



CHILDREN AND FAMILIES SERVICE

HOME TO SCHOOL TRAVEL ASSISTANCE POLICY

CONTENTS

- 1 Introduction and Aims**
- 2 Legislative requirements**
- 3 Dundee City Council Travel Assistance Policy**
 - 3.1 Mainstream Travel - Eligibility
 - 3.1.1 Child or Young Person's Home Address
 - 3.1.2 Distance
 - 3.1.3 Safety
 - 3.1.4 Health
 - 3.1.5 Placing Requests
 - 3.1.6 Change of Address
 - 3.1.7 Nursery Requests
 - 3.1.8 Transport to college / alternative placements
 - 3.1.9 Other circumstances
 - 3.2 Additional Support Needs Eligibility
 - 3.2.1 Home to School Travel Assistance
 - 3.2.2 Process for Assessing Eligibility criteria
 - 3.2.3 Types of Travel Assistance
 - 3.2.4 Concessionary Travel
- 4 Travel Arrangement Process**
 - 4.1 Mainstream Travel
 - 4.2 Additional Support Needs Travel Assistance
 - 4.2.1 Application Process
 - 4.2.2 Variation to Home Address
 - 4.2.3 Use of Escorts
 - 4.3 Administration of Medication
 - 4.4 Review of Travel Arrangements
 - 4.4.1 Annual Review
 - 4.4.2 Change of Address
 - 4.5 Appeal Process
- 5 Code of conduct for children and young people**
- 6 Emergency Pick up**
- 7 Accident or Breakdown Information**
- 8 Monitoring and Improving Performance**
- 9 Contact Address and Complaints procedure**
- 10 Council/ Contractor / Driver / Escort Responsibilities**
- 11 Other Related Documentation**

POLICY STATEMENT: HOME - SCHOOL TRAVEL ASSISTANCE

1 INTRODUCTION AND AIMS

Dundee City Council with its Community Planning partners shares a vision that all children and young people will be safe, enjoy good health and have access to a wide range of experiences and opportunities to achieve their potential. This policy provides information to enable access to services through the provision of travel solutions in order to ensure that the above vision for children and young people is achieved.

Parents/ carers have a responsibility to ensure that their child/young person attends school including providing their required travel arrangements. Dundee City Council may however, provide travel assistance if the child/young person meets the distance criteria or has additional support needs that prevent them from travelling accompanied as necessary.

Dundee City Council wish to promote the independence and well-being of all children and young people through a range of travel options. All children and young people should be encouraged to follow a healthy lifestyle including walking a reasonable distance accompanied where necessary and where possible to school.

This policy is aimed at parents, carers; children and young people; relevant council staff involved in travel arrangements and other relevant stakeholders.

In implementing this policy Dundee City Council aims to:

- assist parents and carers in their responsibility of ensuring that their child attends school safely and on time
- ensure that the right children and young people get the right option for travelling to school
- be responsive to the concerns of parents and carers in the provision of appropriate travel assistance arrangements
- ensure the most effective, safe and economical use of resources by close monitoring of contracts
- keep its arrangements for school travel assistance under continuous review

This document aims to provide information about the provision of home to school travel assistance for eligible individual children and young people, including those with additional support needs.

2 LEGISLATIVE REQUIREMENTS

This policy takes account of the following areas of legislation:

2.1 Education (Scotland) Act 1980 as amended

Sections 50 and 51 to make such arrangements, as they consider necessary for the provision in respect of children and young people attending schools or other educational establishments.

Section 42 of the Act provides details of eligibility in relation to distance and other exceptional circumstances and conditions.

Section 23 of this act places the responsibility for school transport on the Education Authority in which the child or young person resides.

2.3 Standards in Scotland's Schools etc Act 2000

Section 37 of this act gives discretionary powers to the Director of Education in relation to the provision of transport for children attending pre-5 establishments

2.5 Additional Support for Learning (Scotland) Act, 2004 (amended 2009)

This act outlines roles and responsibilities for local authorities in relation to the assessment and provision for those children and young people identified with additional support needs. There are no requirements in relation to home-school travel assistance.

3 DUNDEE CITY COUNCIL TRAVEL ASSISTANCE POLICY

3.1 Mainstream Travel – Eligibility

3.1.1 Child/Young Person's Home Address

For the purpose of this policy statement, a home address is deemed to be the address held on school databases for each child/young person.

3.1.2 Distance

Travel assistance is provided for primary children where the catchment school is more than 2 miles from their recorded home address.

Travel assistance is provided for secondary-age young people where the catchment school is:

- more than two miles from home and the young person is in receipt of free school meals
- more than three miles from home

Local Authorities have a duty to provide free travel assistance to those children and young people who live outwith the statutory walking distances as noted in the Education Scotland Act 1980 section 42(4). Although the statutory walking distance is 2 miles for primary children less than 8 years, and for those who are older than 8 years old is 3 miles, DCC has offered the enhanced entitlement as detailed above.

The distance is determined based on the child or young person's home address to the nearest school gate using the Council's electronic mapping system. In the event that there is no place at either of the catchment schools, travel assistance may be provided if the distance between the home address and the alternative nearest school is beyond the walking distances specified above. Travel assistance will not be provided if the alternative school is within the walking distances specified above.

3.1.3 Safety

This applies to specific rural situations within the city boundary only.

Travel assistance will be provided (for the unsafe element of the route as a minimum) if the route to school is deemed unsafe because:

- the child or young person has to walk a route which does not comply with Road Safety GB 'Assessment of Walked Routes to School' guidance and
- the alternative safe route is beyond the walking distances specified above.

<http://www.roadsafetygb.org.uk/news/2105.html>

Please note that children and young people who live outwith Dundee, even though they attend a Dundee school, are not entitled to travel assistance provided by Dundee City Council.

3.1.4 Health

Consideration will be given to applications for school travel assistance on health / medical grounds which may prevent, on a permanent or temporary basis, a child or young person walking to and from their catchment school safely. In all cases the application must be supported by written confirmation from the child/young person's doctor / consultant. Requests should be made in writing to educationhometoschooltransport@dundeecity.gov.uk

3.1.5 Placing Requests

Parent / carers who apply for and are granted a place in a school which is not either of their catchment schools the parent / carer must accept full responsibility for the cost of the transport to and from school.

3.1.6 Change of Address

If a child moves address during the school year, which results in the existing school no longer being their catchment school and the parent/carer chooses for their child to remain at their existing school, travel assistance will not be provided. Parent /carers will have the option of transferring to one of their new catchment schools and if the distance criteria noted in paragraph 3.1.2 applies travel assistance would be granted. Parent / carers should also note that their catchment secondary schools are based on the child/young person's home address.

3.1.7 Nursery requests

There is no statutory entitlement to travel assistance for nursery children. In exceptional circumstances, children offered a place by the authority to Frances Wright Nursery may be authorised for travel assistance at the discretion of the Executive Director of the Children and Families Service.

3.1.8 Transport to college / alternative placements

Where a young person attends college or a place other than school as part of their educational programme, and transport is already in place, requests for travel assistance can be submitted by the Head Teacher or Named Person as part of the support plan agreed at the Team Around The Child (TATC) meeting.

3.1.9 Other circumstances

Other exceptional circumstances maybe considered on an individual basis and be negotiated depending on individual need. In each case the final decisions lies with the ASN Transport Team.

3.2 Additional Support Needs Eligibility

3.2.1 Home to School Travel Assistance

Home to school travel assistance is provided on the grounds of:

- distance entitlement
- assessment of additional support needs affecting ability to travel to/from school assisted by parent/carer as required.
 - The distance criteria applies to all children and young people as outlined in paragraph 3.1.2 however, some who live within the distance criteria maybe considered for school travel assistance depending on their additional support needs as detailed below:
- the child/young person has additional support needs which prevents them from travelling to school with assistance from their parent / carer as appropriate in the same way that members of their peer group, who do not have additional support needs, would access their education.
- the child/young person has a physical or sensory impairment or severe, profound or multiple learning difficulty which prevents parent/carer assisted travel and which is assessed as requiring specialist travel arrangements or supervision.
- the child/young person is placed by the Complex and Additional Support Needs Management Group to a non-catchment school which is **within** the mileage criteria outlined above and would therefore be assessed for travel assistance on the basis of **need alone**.
- the child/young person is placed by the Complex and Additional Support Needs Management Group to a non-catchment school which is **outwith** the mileage criteria outlined above and would therefore be assessed for travel assistance on the basis of **distance entitlement**.

3.2.2 Process for Assessing Eligibility criteria

- It is acknowledged that some children and young people with additional support needs will require supported travel arrangement because of the complexity of their additional support needs. Many children and young people will be able to make use of mainstream travel arrangements including parent/carer assisted travel which ensures their inclusion and encourages independence. The ability to negotiate journeys as part of this process and where possible independent travel should be encouraged. This may result in a move away from fully supported travel assistance depending on the child's or young person's abilities or needs. In all cases travel arrangements will be reviewed prior to transition from primary to secondary education.
- The assessment process for children/young people who may require travel assistance due to their additional support needs includes input from Dundee's Team Around The Child (TATC) Staged Intervention Framework. The TATC is

best placed to assess and support individual needs and to evidence those against the criteria within this policy. This will include assessment information from school staff, community health and allied health professionals and information from parent and carers.

- The needs of a child or young person may change over time and therefore the parent / carer is responsible for completing an annual Travel Assistance application form for Children and Young Person with Additional Support Needs. Application forms must be submitted by the due date in order to ensure appropriate arrangements are in place. If the application is delayed this may mean that arrangements are not organised for the start of the new session. In this instance, parents/ carers will be responsible to ensure their child attends school until an application is received, assessed and confirmed that Travel Assistance is authorised.
- The ASN Transport Team will write to parent/carers following assessment of the application form by the end of June each year and indicate whether travel assistance has been declined or granted. If granted, there will be further communication prior to the end of the summer holidays detailing the form of travel assistance that will be provided.
- If parent/carers disagree with the decision of the ASN Transport team then they will have the opportunity to appeal this decision, the process for appealing the decision is noted in paragraph 4.5.
- Children/young people who move to another school will not automatically receive travel assistance. Assessment for eligibility will be based on the above criteria and through the completion of the appropriate travel assistance application form.

3.2.3 Types of Travel Assistance

In determining the types of travel for those children/young people authorised for travel assistance, consideration should be given to the following:

- Distance to be travelled
- Ability for independent travel
- Journey duration
- Nature of additional support needs
- Need for supervision

Travel assistance may take the form of:

- Escorted Walking
- Escorted / non escorted transport by Public bus service
- Parental Contract
- Escorted / Non escorted Private Minibus
- Escorted / Non escorted Taxi

3.3 Concessionary Travel

Education authorities have a statutory obligation to allocate a concessionary space when required where there are vacant seats on a dedicated school transport contract. A concessionary place can be granted and charged for in accordance with the Education (Scotland) Act 1980 as amended in 2003. The place granted to

specific children/young people for whom an application has been made however, must be given up, with immediate effect, if it is required by a child with a legitimate entitlement. Concessionary travel is not available on registered school bus services or available to the general public.

Parents/carers should email educationhometoschooltransport@dundeecity.gov.uk requesting a concessionary space.

4 TRAVEL ARRANGEMENT PROCESS

4.1 Mainstream travel

If the distance criteria applies, a parent / carer is required to complete a Bus Pass Application form in order to claim free travel assistance (bus pass) allowing access to mainstream transport. The form is assessed and processed by the School Support Team within Children and Families Service. This will be awarded if the distance criteria noted in paragraphs 3.1.2 is met.

4.2 Additional support needs travel assistance

4.2.1 Application process

The TATC meeting will have discussed the travel assistance needs for the young person and if appropriate a Parent / Carers who wishes to apply for travel assistance would be required to complete a Travel Assistance application for Children/ Young People with Additional Support Needs no later than April each year. In every case, ASN travel assistance requests will be considered by the ASN transport team. Where the criteria are met and travel assistance is awarded the most appropriate form of travel arrangements as noted in paragraph 3.2.3 will be implemented.

4.2.2 Variation to Home Address

Requests to pick up and drop off at addresses other than the home address will not be accommodated except for children/young people attending Kingspark school who will be provided with travel assistance, if required, to a nominated Out of School Care Club. This will only be authorised provided there is no additional cost to the Authority.

Consideration will be given to changes of arrangements in situations deemed to be an emergency by Children and Families service staff in accordance with the emergency contact details provided by the parent. Ad hoc arrangements, however will not be accommodated.

4.2.3 Use of Escorts

The assessed need for an escort lies with the ASN Transport team who have gathered information from key stakeholders including parents, TATC team and medical professionals. The recruitment, training and deployment of escorts is undertaken by the ASN Transport and Sustainable Transport Teams, in consultation with Human Resources officers where appropriate.

4.3 Administration of Medication

Medication cannot be administered by an escort under any circumstances unless there is an appropriate medical protocol in place and the escort has been appropriately trained. Drivers are provided with a list of children at the beginning of each year which includes any medical conditions.

4.4 Review of travel arrangements

4.4.1 Annual Review

In all cases travel arrangements under this policy will be subject to annual review, although DCC reserve the right to review travel arrangements, if circumstances changes, throughout the academic year. The provision of ASN travel assistance may change or cease as the child grows older or becomes more able to travel independently.

4.4.2 Change of Address

Parent / Carers who are awarded travel assistance are required to inform either ASN Transport Team, Children and Families Service, 50 Lindsay Street, Dundee DD1 1NL (01382 433848) or email educationhometoschooltransport@dundeecity.gov.uk if their home address changes during the academic year. Parents/ carers are also required to inform the school of any changes in address. This change will result in a review of travel assistance arrangements, which may revise the travel solution in place.

Parents are responsible for ensuring appropriate notice is provided to the Council to enable a travel assistance review to take place. In the event that appropriate notice has not been provided parents will be responsible for ensuring their child attends school while the appropriate review takes place.

Paragraph 3.1.6 (Change of Address) provides further information.

4.5 Appeal Process

Applications for additional support needs transport will be assessed by the ASN Transport team within children and Families service. Appeals against decisions that this team have made may be completed in writing and addressed to:

Education Manager (Additional Support Needs)
Children and Families Service
Dundee House
50 North Lindsay Street
Dundee
DD1 1NL

5 CODE OF CONDUCT FOR CHILDREN/YOUNG PEOPLE

- 5.1 The responsibility for ensuring the safe and acceptable behaviour of children/young people travelling on school transport remains with the parents /carers. Inappropriate behaviour may result in the provision of free school travel assistance being temporarily or permanently withdrawn. In such circumstances the parents/ carers will be responsible for making their own arrangements for ensuring that their child gets to and from school.
- 5.2 Should consistent and serious inappropriate behaviour whilst on school transport persist, this should be brought to the attention of the Head Teacher and ASN transport team who will attempt to resolve the situation.
- 5.3 Children and young people who have additional support needs may sometimes communicate with challenging behaviour, which should be taken into account during the risk assessment process. Measures should be put in place to ensure that any risk on transport is minimised.

6 EMERGENCY PICK UP

If a child or young person becomes ill during the school day, the parent/ carer should be contacted to transport the child or young person home if they need to leave school early. Operators and escorts are not authorised to make any changes to normal transport arrangements unless directed by Sustainable Transport team in City Development.

7 ACCIDENT OR BREAKDOWN INFORMATION

In the event of an accident, the driver must abide by guidance contained within the Highway Code. The driver will immediately, by telephone, contact the ASN Transport Team of the incident, who will notify the parent/carer of the incident at the earliest opportunity. Full records of any incidents will be recorded and retained by Sustainable Transport Team in accordance with contract specification.

8 MONITORING AND IMPROVING PERFORMANCE

Transport to school is an important part of a child's education experience and good relationships between Operators, Drivers, Escorts, Parent/Carers and Children is essential to ensure that this experience is positive. Whilst the continuity of transport arrangements, including drivers and any escorts will be taken into account, changes will take place from time to time and the council reserves the right to place different drivers/escorts on routes as required. Changes to staff on routes will be communicated as soon as they are known recognising that short term illness may prevent an early notification.

The effective operation of Contract transport can best be achieved by a partnership between Sustainable Transport Team City Development, Operators, Escorts, School staff and Parent/carers.

The Sustainable Transport Team within the City Development Department is responsible for procuring, managing and monitoring the performance of each school transport contract. This is carried out through close liaison with the school,

parent/carer and transport provider. This could also involve Children and Families Service Health and Safety Officer, the Vehicle Inspectorate and Police Scotland. The Sustainable Transport Team will, once per contract period, undertake a service user satisfaction survey with parents, carers and children/young people.

Additional documentation is available which provides guidelines for Contractors, Drivers, Escorts, Schools and Parent/Carers.

Sustainable Transport Team, City Development welcomes the views of parents with regards to improvements to the travel process.

9 CONTACT ADDRESS AND COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

It is important for parents/carers to have the opportunity to ask questions about eligibility of their child for school travel assistance and this policy.

Policy queries or concerns contact:

educationhometoschooltransport@dundeecity.gov.uk or write to:

ASN Travel Assistance Coordinator
Children and Families Service
Dundee House
50 North Lindsay Street
Dundee
DD1 1NL

Responses to issues, concerns or complaints will be responded to within 5 working days from the receipt, unless there are exceptional circumstances which would be communicated in advance.

If the complaint is more serious, then please refer to Dundee City Council's complaints procedure and process. Details for this are available on the website at <http://www.dundeecity.gov.uk/complaints/>

10 COUNCIL/CONTRACTOR/ DRIVER/ESCORT RESPONSIBILITIES

The Council is responsible for the general safety and welfare of children/young people during the time they are being conveyed and when alighting/boarding the vehicle at their school.

Bus and taxi operators are subject to detailed Conditions of Contract, which cover a wide range of requirements relating to the safe and legal operation of transport. In addition, all operators, drivers and escorts are issued with guidance and should undergo training, which explains how they should perform their duties including the procedures that should be followed in certain emergency situations, such as breakdowns.

The driver (and escort when provided) will take all reasonable steps to ensure the security, safety, dignity and comfort of children and young people in their care.

Contractor drivers and escorts, who provide home to school transport, undertake PVG checks in accordance with Disclosure Scotland in addition to appropriate medical assessments.

11 OTHER RELATED DOCUMENTATION

- Code of Practice
- Information leaflet for parents/ carers
- Manual for home - school transport escorts