

HOME TO SCHOOL TRANSPORT POLICY

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

Tel: 01709 822527

Email: 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 2012

ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

TRANSPORT ASSESSMENT AND PROVISION SERVICE

Passenger Transport Services - Corporate Transport Unit,
Hellaby Depot, Sandbeck Way, Hellaby, Rotherham S66 8QL
Fax 01709 334323

Principal Officer – Education Transport
Tel: 01709 822527 (24 hours voicemail service is available)
e-mail: education.transport@rotherham.gov.uk

Useful Contacts	Telephone Contact
Education Transport Enquiry Service (24 hours voicemail is available)	01709 822649 or 822525
Passenger Transport Service	01709 822527 or 822416
Contract Operating Service (24 hours voicemail is available)	01709 334322 or 334325 Or 334324
Contract Monitoring Service	01709 334319
Mobile/Text Service	07789 650085
South Yorkshire Passenger Transport Executive Traveline / Enquiries	01709 515151
Children's Social Care Access Team	01709 823987
<u>Other South Yorkshire Local Authorities</u>	
Barnsley – School Transport	01226 773584 or 773590
Doncaster – Pupil Support and Transport	01302 737325 or 736080
Sheffield – Home to School Transport	0114 2735831

CONTENTS

	Page
1 Introduction	4
2 Transport assistance and eligibility	4
2.01 Pupils under the age of 5 years	5
2.02 Pupils aged 5 to 7 years	5
2.03 Pupils aged 8 to 16 years	5
2.04 Pupils attending denominational schools	6
2.05 Pupils not attending qualifying schools	6
2.06 Exceptions	7
2.07 Pupils from low income families	7
2.08 Pupils with Special Educational Needs	9
2.09 Appeals	10
3 Parents/Carers Guidelines - Mainstream Transport	11
4 Parents/Carers Guidelines - Special Educational Needs Transport	13

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(3B) provides a parent/carer with a defence if he or she proves that the Local Authority has not fulfilled its statutory duty to provide this. 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.

This Policy explains the criteria used in establishing a learner’s eligibility for transport assistance for those living in the Rotherham Authority area.

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 CTU and 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 allows 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 services.
- iii) Mileage expenses in accordance with the Council’s current rate, for pupils requiring special arrangements.
- 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 settings

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 years 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 years 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 years of age (on 1st September) attending their nearest appropriate qualifying school* (unless an alternative appropriate school has been determined by the Local Authority), 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). 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 as appropriate.

2.03 Pupils aged 8-16 years

For pupils aged 8-16 years of age (on 1st September) attending their nearest appropriate qualifying school* (unless an alternative appropriate school has been determined by the Local Authority), 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). 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 as appropriate.

2.04 **Pupils attending denominational schools**

Some transport assistance to denominational schools has historically been provided on a discretionary basis. There is no statutory duty to provide it except for eligible secondary aged pupils from low income families (see section 2.07).

Following consultation, changes in Policy have been made which will affect some pupils attending denominational schools. **As from the academic year commencing September 2013, only new applications for secondary aged denominational pupils who qualify under low income criteria (see section 2.07) will receive free transport assistance.**

All pupils attending denominational schools who currently receive free transport assistance (including new pupils who qualify for the academic year commencing September 2012), 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 transport assistance may be withdrawn.

New applications for free transport assistance commencing September 2013 will only be provided for those secondary aged denominational pupils who qualify under low income criteria (see section 2.07).

2.05 **Pupils not attending their nearest appropriate qualifying school,* (unless an alternative appropriate school has been 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 transport assistance where the school attended is the nearest appropriate qualifying school* (unless an alternative appropriate school has been 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* (unless an alternative appropriate school has been determined by the Local Authority) do so knowing that free transport assistance will not be available regardless of the distance involved (unless section 2.07 applies).

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 the Behaviour Support Service (01709 336611).
- iii) Pupils from low income families (see section 2.07).
- iv) A pupil attending their nearest appropriate qualifying school,* (unless an alternative appropriate school has been determined by the Local Authority) who has a medical condition affecting their mobility may be provided with free transport assistance. Parents/Carers who wish to request such assistance should do so in writing, along with supporting formal medical evidence, to the Transport Assessment Officer (01709 822649).
- v) Consideration for providing a zero fare bus pass for pupils attending their nearest appropriate qualifying school,* (unless an alternative appropriate school has been determined by the Local Authority) will be made if the route is not considered available to walk. 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 Council in accordance with the above guidelines) exists.
- 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 in receipt of **free school meals** or from families in receipt of **Maximum Working Tax Credit**.

Please contact the Council's Customer Services on 01709 336006 to make an application for free school meals.

Please contact the Tax Credit Helpline on 0845 300 3900 to make an application for Working Tax Credit.

There are changes pending according to the Welfare Reform Act 2012 and the introduction of the Universal Credit System.

Pupils meeting these criteria will receive free transport assistance (usually a zero fare bus pass) on condition that:

- i) Pupils aged 8 to 10 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, but less than 6 miles.
- ii) Pupils aged 11 to 16 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 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 are measured as:

Up to 2 miles – as per the statutory walking distance, along the nearest available walking route.

The 6 mile or the 15 mile upper limit – 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.

2.08 Pupils with Special Educational Needs (SEN)

Pupils under the age of 5 years

Parents/Carers are usually required to take children under the age of 5 to their early years 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 £1.20 per day but if families qualify under the low income criteria (as above) then no charges will be applied.

Pupils aged 5 to 16 years

Pupils with SEN 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 a 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 Statement of SEN (paragraph 8:87 of the SEN Code of Practice), on the express condition that parents/carers accept, and continue to accept, liability for arranging and funding home to school transport.

Mobility Pass

A Mobility Pass is available to Rotherham residents and allows free travel on all buses, trams and trains within South Yorkshire and some cross boundary services. Severely disabled people, who are unable to travel without assistance, can also qualify for a special mobility pass that enables a carer to travel with them free of charge. Please contact the Local Authority on 01709 336010, to discuss qualification criteria. Further details are available on the Travel South Yorkshire website www.travelsouthyorkshire.com

SEN Pupils attending Respite Care

Transport assistance to respite care placements will only be provided where pupils can be accommodated on existing transport provision and this does not incur any additional cost to the Local Authority.

SEN Pupils in Public Care

When a pupil with a Statement of Special Educational Needs becomes a "Looked After Child" by Rotherham Authority they may become eligible for transport assistance to other settings as well as their registered school. Requests for transport need to be made via the social worker and must be authorised by a Service Manager. To arrange, amend or cancel the transport, please contact the Business Support Team in Children and Young People's Services on 01709 334049. The Social Care Out of Hours Team can be contacted on 01709 336080.

2.09 **Appeals**

Parents/Carers have the right to appeal against the Authority's decision not to provide transport assistance if they feel there are **exceptional circumstances** that breach this Policy. Please request a Notice of Appeal Form from the Transport Assessment Officer on 01709 822649 (24 hours voicemail is available) or e mail: education.transport@rotherham.gov.uk

Parents/Carers must submit their grounds for appeal within one calendar month of the original decision. The appeal must also include any relevant medical reports which are no more than 3 months old. This will then be considered by an independent appeals panel within one calendar month from submission.

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 (SYPTE). 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 or the Rotherham or Meadowhall Interchanges, or contact **Traveline on 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, 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 Pupils may be excluded from travel and in some circumstances the Police may be involved. 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

www.travelsouthyorkshire.com/onboard/teachers-and-parents/behaviour-guide/

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

Please remember that in the event of serious or persistent misbehaviour, the Local Authority may exclude your child from using school transport or withdraw a zero fare bus pass. Additionally, the bus operator can refuse entry to the vehicle for such pupils.

4 PARENTS/CARERS GUIDELINES – SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS (SEN) 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).
- 4.02 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.
- 4.03 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.
- 4.04 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 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 the Transport Assessment Officer (01709 822649).
- 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, an escort/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 CTU as soon as possible (01709 334322 or 334325) to prevent unnecessary charges being made (especially if your child travels alone). You must inform the CTU 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 CTU (01709 334319 or 334325) 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 (01709 302262)** 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 (01709 334319). 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 a responsible adult meets the child when they are dropped off by the transport provider. If an emergency occurs which prevents this, the CTU should be informed urgently (01709 334322 or 334325). In the event of a responsible adult not being available to meet the child, the Transport Operator will contact CTU. The pupil will be taken to a place of safety according to the instructions of Children's Social Care, Contact and Referral Team (CART 01709 823987) until they are collected by a responsible adult. Outside normal school transport hours the Social Care Out of Hours Team will be contacted on 01709 336080.
- 4.18 In the event of a pupil exhibiting persistent, deliberate, disruptive or dangerous behaviours (including physical and verbal abuse), they will be excluded from transport. Transport provision will be withdrawn by the Local Authority and parents/carers will be expected to make their own arrangements to ensure their child attends school.