

Transport Policy

Reviewed October 2024

The LEA is required to determine whether the provision of transport for pupils of statutory school age is necessary to facilitate the attendance at a designated school of the pupil concerned. If such transport is deemed necessary, then the transport must be provided free of charge.

The minimum (statutory) provision

The LEA provides free transport

- where a child of under 8 years of age resides over two miles from the nearest appropriate school;
- where a child of statutory school age, over 8 years of age, resides over three miles from the nearest appropriate school.

Extensions beyond the minimum (statutory) provision

The LEA provides free transport for pupils of statutory school age

- where a child, over 8 years of age, whose parents are in receipt of Income Support or Working Tax Credit, resides more than 2.5 miles from the nearest appropriate school;
- to the nearest Welsh medium or Voluntary school under the criteria identified above.
- where the route to school is considered to be hazardous by the LEA in consultation with the Department of Environment and Regeneration;
- where a child requires transport on medical grounds and no suitable public transport exists;
- where transport to a named school is identified in a pupil's Statement of Special Educational Needs. This would normally be on medical or educational grounds and would be deemed essential in the context of other criteria identified in this policy.

Post-16 Education

The LEA currently provides transport beyond the statutory school age where a student resides over 3 miles from the nearest Flintshire school or college where their chosen course can be accessed. Within the context of the LEA's obligation to ensure the provision of effective education and the efficient use of resources determination will be made on the balance of courses selected.

Free transport is not provided for disabled students over the age of 19 who wish to attend college. Students requiring such transport should contact their Social Services or College concerned.

Extensions beyond the minimum (statutory) provisions Concessionary fares

The LEA may provide concessionary transport, at a cost, where a pupil does not qualify on the above criteria but can be placed on an existing contract transport route which has empty seats.

In these circumstances:

- a charge will apply. This charge will be established at £55 per term for 2009/10 and will be subject to annual reviews;
- concessions may be withdrawn at short notice, with a pro-rata rebate, when seats become unavailable.

However, under the Transport Act 1985, concessionary fares cannot be made available where public service transport runs along a school route at convenient times for the start and finish of the school day.

Extensions beyond the minimum (statutory) provision: travelling expenses for parents of pupils placed by a Statement of SEN in schools outside Flintshire.

Where such pupils are placed in boarding schools more than 100 miles from home, the LEA will assist with travelling expenses for parents to attend the statutory Annual Review meeting, by the most cost-effective means of:

- arranging transport, or
- making a cash payment (currently 20p per mile), or
- providing a ticket (or cash equivalent) for one or both parents on public transport.

Such assistance will also be given when a pupil who normally travels in a vehicle provided for a group, is unable to travel at the same time as the group because of his/her ill-health. Medical certification will be required.

The LEA will not normally assist with travelling expenses for other functions or meetings.

Applying for School Transport

If you consider, using the above criteria, your child may qualify for free school transport you will be required to complete an application form. An application needs to be made at entry to Reception, Secondary and Post-16. You will also be required to re-apply should any of your circumstances alter during the period your children attend school, or if your child's course alters. Application forms will be available at schools or from the Director of Lifelong Learning, County Hall, Mold, Flintshire, CH7 6ND. (Tel: 01352 704068/704073).

Definition of criteria

Appropriate school criteria

An appropriate school is deemed to be the nearest school which provides education for the relevant age and ability of a pupil, the nearest Welsh medium school or the nearest Voluntary school.

The LEA is not responsible for the cost of transport:

- where parental preference results in a pupil being placed in a school or facility other than the nearest appropriate school;
- to schools maintained by other Authorities where admission to those schools is a result of parental preference, unless that school is the nearest school. The Authority will seek special arrangements with neighbouring authorities for Flintshire pupils whose nearest appropriate school is outside the Flintshire County boundary;
- of pupils who reside outside Flintshire but who receive their education in Flintshire schools.

Age Criteria

The LEA has no legal responsibility to those not deemed entitled to free transport.

- The LEA does not provide transport for pupils attending nursery school or nursery classes at the age of three. Transport is provided from the commencement of the school year in which the child attains the age of five.

- The LEA currently makes provision for pupils above compulsory school age, who qualify, to be transported free of charge to the nearest appropriate school or college as detailed in the Transport Policy.

Mode of Transport

In determining the mode of transport required, the following principles will apply:

- the need for specialist transport;
- the Additional Needs of a pupil as defined in a pupil's statement.

In all cases, the efficient use of resources will dictate the mode of transport (subject to the above conditions). Transport may be provided by means of school contract transport services or existing public transport services which, together with the type of transport (bus, minibus, train, taxi, etc.) will be dictated by cost effectiveness. In some cases, one contract bus may transport different pupils to more than one school site.

In exceptional circumstances, a cash payment (currently 20p per mile) may be available for transporting pupils who meet all the criteria, if deemed by the LEA to be more cost effective.

Collection and Return

Transport will normally be to and from bus stops or pick-up points for groups of pupils. It will only be provided from door-to-door if exceptional circumstances prevail.

In particular:

- no pupil under 11 years of age will be expected to make his/her own way more than two miles to the nearest pick-up-point;
- no pupil over 11 years of age will be expected to make his/her own way more than three miles to the nearest pick-up-point;
- no pupil/student who is eligible to be transported on a contract route will be eligible for transport provision outside the normal daily timetable of that contract route.

Criteria for the Provision of Escorts

An escort may be provided by the Authority for pupils with a Statement of Special Educational Need, who qualify for transport under the defined criteria. Provision of escorts will take place after consideration by relevant officers of the individual needs of the pupils or group of pupils and the nature of the transport available.

Behaviour

It is the Council's policy to withdraw the agreed travelling arrangements from pupils whose behaviour during the journey to or from school is not of an acceptable standard.

Notes

- The driver will be responsible for the supervision of children in his/her vehicle during the journey to and from school.
- The driver will, in accordance with the agreed procedure, report any incidents of misbehaviour to the Head, who is empowered to deal with cases of bad behaviour on school transport and who will, if necessary, recommend to the LEA that the transport facility be withdrawn.

Smoking on Buses

Smoking is not permitted on any vehicle contracted to the Council for the conveyance of school pupils to and from school.

Drivers will report the names of any pupils breaking this rule to the Headteacher of the school concerned, who is empowered to deal with these matters. If it is considered necessary, the Headteacher will recommend to the LEA that the transport provided be withdrawn.

Parents have responsibility for:

- getting their child to and from school where they do not qualify for free school transport;
- applying for free transport where their child qualifies;
- informing the LEA and the school of changed circumstances which may affect transport;
- ensuring that their child is ready and waiting for transport at the appropriate time and place. It is the parent's responsibility to accompany the child to and from the vehicle;
- ensuring that their child's behaviour while using school transport is socially acceptable.

Code of Conduct

A leaflet is available for pupils, parents, drivers and operators setting out simple rules that if followed will keep pupils as safe as possible on school transport.