@rothgen.nhs.uk) to ensure the safety of the child. Defective equipment will result in transport being stopped as **all** drivers are instructed to refuse to transport pupils with defective wheelchairs.
- 4.13 If your child is due to change their wheelchair or buggy, including seating system, you must inform the Contract Monitoring Officer at least 10 working days in advance at [EDS-PassengerTransport@rotherham.gov.uk](mailto:EDS-PassengerTransport@rotherham.gov.uk). It is important that the correct restraints are used to secure the wheelchair into

the vehicle. All drivers are instructed to refuse transport provision for pupils until these changes are made and until it is confirmed safe for the pupil to travel.

- 4.14 If your child has a medical care plan for transport where treatment or equipment is essential for the child's health (e.g. epipen, inhaler, vagal nerve stimulator magnet, suction machine etc.) it is the responsibility of parents/carers to ensure this is sent with the child. This should always be in date and in good working order otherwise your child will be refused transport by the operator.
- 4.15 Transport Staff will **not** administer medicines unless these are part of the Transport Care Plan and staff have received appropriate training. It is important that such medicines are in date, clearly marked with the pupil's name and the dosage prescribed.
- 4.16 Parents are advised to contact their child's school, to check on their policy for the carriage of items such as letters, money or medicines. Transport staff may agree to transport these but cannot accept responsibility for any loss.
- 4.17 As a parent/carer you must ensure that a responsible adult meets the child when they are dropped off by the transport provider. If an emergency occurs which prevents this, the Passenger Services Team should be informed urgently (Tel. 01709 334322 or 334325). In the event of a responsible adult not being available to meet the child, the Transport Operator will contact the Passenger Services Team. If the issue cannot be resolved the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (Tel. 01709 336080) will be contacted and the child taken to a place of safety until the pupil is collected by a responsible adult.
- 4.18 In the event of a pupil exhibiting persistent, deliberate, disruptive or dangerous behaviours (including physical and verbal abuse), the Local Authority may withdraw the transport provision. Parents/Carers will be expected to make their own arrangements to ensure their child attends school.

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