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# Home to school transport policy for children of compulsory school age 2025-26 academic year



## **Document purpose**

This policy sets out the legal responsibilities that West Sussex County Council (“the Council”) has with regards to providing assistance with transport to/from school or another education setting for children living in the Council’s administrative area.

It reflects the requirements of the Education Act 1996 and the Education and Inspection Act 2006 (as amended). It also has regard to the Department for Education’s statutory guidance.

Accessibility:

Please contact [school.transport@westsussex.gov.uk](mailto:school.transport@westsussex.gov.uk) if you’d like this document translated into another language or need other assistance reading this document.

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## 1. Introduction

- 1.1 It is a parent or carer's legal responsibility to make sure their child goes to school regularly. For most parents, this includes arranging travel to and from school, meeting the costs involved and accompanying their child(ren) as necessary.
- 1.2 In some cases, the Council has a duty to provide suitable free school transport. Transport is provided in the most cost effective and appropriate way for the child's needs. This policy specifies the categories of eligible children, ways in which free travel may be provided, circumstances when assistance is not provided, how to appeal a decision and the complaints procedure.
- 1.3 Separate documents set out the provision for children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) of compulsory school age (up to Year 11 pupils), young people of sixth form age and adult learners. Find out more on our [home to school and college transport policy](#) page.

## 2. Qualifying for home to school transport

- 2.1 Eligible children are defined as children of compulsory school age who attend their nearest suitable or catchment school and:
  - the school is beyond the statutory school distance; or
  - they cannot reasonably be expected to walk to their school because of their special educational needs, disability or mobility problem; or
  - they would not be able to walk to their school in reasonable safety.
- 2.2 Children can also qualify for assistance under 'extended rights' eligibility (see paragraphs 2.22 – 2.23 below).

### Nearest suitable or catchment school and statutory school distance

- 2.3 Free transport is provided if their nearest suitable or catchment school, measured from the child's home to the nearest available entrance to the school, is:
  - Beyond 2 miles (if below the age of eight); or
  - Beyond 3 miles (if aged between eight and 16).
- 2.4 The nearest suitable school is the school closest to the child's home that provides education appropriate to their age, ability, aptitude and any special educational needs. A catchment school serving the child's home area is considered suitable. Where more than one catchment school serves the area, the nearest school will be used for transport eligibility. Where a school operates across more than one site (for example, two Key Stage 3 sites) the Council will assess eligibility using the nearest suitable site within that school structure. Eligibility will therefore be determined by the distance to the closest site offering provision appropriate for the child's year group, regardless of the site the parent/carer prefers or the site the child attends. Distances are calculated using the shortest available walking route - public footpaths, bridleways and rights of way - up to the statutory walking distances of 2 and 3 miles. Beyond these distances, only road routes are used. This calculation identifies the nearest suitable school or site; it does not take account of safety, which is considered separately in paragraphs 2.17–2.21.

- 2.5 Parents should note that home to school distances may change over time due to road improvements or where new developments and infrastructure reveal new routes. As a result, the Council regularly updates its mapping data to ensure distance measurements are made using the most accurate data available. This may mean in some cases parents will find the eligibility changes between an older and younger sibling.
- 2.6 We will not usually provide free transport between home and school for children who attend schools other than the nearest suitable or catchment school unless families have used all their preferences to apply for schools which are closer to the family home than the school the child attends.

### **Parental Preference**

- 2.7 Where a child attends a school (or sixth form) which is not the nearest suitable or County Council catchment school, on the grounds of parental preference, the parents are usually responsible for making their own transport arrangements and for all transport costs. Discretionary travel, including medical exceptions, are included in Section 3.
- 2.8 If the nearest suitable or catchment school or college becomes full after the parent has expressed a preference for an alternative school or college, free transport to the alternative school or college will not be provided.
- 2.9 Parent/carers can express up to three preferences for schools in the admissions process. If preferences for the three nearest schools are made in distance order, nearest first, then transport assistance would be available to whichever school is allocated as part of the admissions round. This is because the school offered will automatically be the nearest available school. Parents should apply to the Transport Co-ordination team if they believe their child will be eligible for assistance because their nearest school(s) was full.

### **Special educational needs, disability or mobility problem without an Education, Health and Care plan (EHC plan)**

- 2.10 A child is eligible for free travel to school if:
- they attend their nearest suitable school, and
  - it is within the statutory distance of their home, and
  - they could not reasonably be expected to walk there because of their special educational needs, disability or mobility problem.
- 2.11 Eligibility is assessed on a case-by-case basis to establish if a child cannot reasonably be expected to walk. The assessment takes account of the child's physical ability to walk to school and any health and safety issues related to their special educational needs, disability or mobility problems.
- 2.12 To assist in determining a child's physical ability, we will need to see medical evidence from a consultant or GP confirming the medical condition and any relevant facts regarding or impacting upon mobility.
- 2.13 A fee may be charged for supplying the medical evidence and parents need to cover any costs. We will also need to know how long transport assistance is required and an indication of what type of travel is appropriate.

- 2.14 Assistance can include temporary mobility problems although it is not always possible to make travel arrangements before the child has recovered.
- 2.15 All cases where transport is agreed will be reviewed regularly unless it is a time-limited offer of support.
- 2.16 For children with an EHC plan, the application process is different. Full information can be found on our website by visiting our web page for [support for school age children with SEND](#), you will also find links to the full policy for [Travel assistance for children of compulsory school age with an Education, Health and Care plan \(EHC plan\)](#).

## **Walking in reasonable safety**

- 2.17 This relates to children who live within the statutory distance and attend their nearest suitable or catchment school. Assessments do not determine whether a route is "safe" or "dangerous". All roads may be thought of as presenting some element of road safety risk, whether they are heavily trafficked urban routes, or more lightly trafficked rural routes. Instead, the assessment determines whether transport should be provided because a child's only walking route presents specific road safety hazards.
- 2.18 Where parents or carers formally dispute eligibility for travel assistance on the grounds of an unsuitable walking route, the Road Safety Team will carry out an assessment in accordance with national guidance. The assessment will consider the interaction between pedestrians and traffic and may cover the entire walking route or be limited to the specific section in dispute. Issues surrounding personal security do not form part of the assessment and the Council is able to assume that a child is accompanied by a responsible person. There is no requirement for a route to be lit and temporary closures such as road works or flooding are not considered in the formal assessment. Assistance will not be provided if alternative routes are available within the statutory distance.
- 2.19 Parents are responsible for ensuring their child has suitable clothes and equipment for the journey (for example, boots, wet weather clothes, reflective bands, torch, etc) and national guidance is clear that conditions such as muddy footpaths or lack of street lighting do not mean that a route is not available. Available routes include crossing fields, wooded areas, bridleways, public footpaths, and public rights of way.
- 2.20 **Criteria for the Assessment of Safety of Walking Routes:**
1. Roads in the immediate vicinity of the pupil's home to be considered available for that pupil.
  2. Roads with footpaths to be considered available for assessment
  3. Roads with walkable verges to be considered available for assessment
  4. Regarding roads where it is necessary to walk on the carriageway the following criteria should be considered:

- a) as to visibility, can a driver see a pedestrian from a reasonable distance to allow adequate braking and passing? If so, the roads may be considered suitable.
- b) as to width, can a driver normally give a pedestrian a reasonable berth? If so, the roads may be considered suitable.
- c) and again, as to width can a pedestrian get off the carriageway when – say - two lorries or other traffic are passing each other? This does not mean that a verge must be walkable, only that it must be available as a refuge. If so, the roads may be considered suitable.
- d) short lengths of road, for instance bridges etc., with no verge are acceptable and the roads may be considered suitable
- e) the speed and density of traffic should be considered and if the average speed and density are reasonable, this will suggest the roads are suitable
- f) where there are road crossings, they should be judged in comparison with roads crossed by pupils using contract buses and if comparable should be considered suitable.

2.21 Parents are expected to provide pupils with suitable footwear and clothing, including reflective harnesses when desirable, to cope with the prevailing circumstances on the route.

### **Extended rights eligibility (low-income grounds)**

2.22 Free transport is arranged for pupils entitled to [free school meals](#) or whose parents receive the maximum level of Working Tax Credit\* in the following circumstances:

- The nearest suitable school is beyond 2 miles, by the shortest walking route (for children over the age of eight and under 11); or
- The school is between 2 miles (shortest walking route) and 6 miles (by road) (if aged 11 to 16 and there are not three or more nearer suitable schools); or
- The school is between 2 miles (shortest walking route) and 15 miles (by road) and is the nearest school preferred on the grounds of religion or belief (aged 11 to 16). Confirmation of baptismal status or support from the parish priest or minister of religion is required.

2.23 Transport is considered on a case-by-case basis and not on a family basis and it is not uncommon for one child in a family to qualify for free transport while another does not qualify. Factors include whether a school is available (this can change year on year) and whether the school is on a split site where the distance is different.

\*You can tell if you are in receipt of the maximum WTC from your tax credit award notice issued by HM Revenue and Customs. Part 2 entitled 'How we work out your tax credits' includes details of WTC elements other than childcare. It then lists 'any reduction due to your income'. You are in receipt of the maximum where the reduction shows as £0. Alternatively, you will be on the maximum if your assessed income is below the £7955 threshold (2024/25).

## **Timing of assessment for transport eligibility**

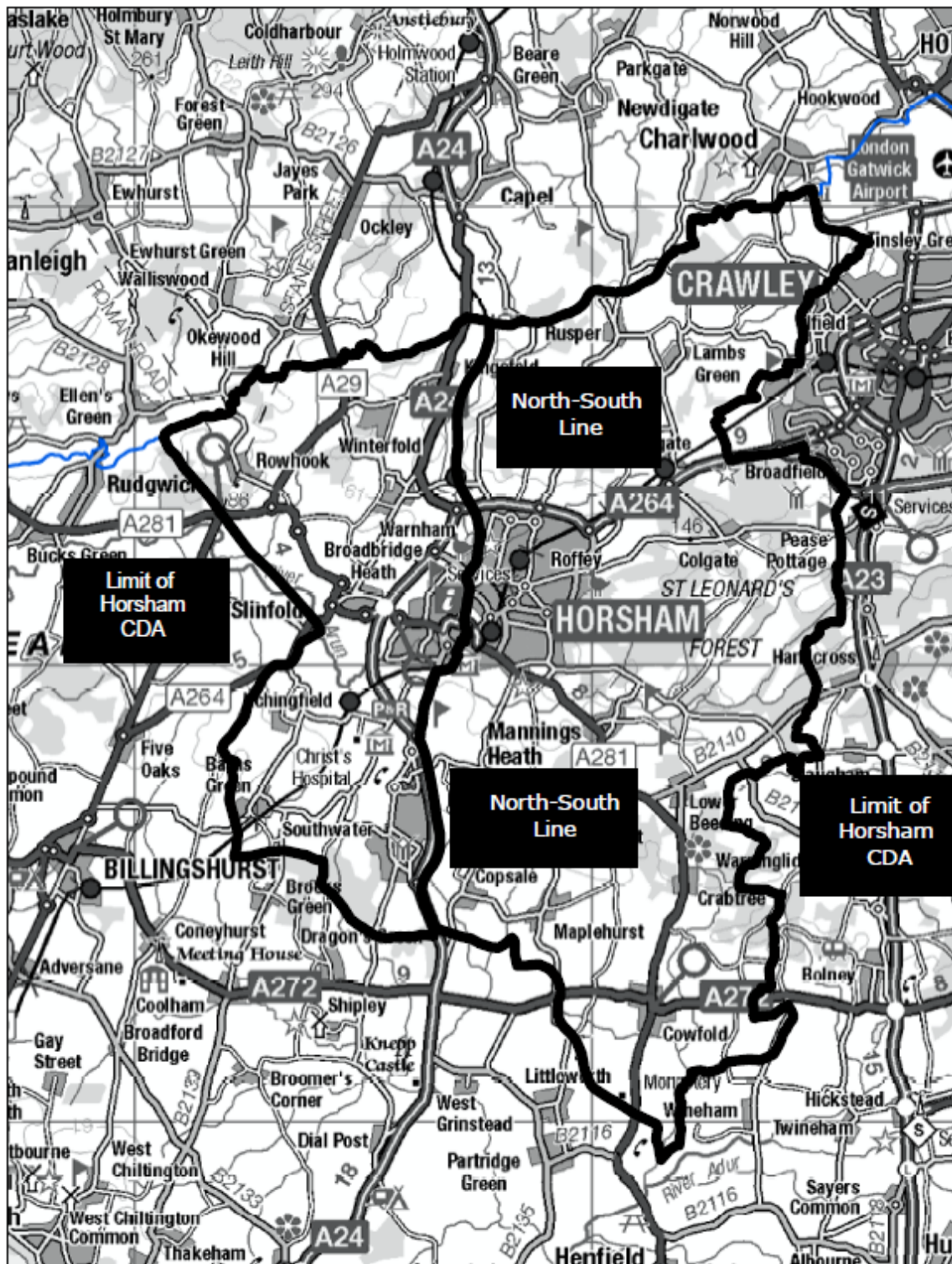
- 2.24 For most cases, eligibility for free school travel is assessed following the normal school admissions round when places are offered for children starting primary school or transferring to secondary school. As the Council co-ordinates school place offers, we can identify which school is the nearest suitable and whether a place is available.
- 2.25 In some cases, eligibility is assessed at other times, for example due to a family moving into the area during the school year.

## **Other circumstances where transport may be offered**

- 2.26 The general expectation is that a child will be accompanied by a parent where necessary, unless there is a good reason why it is not reasonable to expect the parent to do so, for example, if a parent's disability prevents them from accompanying their child to school.
- 2.27 Reasons such as the parent's working pattern, caring responsibilities, or the fact they have children attending more than one school will not normally be considered good reasons for a parent being unable to accompany their child. These apply to many parents, and, in most circumstances, it is reasonable to expect the parent to make suitable arrangements to fulfil their various responsibilities (for example, their responsibilities as an employee and as a parent.)
- 2.28 If you are prevented from accompanying your children on the home to school journey because of a disability. A physical or mental impairment that has a 'substantial' and 'long-term' negative effect on your ability to do normal daily activities, we may be able to provide travel assistance for children under 11 if all other solutions have been investigated. For example, if arrangements with another parent or discussions with the school have been unable to provide a solution. Medical evidence to support your claim may be requested from a consultant. They may charge you for this. Transport cannot be arranged until the medical evidence is provided.
- 2.29 To receive help, your child must be attending their nearest suitable or catchment school. We will then look at the distance to school. Where the distance is very short, assistance may not be agreed, especially for a child in Year 5 or 6.

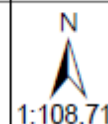
## **Transport to Horsham Secondary Schools**

- 2.30 The usual transport policy is applied, as set out in this document. However, where reference is made to the "nearest suitable or County Council catchment" school, it is necessary to refer to the relevant school within the Horsham Community Designated Area. Pupils will receive free school transport to Bohunt Horsham only if it is their nearest available school.
- 2.31 The relevant school for a child depends on his/her place of residence within the Horsham Community Designated Area as divided by the north-south line. A map for illustrative purposes is attached as Appendix 3.
- 2.32 Subject to the distance criteria above, all pupils living west of the line within the Horsham Community Designated Area shall receive free transport to any of the three Horsham Secondary Schools:



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Horsham Designated Area



## Transport to High Schools in Worthing

2.33 The arrangements for assistance with transport for children resident in Worthing Borough are as set out in this document except that where reference is made to "catchment" school, the term 'nearest school within the Worthing Borough' applies.

## 3. Discretionary travel

### Children below compulsory school age

- 3.1 Children who have not reached compulsory school age are not entitled to free transport. However, assistance will be given at no charge where:
- the child would be entitled to free transport on attaining compulsory school age **and**
  - a spare seat is available on an existing contract vehicle. In such a case, the concessionary assistance will continue if the spare seat is available.
- 3.2 Where a child would not be entitled to free transport on attaining compulsory school age, but a place is available on an existing contract vehicle, an application may be made under the concessionary seat scheme (see paragraph 3.3 – 3.9) for which a charge shall be made. Requests are sometimes received from parents who would like their children to use a school coach when they do not qualify for travel assistance. If spare places are available, a travel permit can be purchased. This is only available on timetabled coaches.

### Concessionary Seat Scheme

- 3.3 Where there are spare seats available on contracted or county council-owned vehicles, the concessionary seat scheme allows children, who are not entitled to free transport, to take up the spare capacity. More information can be viewed by visiting [paid school transport](#).
- 3.4 A charge, which is publicised annually, for the concessionary seat is made and is payable by two termly instalments or monthly (by direct debit).
- 3.5 Places are given as a concession and may be withdrawn at short notice if required by a pupil with an entitlement, or if the vehicle is no longer needed, or if a smaller vehicle is contracted. In such circumstances, parents are responsible for making their own arrangements.
- 3.6 Concessionary seats are given for a maximum of one academic year at a time. Parents must make a new application for each academic year.
- 3.7 Where there are more applications than seats available, the following order of priority will be used:
- children attending the nearest suitable or catchment school – those living furthest away having highest priority.
  - children attending an alternative school – those living nearest to the school attended having the highest priority.
- 3.8 If a concessionary place is given to a sixth form student who attends the nearest suitable or catchment school and who lives three miles or more from the school, it will not be withdrawn where there is no alternative public transport available in the area (as a guide, 1.5 miles from the student's home).
- 3.9 The charges are set each year for those attending their nearest suitable school and/or who live within statutory walking distance of the school. A higher level of charge applies to pupils and students as follows:

- Pupils and students living in another catchment area
- Students of sixth form age who live more than three miles away.

### Medical exceptions

- 3.10 In exceptional circumstances, free transport may be provided temporarily or permanently where a child's medical condition affects his ability to walk to school.
- 3.11 Assistance will be given only where a child is attending the nearest appropriate or catchment school.
- 3.12 In such cases, assistance is given at the discretion of the Assistant Director of Education and Skills and will be subject to satisfactory medical evidence, which would include reports from consultants, psychologists, and/or other professionals.

### Reduced/Part-time timetables

- 3.13 Where classes, year groups or pupils have a start or finish time that is different from most pupils at the school, it will not normally be possible for the local authority to make separate travel arrangements. Where schools implement part-time or staggered timetables, they should consider the transport implications in advance and work collaboratively with families and the Council. There may be a small number of circumstances in which local authorities consider it appropriate to arrange transport at an alternative time of day, for example if a child has a medical condition which means they are not well enough to attend school for the whole day. Where transport to service a reduced/part-time timetable receives discretionary approval, these arrangements will be reviewed and monitored with the child's school every 6 weeks.

### Moving home – applicable to Years 10 and 11 only

- 3.14 Where a pupil attends the nearest suitable or catchment school and moves home to an area served by another school, assistance, subject to reasonable costs and meeting the relevant distance criteria, may be given if:
- The new address is within West Sussex and the pupil continues to attend the same school **and**
  - The pupil has been following for at least one term a course leading to a public examination (i.e., years 10 or 11) **and**
  - The journey is considered reasonable for the student.
- 3.15 A reasonable journey is one which does not exceed 75 minutes by public transport. The journey time is taken from the time a child leaves home to the start of the school session and includes walking and waiting at bus stops/railway stations. Similarly, in the afternoon, the journey time is measured from the end of the session to the time a child arrives at home, again including walking and waiting times.

### Managed Moves

- 3.16 Where a parent instigates a managed move, they will usually be responsible for

arranging transport and its costs.

- 3.17 Where a managed move is instigated and organised by the Headteachers and the County Council, transport normally will be the responsibility of the parent but, in exceptional circumstances, assistance may be given where agreed by the County Council beforehand.

### Alternative Provision Transport

- 3.18 This section of policy applies to the categories of children and young people listed in the table below:

Category	Approver	Provider	Status
Permanently excluded (PEX)	SENAT or Fair Access	WSAPC	Full-time Short – medium term
Alternative provision used as a temporary or complimentary intervention under Section 19 Education Act 1996	SENAT	Approved alternative provision	Full or part-time Short – medium term

SENAT – Special Educational Needs Assessment Team

WSAPC – West Sussex Alternative Provision College

Permanently excluded pupils are those for whom no place is available, or who cannot be placed at a maintained school or academy.

Pupils accessing alternative provision under Section 19 Education Act 1996 will include those who have behavioural issues and are at risk of exclusion. They will be registered at a school or academy but attending an alternative establishment which might be the WSAPC, a further education college or other provision.

- 3.19 Medical/vulnerable pupils are as defined in the WSCC policy statement: "Education for children who cannot attend school because of health needs".
- 3.20 The eligibility criteria outlined in the home to school transport policy apply to pupils attending alternative provider establishments and centres.
- 3.21 The expectation is that pupils will use public transport unless it is not accessible, or the pupil is unable to do so. The use of taxis will be an exception.
- 3.22 In cases where the provider decides to place a pupil at a centre which is not the nearest to the pupil's home, the provider shall be responsible for any additional transport arrangements or costs over and above those that are provided to the nearest establishment.
- 3.23 Schools may decide to direct off-site a pupil who is at risk of exclusion with the aim of both reintegration and avoiding the exclusion. Such cases would be considered for help with transport provided the pupil meets the usual eligibility criteria and the placement is approved and funded by SENAT under Section 19 Education Act 1996.

- 3.24 Regarding the West Sussex Alternative Provision College, the home to school distance will be the distance between the child's home and the nearest suitable centre, e.g., the distance for a pupil of secondary school age living in Crawley will be measured between the home address and the WSAPC centre at Crawley, unless an alternative is agreed by the Fair Access at the time of allocation. Any other transport requirements are the responsibility of the WSAPC, e.g., the decision to allocate a pupil at a centre further away, college placements (unless the placement were closer to the pupil's home which would result in lower transport costs).
- 3.25 The nearest suitable establishment will be determined by the Education and Skills service.

## 4. Occasions when transport is not supplied or withdrawn

- 4.1 Our duty is to provide transport to get children to and from school at the beginning and end of the school's published day.
- 4.2 It is the responsibility of parents or carers or schools to arrange and pay for transport at other times. Specific examples of where transport will not be provided by the Council include:
- School-to-school placements. This is the responsibility of the school where the child is on roll.
  - Journeys to and from other destinations. Transport is not offered to or from points other than the school/ education centre and home or pick up/drop off points.
  - Dissatisfaction with the nearest suitable/catchment school. If a child has experienced difficulties at the nearest suitable/catchment school and has moved schools for this reason, this does not create an entitlement to free transport.
  - To take account of work/business commitments or domestic difficulties of parents/carers.
  - To accommodate attendance at breakfast clubs, after-school activities or homework clubs
  - Before or after medical appointments
  - To accommodate work experience or off-site educational placements
  - For pre-course visits, 'taster' days or parents' evenings/visits
  - In the event of sickness where a child has to be collected from school
  - In the event of a fixed term exclusion where a child has to be collected from school
  - Specific exam timetables that start or finish outside of the normal school day
  - School trips or educational visits
  - Part-time attendance unless the Council considers it necessary for a child with a medical condition which means they are not well enough to attend school for the whole day.

- 4.3 Transport shall be withdrawn at the end of the term (as a minimum) in which the error is discovered, and the parent notified. In such circumstances, parents will always be given as much notice as possible and this will be a minimum of one-half term.

## **Other factors for parents to be aware of**

### **4.4 Definition of home address**

In accordance with statutory guidance, travel assistance will only be provided from and to a single address at which the child or young person is habitually and normally resident. Where a child splits their time equally between addresses, travel assistance will be assessed from the address which is registered with the school as the home address or, prior to admission, the address used on the relevant school admission application form. Assistance with transport will not be given to or from an alternative address for reasons such as childcare.

### **4.5 Denominational primary schools**

In most cases, no support will be provided to children attending a denominational church aided primary school for reasons of religion or faith. In extraordinary circumstances, pupils may still be considered for transport assistance to their nearest school preferred on the grounds of religion or belief if qualifying for extended rights eligibility – 2.22 to 2.23.

### **4.6 Independent or private schools (including nurseries)**

Assistance is not given to children attending schools in the private sector unless the placement has been named in Section I of the child's EHC plan and the transport criteria have been met.

### **4.7 Timeframe for processing applications**

Applications are processed in two stages:

- Stage one is determining eligibility. Officers will decide if there is an entitlement under the policy and aim to reach a decision within 10 working days of receiving an application.
- Stage two involves determining which mode of travel is appropriate. This can typically take up to 10 working days once transport has been authorised by a designated officer.

Whilst every effort will be made to complete the transport arrangements as quickly as possible, you will need to make your own travel arrangements until the travel permit or hired service is available.

## **5. Operational standards and practices**

### **Types of travel assistance for eligible children**

- 5.1 It is for the council's Transport Coordination Group to identify the most suitable, cost-effective mode of transport to get pupils between home and school, taking account of any special arrangements to support the child's particular needs. Once this task has been completed, the Transport Coordination Group will contact

parents by email or letter to advise them of the arrangements. Parents are not able to choose which form of transport or specific vehicle their child will travel on.

- 5.2 Children will not be expected to walk more than one mile (one and a half miles for post 16 students) at either end of the journey to access transport arranged by the County Council.

### **Public services and school coaches**

- 5.3 In most cases, we provide a ticket for use on public transport or provide a seat on a hired coach. Transport arrangements will operate to and from a reasonable proximity to the home address and the school (typically no more than one mile at either end), will run at times compatible with the school and not demand excessive waiting time, should not require a child to make several changes on public transport and not result in an unreasonably long journey time. The responsibility for ensuring a child's safety in getting to and from the pick-up point rests with the parent/carer.
- 5.4 Parents should make contingency plans in the event of transport not turning up or where there are unavoidable delays.
- 5.5 Lost and replacement passes can be requested by contacting [school.transport@westsussex.gov.uk](mailto:school.transport@westsussex.gov.uk). A fee is payable.

### **Journey length times**

- 5.6 As a general guide, the maximum journey time for a child of primary school age should be 45 minutes each way, and 75 minutes each way for a child of secondary school age, including any time taken to walk to a pick-up point, but there will be circumstances in which this is not possible, for example in rural areas where children live in remote locations, where a child needs to travel a long way to the school named in their EHC plan, or when journey times are extended by traffic delays.

### **Expected behaviour on school transport**

- 5.7 Seat belts must be worn where fitted. In addition, children and young people must not smoke or vape on school transport, drop litter inside the vehicle, eat or drink in the vehicle or stand up or move around in the vehicle whilst it is moving.
- 5.8 All personal equipment, e.g. musical instruments, laptop, tablets, mobile phones etc, should be secured in a suitable bag. If a child or young person causes damage to a vehicle, the operator may require parents to reimburse them for any repairs. If a child misbehaves persistently on a school vehicle, the Council reserves the right to take appropriate action to protect other users of the service. This may involve, among other steps, asking the school to take disciplinary action against the child or issuing a ban on transport.
- 5.9 If the vehicle breaks down, the driver will call for assistance. Children must follow the instructions of the driver. It is normal for children to wait in the vehicle, with the driver and/or passenger assistant, until a replacement vehicle arrives.

## **Mileage payments (TE15 reimbursements)**

- 5.10 If there is no suitable public transport or hired vehicle, parents willing to make their own travel arrangements will receive help with the cost of two return journeys a day. This is based on the distance between home and school. Payment is made on a family basis at the rate of 45p per mile since the cost will be the same for two or more children, with changes to this cost if children are at different schools.
- 5.11 This is not available to parents who prefer to make their own arrangements to transport their child where suitable public transport, or a hired vehicle is available.

## **Travel by taxi or minibus**

- 5.12 In cases where the home address is not served by public transport, hired transport will be provided to get pupils between home and school at the beginning and end of the school day. Once authorised, new transport solutions can take up to 15 working days to organise. This is because the council must secure transport via a fair and open tendering process. In addition, some children will have a needs assessment completed to ensure the arrangements meet their needs.
- 5.13 The Council cannot guarantee the travel arrangements e.g. passenger assistant/driver will stay the same throughout the child's academic career. You will need to be prepared for this possibility although we will give as much notice as possible when making changes. You should also be prepared for unforeseen circumstances such as illness or vehicle breakdown. It is also possible for an operator to give up a particular run.
- 5.14 In the morning, you will need to have your child ready at the agreed collection time. It is also the responsibility of the parent or carer to get the child into the vehicle and the school's duty to get the child from the vehicle into the school building.
- 5.15 In the afternoon, you will need to make sure that a responsible person is at home to receive your child at the arranged time unless it has been agreed between the Council and parent/carer in advance that this is not necessary. Failure to make sure that a responsible person is at home to receive the child may result in the child being taken to a safe place. Costs associated with looking after or transporting your child due to a parent or carer not being ready to receive the child will be passed on to the family. It is also the parent or carer's responsibility to collect their child from the safe place or arrange and pay for their travel home.

## **Children living in temporary accommodation**

- 5.16 If an eligible child is living in temporary accommodation, 508B of the Education Act 1996 requires local authorities to make travel arrangements for 'an eligible child in the authority's area'. This means that, in all circumstances, the local authority in whose area an eligible child lives is responsible for their home to school travel. Transport will not be provided from a temporary address to a school that is not the designated catchment area or nearest school for that address.

## **Service standards for hired transport Licensing and training of drivers and passenger assistants**

5.17 Drivers of coaches will possess PCV licenses. Taxi drivers will have been approved by the local Borough or District Council licensing officers. The County Council offers training to drivers and passenger assistants to support them in their role, including extra guidance about individual pupil's needs.

## **Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS)**

5.18 All drivers and passenger assistants of taxis, minibuses and hired coaches on Council commissioned transport are subject to a DBS check. This does not currently apply to those driving public transport.

## **Suitable vehicles and equipment**

5.19 Vehicles used to transport children will be appropriate to the needs of the child. Where children need to be transported in their wheelchairs, a specialist vehicle will be provided. Other essential items of equipment will also be transported.

## **Contract information for operators**

5.20 All parents or carers will be provided with detailed information about the travel arrangements if assistance is provided. Such as: driver name and phone number, pick up and drop off times, and handover arrangements.

## **Monitoring operator performance**

5.21 If parents have any concerns about the service being provided, they should contact staff in the Transport Coordination Group in the Highways, Transport and Planning Department so that the concerns can be raised with the provider of the transport service. Please phone 01243 753 530. Service performance is subject to a contract between the operator and the Council.

5.22 We welcome the support of parents in ensuring the smooth running of their child's transport arrangements by letting us know:

- if there are any changes to your child's needs which could affect transport, e.g. a recent medical diagnosis
- about a different type of wheelchair or car seat;
- about a change to your child's behaviour

## **Transport granted in error**

5.23 Where transport has been granted to a pupil by mistake, the error shall be rectified.

5.24 Transport shall be withdrawn at the end of the term (as a minimum) in which the error is discovered, and the parent notified. In such circumstances, parents will always be given as much notice as possible and this will be a minimum of one-half term.

## Closure or reorganisation of a school

- 5.25 In general, when a school closes or is reorganised, only pupils who live beyond walking distance (see 2.3) from their new school will receive assistance with transport, provided it is still the nearest suitable or catchment school for their home address.
- 5.26 The County Council may use its discretion to provide transport assistance to pupils affected by the closure or reorganisation of a school as follows:
- Pupils must attend the school affected at the time of its closure or reorganisation and
  - Must live closer to the school being closed/reorganised than the new school and
  - Must continue to live in the previous school's catchment area.
  - Assistance would be for a period determined by the County Council up to the time that a child transfers to the next phase of education.
- 5.27 The usual school transport policy will apply to all pupils, including younger siblings of those affected, following the closure/reorganisation.
- 5.28 Children who live in the area of a new school that has been established, but who receive assistance with transport to the school serving the area previously, will continue to be entitled whilst at that school.

## Change of session times

- 5.29 Governing bodies are expected, as good practice, to consult fully with the County Council and other interested parties regarding proposals to change school session times.
- 5.30 If a Governing Body decides to change the school session times with the direct result that the County Council incurs additional transport costs, the extra expense may be charged to the school's delegated budget.

## Medication on school transport

- 5.31 **When do we administer medication, what is our policy:**
- 5.32 This document relates to pupils who have been referred by the Special Educational needs assessment team (SENAT) to the Transport Co-ordination Group (TCG) for provision of transport usually these Pupils are at specialist placements or have medical conditions relevant to safety on transport and may carry prescribed medicine.
- 5.33 **The Purpose of this protocol:**
- Ensure the welfare of children being transported.
  - Clarify requirements and expectations of all relevant parties, including parents, carers, schools, WSCC and its service providers.
  - To make sure passenger assistants (PA) and drivers have the relevant medical & care information required to carry out their duties.

- Protect and support PAs and drivers
- Outline the advice, training and information that our employees, contractors and their employees should expect to receive

#### 5.34 What is required for WSCC to arrange Transport:

- Parents of pupil's who have a known medical or behavioural condition that may require specific support or intervention, must complete the WSCC Health & Safety form before they are allocated a place on WSCC transport.
- The information provided should include details of all known medical conditions and behaviour's, so that the PA or driver have all relevant information to support the passenger – this is used to draft the Transport Care Plan (TCP). The final TCP will be agreed and signed by parents/carers, schools and the WSCC Transport Planner.
- An individual desktop risk assessment is required for all Special Educational Needs (SEND) pupils travelling on home to school transport
- Relevant information from the TCP will be shared with key professionals involved in the pupil's transport, including the PA and driver. The County Council expects its employees, service providers and their employees to treat all such information confidentially.
- WSCC requires passenger assistants to complete basic first aid training.
- The driver and PA also attend mandatory training courses in:
  - Disability Awareness
  - Safeguarding
- Where there is a specific medical condition that requires specialist training to provide the care WSCC will endeavour to provide a PA with the training required to administer medication or provide medical support although this cannot be guaranteed.
- The travel care plan should include a contingency plan in the event that a PA or driver is not trained or is unable to administer the medication.
- If the PA or driver is trained to administer emergency medication then the parent/carer **must** sign the permission area of the care plan and provide relevant information about medication before we organise transport and source a provider
- If the trained passenger assistant or driver is away from work then we cannot guarantee a replacement with specific training, the parent will be informed by the operator if the usual passenger assistant or driver is not available
- A current version of the travel care plan must be held by transport operators and carried by drivers and passenger assistants on all journeys.
- It is the parent/carers or by a person acting on their behalf responsibility to keep the transport planner updated. WSCC cannot be held responsible for any treatment given, or not given when the pupil's current and up to date medical information has not been provided in writing by the parent/carer.

### 5.35 Medication (Prescribed medicine only)

- The pupil's medication should be secured in a small medical box or a zipped clear plastic bag - the box or bag should be clearly labelled and sealed - together with a copy of the TCP. This is to be given to the passenger assistant by the parent/carer each morning.
- The PA will hand over the medication and the copy of the TCP to a responsible person on arrival at school. The reverse process takes place at the end of the school day.
- The Medication (prescribed only) will be received on transport arranged by WSCC for two purposes:
  - a. When administration is required regularly during the school day.
  - b. Where the pupil may require medication in an emergency whilst being transported to and from school

### 5.36 All prescribed medicines must be delivered in their original containers which must be clearly labelled with the following information:

- Name and strength of medicine
- Pupil's name
- Dosage
- Dosage frequency
- Storage requirements
- Expiry date
- Any cautionary advice, e.g. may cause drowsiness
- Name, address and phone number of the pharmacy

It is the parent or carer's responsibility to ensure that the correct medication is handed to the PA, if a child has a need for temporary medication to be transported to school (i.e. antibiotics) these should be placed into the sealed bag along with instructions for the school nurse.

We will only be held responsible for transporting medication that is declared on the transport care plan.

It will be the responsibility of the parent/carer at the start of the day to ensure that the medication is given to the PA. The PA, on return to the pupil's home address, should hand the medication back to the parent/carer.

### 5.37 Emergency procedures that a Driver or PA would normally follow:

- In the case of an emergency the driver should stop, park the vehicle in a safe place and activate the hazard lights
- The driver or PA should call 999 & follow the relevant instructions that are contained within the TCP.
- The relevant trained personnel will follow the instructions on the administration of medication as per the care plan
- As the situation allows, the driver or PA will alert the parent/carer.

- The PA or driver will notify the school & WSCC/Line Manager at the earliest opportunity
- The driver or PA will then complete an incident report for their line manager.
- When the emergency services have arrived, the PA/driver will brief the paramedic, handing over the TCP and the pupil's medication but would not be expected to accompany the child to hospital.

## Useful contacts

### Transport Coordination Group

County Hall  
West Street  
Chichester  
West Sussex  
PO19 1RQ  
Telephone: 01243 753530

### West Sussex Special Educational Needs Assessment Team

County Hall  
West Street  
Chichester  
West Sussex  
PO19 1RQ  
Telephone: 01243 752132

### Michael Ryan, Principal School Transport Officer

County Hall  
West Street  
Chichester  
West Sussex  
PO19 1RQ  
Email: [Michael.ryan@westsussex.gov.uk](mailto:Michael.ryan@westsussex.gov.uk)

## 6. Review of transport provision

- 6.1 We will make regular checks to ensure the eligibility criteria continue to be met although you should inform us immediately if you move address or your child changes school. Failure to inform us of a change of circumstances may result in you having to pay back unused portions of rail or bus season tickets.
- 6.2 The mode of travel being used to provide assistance will also be reviewed regularly to make sure that the service provided continues to be appropriate for the child's needs.
- 6.3 Complaints and concerns about arrangements in relation to school travel should be directed to: Email: [school.transport@westsussex.gov.uk](mailto:school.transport@westsussex.gov.uk)

## 7. Support in further education – learners aged 16 - 25

- 7.1 All young people in England must continue in education or training, requiring them to continue until at least their 18th birthday. This does not mean young people have to stay in school to continue in education or training. Options include full-time study in a school, college or with a training provider. They can also go into full-time work or volunteering combined with part-time education, training or an apprenticeship. As a result, there is no obligation to provide free school transport that some younger children are entitled to but there is a duty to provide travel assistance to learners of sixth form age and adult learners if it is considered necessary.
- 7.2 For more details about what support might be available please visit <https://www.westsussex.gov.uk/education-children-and-families/schools-and-colleges/school-and-college-transport/>. The Post 16 Transport Policy Statement includes information on fares and concessions and a summary of policy for learners with SEND with an EHC plan. You can also view the full policies for learners aged 16-19 and adult learners.

## 8. Policy changes

- 8.1 The Council reserves the right to make minor amendments or corrections to this policy without consulting on them.
- 8.2 Where proposals to change the policy may affect children's eligibility for transport, we will consult for a minimum of 28 days during term time. Consultees will include schools, parents of children who will (or may) be affected by the proposed changes, including those whose children attend school in a neighbouring authority, and those whose children may be affected in the future.
- 8.3 Wherever possible, changes will be phased in so that children who begin attending a school under one set of travel arrangements continue to benefit from those arrangements until they leave that school.

## 9. Appeal process

- 9.1 If your application for travel assistance is declined, you have the right to appeal through a two-stage process. Stage One involves a review of the decision by the Assistant Director. Stage Two is a hearing conducted by an independent appeal panel. You may attend this hearing in person or provide written evidence for the panel's consideration. You must submit your written request for a review within 20 working days of receiving the local authority's decision letter regarding eligibility for transport assistance.

### Stage One Appeal

- A stage one appeal form needs to be completed to make an appeal.
- All stage one appeals will be considered by the Assistant Director for Education & Skills. The Assistant Director for Education & Skills will consider the appeal form; any information provided in support of the appeal; the application form; supporting information provided with the application; and any other

correspondence used by the officer to reach a decision.

- We shall aim to provide you with a decision from your stage one appeal within 20 working days of receipt of the application. You will receive an email with the detailed reasoning for the decision. We will also inform you how to escalate your appeal to the next stage if you disagree with the outcome.

## Stage Two Appeal

- If your stage one appeal has been unsuccessful, you have 20 working days from receipt of the outcome letter to submit your stage two appeal. A stage two appeal form needs to be completed to make a stage two appeal.
- An appeal hearing will be scheduled within 40 working days of receipt of the application form. The Appeal Panel will be independent of the stage one decision-making process and suitably experienced. They will consider your appeal based on evidence submitted by the appellant, and the School Transport Team. You have the option of attending the hearing in person, or attending virtually or having your appeal considered on written material only. A representative of the School Transport Team will also participate in the hearing. Once the panel has considered all the evidence and representations submitted by both sides it will decide whether it agrees with the previous decision to dismiss your appeal or whether it wishes to overturn that decision and uphold your appeal.
- Within 5 working days of the hearing, you will be informed of their decision with the detailed reasoning in writing. We will also inform you how to escalate your complaint to the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) if you consider that there was a failure to comply with the procedural rules or if there were any other irregularities in the way the appeal has been handled.
- If the Appeal Panel is not satisfied it has enough information to reach a decision it may send a letter containing its provisional view on a stage 2 appeal and/or requesting further information. This is called a 'minded to' letter. Where necessary, this letter will be sent within 5 working days of the Appeal Panel meeting. A minded to letter is an opportunity for the appellant to comment on the Appeal Panel's provisional view of the stage 2 appeal, to answer any questions or points of clarification raised in the letter and to provide any further information requested. The letter will set out how long you have to respond to it, but this is usually 7 days. The Appeal Panel will then meet to finally determine your stage 2 appeal considering any response to its minded to letter.

## 10. Complaints

- 10.1 The Council is here to help and support the people of West Sussex. Services are provided as efficiently as possible and it is expected that staff are helpful, polite and explain things clearly whether on the telephone, in writing or face to face.
- 10.2 Vehicle organised by the Council, or concerns about transport arrangements should be directed to:
- Email [school.transport@westsussex.gov.uk](mailto:school.transport@westsussex.gov.uk) or telephone 01243 753530
- 10.3 Full details can be viewed online regarding the council's [complaints procedure](#).