

REVISED SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS TRANSPORT POLICY FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE IN SHEFFIELD 2008

A Guide for Parents and Carers.

The Authority is committed to ensuring high standards in Sheffield so that each child and young person's journey is as safe and comfortable as possible and contributes to the support of each child and young person in the development of their independence and life skills.

If you would like a copy of this policy in Braille, audiocassette or large print, please contact us on 0114 273 6394

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Haddii jeclaan lahayd nuqul macluumaadkaan ah oo ku qoran luqad kale fadlan nagala soo xiriir taleefankaan 0114 273 6394

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 This Policy document outlines home to school transport assistance available for children and young people with Special Educational Needs (SEN) who live in Sheffield including those who are 'looked after' by the Local Authority. It constitutes a revision to the existing (2002) SEN Transport Policy.
- 1.2 There is no change in the entitlement for children and young people to receive transport assistance under the revisions outlined in this Policy document
- 1.3 The revisions are aimed at; engaging with parents / carers to encourage their children to develop their life skills and promote the ability of children and young people to travel as independently as possible; equipping children and young people with additional independent travel skills to improve their opportunities and aspirations to make a positive contribution to their community, including economic well-being and to stay safe in preparation for adult life
- 1.4 Children and young people who have special educational needs and attend their nearest mainstream school or, a special school or integrated resource which is named in their Statement of Special Educational Needs (SSEN) which is outside of the statutory walking distance from their home address will be entitled to statutory transport assistance.
- 1.5 Children and young people who are unable to walk to school by reason of their special educational needs, disability or mobility difficulties may receive discretionary transport assistance even if they are living within the Statutory walking distance of their nearest appropriate school.
- 1.6 A child attending their nearest appropriate school who has an injury or temporary medical condition may be provided with discretionary transport assistance on a short-term basis following an assessment of need.
- 1.7 Where a child / young person is not entitled to receive statutory transport assistance, parents / carers may wish to apply for discretionary transport assistance. Parents / Carers will be required to make a written application for discretionary transport for their child in all cases.
- 1.8 Where statutory or discretionary transport assistance is agreed, a Transport Information Form must also be completed in all cases to enable us to make the appropriate travel arrangements for the child / young person

2. General

- 2.1 Each child / young person undergoing a statutory assessment of their Special Educational Needs will also have their individual transport needs assessed taking into account their age, mobility and the effect of their special educational needs on their ability to travel.
- 2.2 The home address is considered to be the one that is registered for the purpose of claiming Child Benefit.
- 2.3 Children / young people will not be delivered to an alternative address due to parent / carer social reasons or work commitments.
- 2.4 If the child / young person lives outside of the Statutory walking distance to the school which is identified by the Authority as the nearest appropriate school to meet their needs, transport assistance will normally be provided on the basis of a zero rated bus pass. If it is established by the Authority that in addition to the distance criteria the young person requires special transport assistance, an appropriate vehicle as determined by the Authority will be arranged.
- 2.5 The zero rated pass will operate from the nearest bus stop between the child / young person's home and their nearest appropriate school. If the child / young person requires special arrangements they will operate from and to the nearest pick-up point where possible. The nearest pick-up-point will be no further than a distance of 400 (four hundred) metres from the home address
- 2.6 It is the parent / carers responsibility to take children / young people to the pick-up point at the designated time at start of the day and ensure that they access the vehicle safely
- 2.7 It is the parent / carer's responsibility to collect children / young people from the pick-up point at the designated time at the end of the day and ensure that they exit the vehicle safely
- 2.8 If the parent / carer wishes to nominate a responsible adult to act on their behalf to supervise the pick-up and drop- off arrangements, based on the child / young person's home address, this must be notified to the SEN Team in advance in writing giving the person's full name and contact details and relationship to the parent / carer / the child.
- 2.9 A small minority of children and young people with the most profound and / or medically complex needs will be collected and returned to their home or respite address.
- 2.10 The Authority will normally arrange any special equipment or supervision arrangements such as an Escort in accordance with the child / young person's special educational needs.
- 2.11 It is the responsibility of parents/carers to meet other transport needs including travel to and from work-experience placements, extra-curricular activities or any other arrangements they may enter into with their child's school.
- 2.12 If parents/carers choose to send their child to more distant provision of the same type transport assistance will not be allocated.
- 2.13 Children / young people will be allocated seats for their travel and only in exceptional circumstances and following an assessment will travel with children / young people from other schools.

- 2.14 Siblings who do not have an allocation for transport assistance in their own right and parents of children / young people of children with allocated transport will not be allowed to accompany their child to school on SEN transport without the expressed and written approval of the SEN Manager, Assessment and Placement.
- 2.15 If your child displays behaviour that is considered as a risk to themselves or other people the Local Authority have the right to remove them from transport provision, taking full account of their special educational needs and or disability, as applicable. It is responsibility of parent's to ensure that their child attends school.

3. Eligibility

- 3.1 If the child or young person attends their nearest appropriate school, either mainstream, Integrated Resource or Special School, which is named in their Statement of Special Educational Needs and that school is outside of the Statutory walking distance they will qualify for statutory transport assistance.

- 3.2 The statutory walking distance is:

Two miles for children aged under eight
Three miles for children aged eight and over

- 3.3 Transport assistance will normally comprise one of the following and will be decided on an individual basis, depending on the level of the child's needs and difficulties:

- 3.3.1 A parental allowance may be payable to parents / carers who may wish to use their own vehicle to transport their 'eligible child' to and from school instead of the use of a bus pass / shared vehicle. Payment will only be made for the part of the journey when the pupil is travelling in the vehicle. Further information on this scheme can be obtained from the CYPD Transport Services.
- 3.3.2 Free travel on an appropriate vehicle as determined by the Authority between the nearest pick-up point to their home address and the school they attend if the child or young person has a Statement of Special Educational needs which recommends special assistance is required. It is the responsibility of parents/carers to ensure their child's safety or to nominate a responsible adult to act on their behalf by making appropriate arrangements to accompany the child / young person to and from the designated pick-up point and to see them safely onto and off the vehicle.
- 3.3.3 A 'zero fare' bus pass that allows a child / young person and where appropriate their parent / carer to travel by bus between the nearest bus stop to their home address and the school they attend. A zero fare pass will not be allocated for the accompanying parent / carer by Sheffield City Council however a carers pass may be available. Information can be obtained from the South Yorkshire Passenger Transport Executive.
- 3.3.4 Children with multiple/ complex needs may be collected from and returned to their home address or respite care arrangements or as determined by their Social Care planning. The parent / carer or the nominated responsible adult must be at home to deliver them onto the transport and receive them from the homeward journey.
- 3.3.5 Social reasons or parents/carers work commitments will not be regarded as valid reasons for; determining eligibility for transport assistance or; the type of assistance or; the pick up and drop off times in respect of the child / young person or the pick up and drop off arrangements other than from or to the child / young person's home address.

- 3.3.6 Eligibility for a type of transport assistance other than a zero-fare bus pass (ie special transport assistance) will be based on the assessment of need factors as identified from the information contained within the Transport Information Form
- 3.3.7 All transport assistance eligibility and arrangements are subject to review by the Authority
- 3.3.8 The Authority will consider any recommended change in a pupil's transport arrangement that arise from an Annual Review meeting. The Annual Review, completed by the Authority, will determine any changes to the entitlement of transport assistance.
- 3.3.9 Where the child /young person / their needs are considered appropriate for the independent travel schemes they be eligible for a 'zero fare' bus pass.
- 3.3.10 Where children /young people are entitled to free school meals or whose parents are in receipt of the maximum level of Working Tax Credit the child may be entitled to transport assistance. Please refer to the Authority's main Transport Policy for details of eligibility for transport assistance under these circumstances.
- 3.3.11 Where the parents / carers of children / young people are themselves disabled and unable to accompany their child to school the child may be entitled to free transport assistance. Please refer to the Authority's main Transport Policy for details of eligibility for transport assistance under these circumstances.
- 3.3.12 Where children /young people live within the statutory walking distance of the nearest appropriate school they will be entitled to transport assistance if the nature of the route is such that they cannot be reasonably expected to walk, accompanied as necessary, in reasonable safety. The assessment will be carried out by the Authority in accordance with published criteria. Please refer to the Authority's main Transport Policy for information and details of eligibility for transport assistance under these circumstances.
- 3.3.12 All young people who are aiming to attend sixth form education (Post – 16) at school or college need to have their transport requirements assessed before accepting a place on a course. For young people with a Statement of Special Educational Needs this assessment will be based on the latest Annual Review information. The eligibility criteria for assistance will be common to all Local Authority maintained settings in line with the general eligibility as outlined above.

4. Planning for Independence

- 4.1 Many secondary aged young people who have been previously assessed as requiring transport assistance other than a zero fare bus pass will have their needs reviewed and assessed at each Annual Review of their Statement of Special Educational Needs. Where possible, the young person will receive support for independence and mobility training as part of their school curriculum with the aim of improving their independent travel skills in preparation for adult life.
- 4.2 Plans to encourage independent travel will be put in place by the school and parents/carers working in partnership with the L.A with agreed targets and evidence of progress to be presented at each Annual Review meeting.
- 4.3 School and parents/carers will encourage children / young people to take up public/community transport options (where appropriate) at the earliest opportunity - this will be regarded as a positive achievement towards their progress in becoming an independent traveller. There may be a period of time during which the young person requires transport assistance that combines

elements of independent travel whilst still travelling on shared transport for some journeys as part of a longer term plan towards independence. See Appendix 2 Independent Travel Training (ITT)

5. Children and Young People Who Attend School Outside of Sheffield

- 5.1 Children / young people who attend a residential school outside Sheffield which is named in their Statement of Special Educational Needs as being the most appropriate to meet their needs, on a 38 week (i.e. termly) or 52 week basis will be allocated a maximum of six return journeys from / to their place of education. The Authority will not fund any additional journeys.

6. Pupils with Physical or Medical Needs

- 6.1 Children / young people attending their nearest appropriate school who have a short-term medical or mobility difficulty which prevents them from travelling by public transport may apply for special transport assistance. Parents/carers must submit a request for such assistance with supporting evidence from the relevant professional (s) for example, a medical Consultant. If transport assistance is agreed by us it will be provided on a time limited basis and you will be informed about this depending on the individual circumstances of your child. If it is not agreed parents / carers have the right to appeal the decision. Please see 'Appeals' at Section 9 below.

7. Emergency Arrangements

- 7.1 An alternative telephone contact number should be provided by parents on the Transport Information Form for our use in the event of an emergency situation where the Transport Team are unable to contact the parent / carer. The Authority requires this information solely for this purpose and not for the purpose of making arrangements to collect or deliver children / young people from or to any address other than their home address and into the care of the person with parental responsibility for the child (or another nominated responsible adult as notified to us in advance, as above).
- 7.2 If an emergency situation arises and the parent / carer / responsible adult is unable to meet the child / young person at the return school journey pick-up-point, or be at home to receive their child if this is the usual agreed arrangement, the Authority will take the child / young person to a designated place of Safety as follows:
- Mossbrook School for primary school age children
 - Bents Green School for secondary school age young people

8. Applying for Transport Assistance

- 8.1 Statutory entitlement is decided using the distance criteria as stated under 'Eligibility' above. All other transport arrangements are deemed to be discretionary.
- 8.2 If your child has a statutory entitlement to transport assistance as described above under 'Eligibility' you will be informed of this when the Final Statement of Special Educational Needs is issued. A Transport Information Form (TIF) will be sent to you, which must be completed and returned to enable us to make the appropriate arrangements for your child according to their individual needs. Transport cannot be arranged until the completed form has been returned.

- 8.3 Discretionary transport provision is not provided automatically. Having read the Policy, if parents / carers believe that their child should be given transport assistance they should write to the Special Educational Needs (Assessment and Placement) Team and explain why.
- 8.4 If statutory or discretionary entitlement to transport assistance is agreed, parents / carers will be informed by the Special Educational Needs (Assessment and Placement) Team in writing and sent information about what happens next and when the arrangement will be reviewed or ceased.

Where parents or carers disagree with the Authority's decision not to agree transport assistance or if the Authority decides to cease an existing entitlement, parents / carers have a right to appeal that decision, in writing.

9. Appeals

- 9.1 Parents/carers have the right to appeal against the Authority's decision not to provide discretionary transport assistance (i.e. a zero fare bus pass, free travel on a vehicle, or reimbursement of fuel costs) if they feel there are circumstances that have not been taken into consideration. Appeals are heard by the Councillors of Sheffield City Council through the Admissions Board.
- 9.2 Parent and carers will be advised in correspondence of the right to appeal. They will be offered support and further advice as necessary.
- 9.3 A written appeal by letter must be submitted to the Authority by the parent / carer.
- 9.4 Officers from SEN Section will prepare advice to accompany the letter of appeal and the collated information is submitted to the next available Admissions Board.
- 9.5 The Board (comprising 3 or 5 elected members) will consider the appeal with reference to the Policy. An Officer will be available to answer questions regarding the Policy.
- 9.6 The information supplied by the parent/carer will be made anonymous to conceal the identity of the child.
- 9.7 A decision will be made on the day of the appeal and the outcome and explanation will be provided in writing to the appellant within 10 working days.

If transport assistance is awarded through appeal, it will usually be until the end of the academic year. The child / young person's circumstances and continued eligibility for transport assistance will be reviewed prior to the commencement of the next academic year. There is no further right of appeal once the decision by Councillors has been made.

USEFUL CONTACT DETAILS FOR PARENTS / CARERS

Your child's school	
School Telephone Number	
Class Teacher	
Your child's Transport Operator	
Operator Telephone Number	
Pick up time	
Drop off time	
Social Care Dept	0114 2734665 (Redvers House reception 8.45 – 17.00)
CYPD Transport Services	0114 2736195 / 0114 2734802 CYPD.transport@sheffield.gov.uk
South Yorkshire Passenger Transport Executive - Traveline	01709 515151
Emergency 'place of safety' arrangements:	Mossbrook School (Primary) 0114 237 2768 Bents Green School (Secondary) 0114 236 3545

Points to note about the Transport Service

- In the event of school closures or transport problems caused by bad weather, please listen to Radio Sheffield 1035 AM or 88.6, 94.7, 104.1 FM) for regular reports and updates
- If there is no parent / carer present to meet a child from the vehicle on the homeward journey the child may be taken to a respite centre as a place of safety for collection by a parent / carer
- All escorts and drivers have completed satisfactory police checks (CRB)