

## **CRITERIA FOR PROVISION OF TRANSPORT FOR PUPILS WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS, EXCLUDED PUPILS, AND LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN NEEDS SUMMER 2001**

### **1. General practice for all school pupils**

All pupils, including those with Special Educational Needs, are subject to the general Local Education Authority Transport criteria as determined by statute and Council Policy, ie:

- Primary aged pupils who live over two miles from their nearest or appropriate school qualify for free transport.
- Secondary aged pupils who live over three miles from nearest or appropriate school qualify for free transport.
- Free transport can be granted by the Authority on any other grounds it considers appropriate (Education Act 1996). Parents have a right in law (Education Act 1996) to state a preference of school for their children, but transport is not normally considered outside the above criteria.

For all pupils, including SEN, parental application for free/assisted transport should be made to the LA using Form TRAN 1, available from the LA. In certain cases this application process may be undertaken through the LA's internal procedures using TRAN 25. Each application will be considered on its merits and the applicant notified of the decision. Where free transport is provided, arrangements will be made to meet the needs of the individual pupil. Each case will be dealt with in respect of its own circumstances and its merits and, for instance, an escort may be provided, provision for carriage by wheelchair made, or specialised seat provided, etc. Clearly the length of the journey, the nature of the pupil's special needs, the type of transport, the age of the child, the type of seating arrangements, any medical conditions, whether other pupils are carried, and other factors will influence what support will be provided and what changes may or may not be needed to the type of transport arrangements. These arrangements, once made, can be subject to change in order to make efficient use of resources, whilst at the same time continuing to meet the needs of the pupils. The Council reserve the right to withdraw transport where a pupil does not behave in a suitable manner that allows transport to safely and reasonably continue.

A Code of Conduct for transport is available on request.

Where free transport on SEN grounds is not granted, the LA's rules on mainstream transport entitlement may, or may not, mean free transport on other grounds.

### **2. Statemented Pupils**

Pupils holding a Statement are not automatically provided with free transport outside the rules set out in 1 above. If pupils have specific needs highlighted and supported by professional advice, then each will be judged on its merits.

Such might include any or a combination of:

- Severe Learning Difficulties/Profound Multiple Learning Difficulties or such a level of maturity that pupils are unable to cope with independent travel.
- Significant communication and interaction difficulties.
- Physical/Sensory Disability.

- Significant behavioural, emotional and social difficulties to the extent that pupils are unable to cope with independent travel.

Provision of free transport in these exceptional cases is subject to approval by the Children's Services Manager, and will be dealt with as part of the school placement process. Transport would only normally be considered to the pupil's nearest school or to the school considered appropriate by the LA.

### **3. Excluded Pupils/Poor Attenders**

Transport will normally be provided for an excluded pupil to their nearest provider (other than the provider they have been excluded from) subject to the distance criteria. This will include schools and Pupil Referral Units.

Transport for these pupils is considered with documentary evidence from the EWO/ Educational Psychologist and is subject to approval of Children's Services. Transport would only normally be considered to the pupil's nearest provider or the provider considered appropriate by the LA.

### **4. Transport for alternative education packages at Key Stage 4**

Some pupils require access to a package which might involve off site links for attendance at FE/other providers/work experience. These pupils may be in receipt of a Statement of SEN or identified as being at risk of exclusion when the pupil is on the school roll, transport to/from such packages remain the responsibility of the school.

### **5. Pre-School Pupils**

Pre-School pupils with a Statement or who are undergoing Statutory Assessment are considered for discretionary free transport in the context of advice from the medical, psychological and education professionals involved. Transport would only normally be considered to the pupil's nearest school/nursery setting or to the school/nursery setting considered appropriate by the LA.

### **6. Post 16**

A pupil's Statement will normally lapse at 16 years of age, unless a pupil is staying on at an LA Sixth Form or where their needs are such that it may be extended, subject to them meeting the criteria for statemented pupils.

If a child is going on for Further Education or to Sixth Form Education, applications for free transport will be considered on the merits of each case.

The grounds and context for considering free Post 16 transport include:

- Whether the applicant has held a Statement of Special Educational Needs.
- Whether the applicant has a physical or sensory impairment that makes it difficult to access public transport independently.
- Consideration of the distance between the applicant's home and college.
- Consideration of the applicant attending the designated college for the course.
- Whether the applicant has a significant medical condition which is likely to impair their ability to travel independently or which may require them to access medical treatment on route.

- Whether the applicant previously exhibited severe behavioural/emotional needs which is likely to impair their ability to travel independently and is likely to be of a long term nature.
- Whether the applicant has significant learning difficulties of a long term nature that might result in limited life skills/poor social skills and a low level of independence or self-esteem.
- Whether the applicant has a severe speech/language impediment and/or communication problems.
- Whether the applicant has been referred to an Educational or Clinical Psychologist.
- Consideration of the complexity of the route from home to the bus stop and the directness of the bus route, including the number of changes.
- Consideration of how vulnerable the applicant is to overtures, sexual or otherwise, of others.
- Consideration of whether the applicant is likely to pose a risk to others.

All requests will normally need to be supported by professional recommendations on completion of the application form, eg Educational Psychologists, School Staff, Connexions, Education Officer.

Students and their parents are advised to discuss transport needs with their college/school and Social Services, prior to enrolment.

A TRAN 16 form should be completed and submitted to the Council for each application.

Where pupils do not qualify for help with transport on SEN grounds they can apply for assisted transport under the terms of the Council's Post 16 Contribution Scheme, again by using a TRAN 16 form.

## **7. Looked After Children**

For this group of children, transport will be considered where appropriate, to their existing school and where approved, funded jointly by Education and Social Services Directorates. Distance criteria will normally apply and children will attend their appropriate school where possible.

## **8. Summary**

In all cases, provision of transport is considered by Children's Services.

As an alternative to free provision, some assistance with transport may be considered (ie payment or help with travel expenses) and granted where appropriate.