

Hurworth School

Transport Policy

Accepted by: Governing Body – May 2007

Senior Leadership Team Lead Reviewer: Ann Kennedy

Review Cycle: 3 Years

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This statement is a supplement to, and not in substitution of Darlington Borough Council's Transport Policy document.

The purpose of this policy statement is to indicate the organisation and arrangements for carrying out the policy within the school.

The policy will be kept up to date by the inclusion of all relevant information from the Schools Transport Section of the Children's Services department.

Specifics at Hurworth School

Nine coaches and five taxis transport children to Hurworth School.

Coaches serve Darlington, Middleton St George and the Great Stainton/Bishopton area

One taxi is used to serve the outlying farms around Hurworth Moor and the others are provided as a support to SEN and autism students.

We believe that each student who travels to school on school transport has the right to do so safely.

Students are asked to read the information issued to them when they receive their travel pass and to adhere to the rules.

Safety in the school yard

Up to nine coaches use the main school yard twice per school day and there are procedures in place to ensure student safety.

The coach companies are required to not allow students to disembark before 8.45 a.m. when there will be adult supervision. When students leave each bus they are directed behind the barriers .

At 3.30 p.m. students are required to make their way to the appropriate coach in a particular direction.

Members of the staff duty team supervise the yard at 3.30 p.m. and ensure that the building is clear before authorising the buses to leave.

Parents are discouraged from using the school yard as a car park at the times when the coaches are on the yard.

Problems/Inappropriate behaviour

If a student loses or misplaces their pass temporary passes are available from the school office. A temporary pass cannot be issued for longer than a week, and so a new pass must be applied for if the pass is lost. (£6.00 from School Transport)

The Office staff are available to issue a temporary pass at lunchtime everyday – students are encouraged not to ask for passes at the end of the school day.

Travel bans are imposed if a student's behaviour is in breach of the regulations. The length of the ban imposed matches the severity of the incident : and the length tends to be accumulative. A log of these bans is kept in school. Parents are informed by a letter and by a telephone call.

Permanent bus bans are imposed as the result of serious incidents. A log of these is kept at school. Parents are informed by a letter and a telephone call.

In most cases, a bus warning letter is sent to parents before such a ban is imposed, unless the incident is a severe health and safety risk and warrants an immediate ban.

If damage occurs on a coach those guilty will be required to meet the cost of the repair. A travel ban would also be imposed.

A copy of all bus bans are forwarded to the LA.

Consultation between school and the School Transport section is frequent.

Occasionally students miss their bus at the end of the day and they are reminded frequently that if this happens they should report to the school office to either contact home for a lift to be arranged or a member of staff will take the child home.

Seatbelts

The law about the wearing of seatbelts has been changed recently. As a school we support the wearing of seatbelts and encourage our students to wear them on each trip.



CHILDREN'S SERVICES

Transport Policy Document

2006/2007

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1. INTRODUCTION

A local authority has a duty to provide or arrange free transport to and from school for a pupil of statutory school age who lives in its area if:

- The pupil is under eight years of age and the shortest walking route to the nearest suitable school is over two miles;
- The pupil has reached their eighth birthday and the shortest walking route to the nearest suitable school is over three miles;
- The route, whatever its length, is unsafe if travelled on foot, even if the child is accompanied by an adult; or
- There are exceptional circumstances.

This booklet outlines the transport policy of Darlington Borough Council, which is currently more generous than its statutory duty set out above. It gives information on transport provision for pupils in schools and for those pupils continuing in post compulsory education.

The Borough Council also has in place a Behaviour on School Transport policy, which is intended to give both pupils, and parents information/guidance on how good behaviour on school transport can be encouraged, and the way incidents of poor behaviour will be managed.

Copies of the policy are issued to all pupils for whom transport provision has been secured by the Borough Council.

Further details can be obtained from:

**School Transport Section
Darlington Borough Council
Children's Services
Town Hall
Darlington
DL1 5QT**

**Telephone: 01325 388851 or 388852 Home to School Transport
Email: school.transport@darlington.gov.uk**

**Telephone: 01325 388851 Post 16 Education Transport
Email: post16.transport@darlington.gov.uk**

2. HOME TO SCHOOL TRANSPORT FOR CHILDREN OF STATUTORY SCHOOL AGE

Under present policy arrangements Darlington Borough Council provides free transport to the nearest appropriate and/or suitable (Community) school, or the nearest appropriate Voluntary Aided (Church) school for parents who adhere to that particular faith and who obtain a place at that school where that school is more than two miles from the parental home using the shortest available walking route.

The nearest suitable school is the one which offers an efficient full-time programme of education suited to the age, ability and aptitude of the child. Certain areas are linked to particular schools to secure admission for the pupils in those areas and to limit travel costs. In these instances, the Authority will identify the appropriate school. These arrangements are referred to as 'Associated Transport Provision'.

Free transport to Voluntary Aided (Church) schools will be granted only to those pupils whose parents adhere to that particular faith. Parental Adherence is defined: to the Roman Catholic faith, where at least one parent and the pupil are baptised Roman Catholic; and to the Anglican faith, where at least one parent is a confirmed Anglican and the pupil is baptised Anglican. In all other circumstances a 'suitable' school will be a (Community) School. Applicants will be asked to provide confirmation of their adherence to a particular faith such as baptismal or confirmation certificates to confirm their entitlement to transport.

Safety

All drivers and passenger assistants engaged on education transport contracts are subject to an enhanced Criminal Records Bureau disclosure as part of the contract. All transport operators contracted on education transport are required to provide the following information:

- Vehicle registration and plate details for taxis.
- Insurance certificates.
- Vehicle test certificates.
- Operators licence for PSV vehicles.
- Training on passenger assistants

The School Transport Section carries out regular checks on operator vehicles and their staff. Where necessary these are done in conjunction with the Police and Vehicle Inspectorate.

Parental Preference

Where a parent expresses a preference for their child to attend a school which is not the nearest suitable school which is more than two miles from the parental home, assistance with transport is not the responsibility of the Authority. This also applies to attendance at a voluntary aided school which is not the nearest suitable school appropriate to the child's age and faith.

Change of Address

Where parents move house whilst their child is in the fourth or fifth years of secondary school (Years 10 and 11 National Curriculum) and that address is more than two miles from the school, the Authority will assist with travelling expenses to enable continued attendance at the same school where it is considered 'reasonable' to do so. The arrangements will not be extended if the pupil continues into post-compulsory education after 16 years of age.

Concessionary Travel

Pupils who are not entitled to free transport may be offered a 'concessionary' seat on a school contract bus if a spare seat is available. Where such facilities are made available they will be at the discretion of the Authority and will be subject to strict conditions. The seat may be withdrawn at any time. Currently no charge is made for concessionary transport. It must be noted that this policy may be subject to change in the future (i.e. a charge may be levied before concessionary seats are offered).

Medical Reasons

Children with acute medical needs or short-term medical conditions may require transport in order to facilitate their attendance at school. The Authority will give consideration to the provision of transport, appropriate to the pupil's requirements, on medical grounds. In such cases, the request will need to be supported by written evidence provided by the School Medical Officer. Transport for children with statements of special educational need is covered in the next section.

3. PRE-SCHOOL & SCHOOL AGE PUPILS WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

Entitlement to Special Education Transport

The policy on the provision of transport for children with a disability and/or experiencing special educational needs has been developed to be consistent with guidance within the Special Educational Needs Code of Practice 2001 and Disability Discrimination Code of Practice.

Transport requirements are considered as part of the full assessment of a child's special educational needs. If a child's needs are such that there are no associated transport requirements, the mainstream home to school transport policy will apply.

School Age Children - Assessment of Transport Requirements

Pupils whose individual needs are considered to determine whether there is a requirement for special education transport include those with severe and / or complex:

- Cognition and learning;
- Social, emotional and behavioural difficulties;
- Physical, medical or sensory difficulties;

- Communication difficulties or an autistic spectrum disorder.

In undertaking formal assessment of a child's individual needs the Authority will gather information from a range of sources and determine the provision and placement necessary to meet those needs. Any individual requirements for transport will be assessed by the Statement and Banding Panel as part of this process. Key sources of information in respect of transport will be: staff paediatrician, educational psychologist; and the school or setting attended by the child. For some children information provided by social services will also be relevant.

A child will be eligible for free transport to the nearest appropriate school or setting if:

- It is more than 2 miles from the parental home using the shortest available walking route, or;
- The child has a severe or complex learning difficulty, behavioural problem or disability, which could make it unsafe or impossible for the route to be travelled on foot, when accompanied by an adult.

Pre-School Age Children

Pre-school age children attending the nearest appropriate maintained nursery or special school, who have a statement or are undergoing formal assessment qualify for free transport to the nearest appropriate nursery or setting, provided:

- It is more than two miles from the parental home or
- The child has a specific transport need.

Concessionary Travel

If a child with special educational needs and/or a disability does not qualify for free transport the Authority may be able to provide concessionary transport if there is spare capacity on a vehicle being used to transport entitled travellers. The seat may be withdrawn at any time. Currently no charge is made for concessionary transport. It must be noted that this policy may be subject to change in the future (i.e. a charge may be levied before concessionary seats are offered).

Inclusion

It is the Authority's policy to support inclusive education. This means that individual needs will be met as locally as possible to a child's home. In making decisions about any placement the Authority will take into account transport issues including transport and cost.

For some pupils, dual placement is appropriate to enable them to attend their local school, while also accessing the necessary resources or expertise within a specialist setting. When the Authority determines that dual placement is appropriate consideration will be given to whether transport should be provided and the organisation of sessions to minimise transport costs, consistent with the child's educational needs.

Day Placements Outside of Darlington

If provision to meet individual needs is not available within Darlington, a decision may be taken that a day school in a neighbouring LEA is the nearest appropriate placement. Transport will be provided on a daily basis if the school is more than two miles from the child's home.

Residential Placements Outside of Darlington

A very small number of pupils with the most complex needs attend residential schools or settings. The decision that this is appropriate is taken by the Education Department in conjunction with Social Services and, if appropriate, the Primary Care Trust. Transport arrangements are considered as part of the overall decision making about the placement and transport costs are shared on the same basis as the remainder of the placement costs. Transport is provided on the following basis:

- **Weekly or fortnightly boarding** - transport for the child to return home fortnightly during term time
- **38 Week Termly Boarding** - transport at the beginning and end of each half term and one additional return journey per half term
- **51/52 Week Residential Placements** - one return journey per term

Only in exceptional circumstances will the Authority consider requests for additional transport, which must be discussed and agreed in advance with the SEN Officer.

Passenger Assistants

Where it is appropriate to the child's health and safety needs a Passenger Assistant will accompany them on the journey to and from school. The continuing need for a Passenger Assistant will be reviewed annually with the child's statement.

Passenger assistants are required to attend an initial training course. Refresher courses are also held when required. Transport Officers meet with Passenger Assistants on a regular basis to discuss transport issues.

Parental Preference of Educational Placements

If parents decline an offer of a placement in the nearest appropriate school and would prefer their child to attend an alternative appropriate school, the parents would then be responsible for both making transport arrangements and the financial cost of the transport. This responsibility will be specified in the child's statement.

Annual Review

Special transport requirements will be reviewed on a regular basis. For children with statements of special educational need, information will be collected as part of the annual review process and the annual review meeting will make a recommendation to the Authority about future requirements for transport. Review of the statement by the

LEA will include consideration of whether transport arrangements are still appropriate to the needs of the child.

Parental Responsibilities

The parents/carers of children accessing special transport may be asked to supply information to ensure transport arrangements meet the specific needs of their child.

Parents should also be aware that:

- Children must be ready at the times agreed to ensure efficient running of the service. Where pupils are persistently late in boarding the transport causing delays in the route, this may result ultimately in the withdrawal of transport until the difficulty is resolved.
- It is the parents' responsibility to ensure that an appropriate adult is there to meet the transport and collect their child when they return from school. Failure to do so could result in the withdrawal of the transport provision until the difficulty is resolved. Where the Passenger Assistant / Driver has found no appropriate adult available and is unable to leave the child they would need to seek advice from the School Transport Section. Where no responsible adult can be located, the child may be left in the temporary care of Social Services.

Additional Journeys

All journeys **must** be agreed in advance with the SEN Officer and the School Transport Section. The Authority will not be responsible for the cost of any additional journeys arranged by parents or schools. School Transport operators are instructed only to transport children on the scheduled dates provided, in accordance with the contract

4. BEHAVIOUR ON SCHOOL TRANSPORT

Travel Safely in Darlington: A GUIDE FOR PARENTS FOR SAFER JOURNEYS

Parents / Carers

Your Entitlements are:

To:

- Be made aware of the Education Authority and School Policy and Guidelines on School Transport.
- Be involved and consulted where there are problems on school transport and to share in the solution.
- Be listened to where you have concerns and where appropriate, be able to register complaints.
- Be assured that transport in a safe, secure, non-threatening and civilised environment will be provided.
- Be made aware of the details of home to school transport arrangements.
- Support, assistance and co-operation from other partners in school transport.

- Be made aware of the consequences of your child's poor behaviour.

Your Responsibilities are:

To:

- Support the Education Authority, school and operator in applying the Education Authority Policy and Guidelines.
- Support a positive resolution where there are problems on school transport, which include your child/ren, e.g. attending school meetings, etc.
- Pay for the making good of damage caused by vandalism / criminal activity which involves your child/ren.
- Ensure that your child/ren conduct themselves in accordance with the expectations of the school and the Education Authority Policy and Guidelines. This may include meeting with the school to discuss problems and in some cases, entering into a voluntary agreement between yourself, the school and the pupil, to manage the situation positively.
- Act as a good role model to your child/ren thereby encouraging good positive behaviour.
- Ensure that your child/ren always has their bus pass available for use on school transport.

The consequences of poor behaviour on School Transport can be:

- A charge for replacement passes.
- A charge for the making good of damage caused through acts of vandalism.
- Short and long term withdrawal of transport with no reimbursement or alternative provision being made, during which time it will be the parents responsibility to ensure the child attends school
- The potential for the refusal of travel if no pass is carried.

Travel Safely in Darlington: A GUIDE FOR PUPILS FOR SAFER JOURNEYS

Your Entitlements are:

To:

- A safe, secure, non-threatening and civilised environment on school transport.
- Having your views and concerns listened to and addressed, as appropriate.
- Being treated consistently and fairly.
- Being made aware of the Policy and your school and the Education Authority's expectations of the behaviour and conduct expected on transport and the sanctions, which may be applied where these expectations are not met.
- A good 'service' on the school transport provided by the Education Authority.
- Being made aware of the seriousness of your behaviour where there are problems, and the possible consequences arising from such.

Your Responsibilities are:

To:

- Conduct yourself at all times in a safe, orderly, courteous and responsible manner.
- Respect the rights and feelings of others, including other passengers, drivers and escorts, bystanders and other road users.
- Comply with the guidelines issued to pupils by the Education Authority and any such issued by the school.
- Carry and show your bus pass at all times when using school transport.
- Remain seated throughout your journey and use a seatbelt where one is available.

The consequences of poor behaviour on School Transport can be:

- A letter of complaint to your parents/carers from school and / or Education Authority.
- The range of normal school based sanctions, which may include exclusion, detention, withdrawal of privilege, etc.
- Voluntary agreements / contracts between parent, school and pupils.
- Short and long term withdrawal of transport with no reimbursement or alternative provision made.
- The potential for loss of travel if no pass is carried.
- Possible Police action in appropriate cases.
- The loss of transport privileges on a permanent basis in the most serious of cases.
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Travel Safely in Darlington: A GUIDE FOR SCHOOLS FOR SAFER JOURNEYS

Your Rights:

- To support from the LEA, parents, pupils, operators, drivers and escorts with issues concerned with pupil behaviour.
- To home to school transport being provided for pupils in compliance with the contract.
- To the safe and trouble free arrival at school of pupils using school transport vehicles.

Your Responsibilities are:

- To support the LEA, parents, operators, drivers and escorts in relation to the Policy and Guidelines.
- To nominate a key member of teaching staff to act as a contact in relation to behaviour on transport issues.
- To liaise with the LEA and operators to ensure the smooth organisation and management of school transport.
- To log all reported incidents and inform the LEA and operators where appropriate of all relevant incidents.

- To investigate incidents where appropriate.
- To assist in developing the understanding of pupils (and parents where appropriate) in relation to behaviour on school transport issues.
- To inform parents and the LEA when transport will not be provided, due to their child being involved in incidents of bad behaviour on school transport.

Sanctions

Whilst there are no actual sanctions which may be taken should schools not provide the required level of support in implementing the Policy, they would nevertheless be subject to complaints from the LEA, operators and parents which may affect their reputation and cause a loss of confidence in the school.

How schools can play their part

- Remind pupils that they **must** show their passes to the driver.
- Where a pupil has forgotten a pass they may be carried to school on the morning, but must have a temporary pass to travel home.
- Supervise pupils when boarding and alighting the vehicle.
- Vehicles should not be permitted to leave the school site until vehicles are properly loaded and all pupils are seated.
- Operators should have a traffic management plan of the school and this should be adhered to.
- All incidents of bad behaviour should be properly logged, investigated and reported.
- If the organisation or provision of transport causes problems, the LEA should be alerted at an early stage, so that investigations can be made.
- Raise the profile of 'Behaviour on School Transport' with parents of Year 7 pupils.
- Have effective links with police.
- Planning meetings can be arranged with the LEA and operators.

Meetings can be arranged by contacting the School Transport Section, on 388851 / 2.

5. GUIDANCE FOR OPERATORS

Travel Safely in Darlington: A GUIDE FOR OPERATORS FOR SAFER JOURNEYS

Your Entitlements are:

To:

- Be made aware of the Education Authority's Policy and Guidelines on School Transport.
- Be involved and consulted where there are problems on school transport and to share in the solution.
- Be listened to where you have concerns and where appropriate, be able to register complaints.

- Support from parents and pupils on all issues concerned with behaviour.
- Support, assistance and co-operation from other partners in school transport.

Your Responsibilities are:

To:

- Deliver a service in accordance with the terms of the contract.
- To ensure that all personnel involved with school transport are aware of their responsibilities and requirements of the Contract.
- To ensure personnel are appropriately licensed and trained.
- To ensure personnel are police checked by the LEA as appropriate.
- To maintain the continuity of drivers and escorts on school transport vehicles.
- To ensure the prompt arrival of vehicles on both the morning and afternoon journeys.
- Provide safe and secure transport at all times.
- To ensure that vehicles are in good condition, clean and thoroughly roadworthy.
- **To ensure that drivers check passes for all journeys** (morning and afternoon).
Drivers should only allow a child to travel if they are satisfied that the pupil is using the correct bus, with his/her own pass. *Where a pupil has genuinely forgotten a pass on a morning they should be carried to school but advised they need a temporary pass from school to travel home.*
- To liaise with the LEA and schools to ensure the smooth running and management of school transport.
- To report all relevant incidents and concerns to the LEA, school and, where appropriate, the Police.
- To follow up and pursue claims for damage with parents.

Should operators not adhere to these responsibilities they should be aware that the LEA may take action to withdraw the contract or impose a penalty as stated in the contract.

6. COMPLAINTS AND APPEALS

Complaints

If you have a complaint about Home to School Transport, including SEN Transport, you should contact the School Transport Section. If your complaint is regarding safety you should telephone the section immediately where possible. We may need to ask you to follow up your complaint in writing. Once investigated, we will advise you of the outcome and any subsequent action taken.

The postal address, email address and telephone numbers for the section can be found on the Introduction page.

Appeals

If you wish to appeal against the refusal to provide free Home to School Transport or against being refused a Post 16 Travel Grant you should write to the Senior School

Transport Officer. You will need to set out clearly the reason for your appeal and enclose any relevant evidence/information to support your appeal.

Transport provision for children with Special Educational Needs (SEN) is considered as part of the review process. If transport has not been agreed and you wish to appeal you should write to the SEN Officer concerned. You will need to set out clearly the reason for your appeal and enclose any relevant evidence/information to support your appeal.

You will be informed in writing of the outcome of your appeal and the reasons for it. If you are still not happy with the decision we will inform you of what to do next.