

Education and Learning  
Procedures and Guidelines

# SCHOOL TRANSPORT

## A GUIDE FOR PUPILS AND PARENTS

2019

## 1. INTRODUCTION

This guidance provides pupils and parents with background information about transport arrangements for school pupils in Dumfries and Galloway.

Parents or guardians are responsible for ensuring their child is able to get to school safely and on time. Under the terms of the Education (Scotland) Act 1980, the Council has a statutory responsibility to assist with the provision of transport when certain criteria are met.

It is recognised that to provide a high quality service all involved should understand not only their rights but their responsibilities. This includes children, parents/guardians, schools, transport operators and Council staff. These Guidance Notes aim to support the application of School Transport Policy.

## 2. RESPONSIBILITY OF THE COUNCIL

Where children live more than the statutory parental responsibility distance from their catchment school, the Council has a duty to transport those pupils to and from school.

The obligations of the Council are set out in school transport policy as agreed by Elected Members. In applying this policy in a fair and equitable basis council officers make use of school catchment area boundaries. This information can be viewed by parents and schools through accessing the Dumfries and Galloway Council website, [www.dumgal.gov.uk](http://www.dumgal.gov.uk) and clicking the “Find My Nearest” icon.

Pupils who attend an alternative school by parental choice (known as a Placing Request) have no entitlement to transport. Where a child attends a school as the result of a successful Placing Request it is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to organise transport to the school.

## 3. ENTITLEMENT

The school transport policy governs decisions on who is provided with school transport. These are:

- Pupils who live 2 miles away from their catchment school if they are under 8 years old by the shortest walking route.
- Pupils who live 3 miles away from their catchment school if they are 8 years and over by the shortest walking route.
- Roman Catholic children attending the denominational school for their address and live out with the statutory distances from that school.

In certain specific circumstances on a case by case basis those:

- recommended on health grounds by a designated medical officer
- deemed to have specific requirements based on additional needs

If your child is eligible, details of the transport arrangements will be communicated to you in time for the new academic year by the Council. This is normally undertaken via your catchment school. Any alterations to transport arrangements that occur during the school year will be communicated prior to any changes being made. If school bus passes are required these are issued at school.

If you live near a school transport route, your child may be able to apply for a grace and favour seat. Vacant seats on dedicated school transport services may be allocated to pupils who are not normally entitled to travel. Parents must apply each school year since transport for non-entitled pupils automatically ceases at the end of the session.

Parents should also note that transport for non-entitled pupils can be withdrawn at any time should spaces be required for entitled pupils, or if the capacity or route of a vehicle is changed. The Council will provide notice of any intended change.

The criteria which are used in making an offer of such places are:

- Pupils with entitled siblings (should there be more pupils in this category than there are places available then those furthest from the school have the highest priority)
- Pupils furthest from the school within the catchment
- Pupils closest to school out with the catchment
- Pupils from out with Dumfries and Galloway

#### 4. PROVISION

There are various services used for the provision of school transport drawn from the Council fleet, Service buses and contract vehicles. Where a family lives remote from other children and off any established route, a mileage allowance may be paid to parents undertaking to provide transport to pupils eligible within the school transport policy.

#### 5. SAFETY AND EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

The Council has a common law duty of care to those accessing services it provides. This extends to those providing such services such as private contractors. In taking reasonable steps to exercise this the Council ensures that all:

- buses are licensed and routinely inspected by VOSA.
- taxis and private hire cars used for school transport are required to hold appropriate insurance cover to transport pupils to and from school.
- drivers have undergone Protecting Vulnerable Group (PVG) checks.

Those accessing the service (pupils) have a responsibility to comply with relevant legislation and reasonable instruction, such as the wearing of seatbelts, to ensure their safety and wellbeing.

In the event of an emergency situation, such as pupil illness requiring medical intervention or school closure, effort will be made to contact parents/guardians at the earliest opportunity. This may be via the individual school, the service or in the case of those with Additional Support Needs the Driver or Escort. Parents can find information on school closures on [www.dumgal.gov.uk](http://www.dumgal.gov.uk)

Drivers will not normally set children down at any point significantly different from the usual one. If it is not possible to set pupils down at the normal drop-off point then they will be taken to a nearby school for their safety. Pupils are expected to follow any instructions given to them by the driver in any emergency and should not leave the bus to make their own way home.

## 6. RESPONSIBILITIES

The following sections outline the main responsibilities of the parties involved in school transport provision. These are that those:

### **Organising and allocating provision (the Council) are:**

- providing school transport for entitled pupils and allocating this in a fair and equitable basis
- designing transport services appropriate to pupil needs and placing and monitoring contracts to provide services
- ensuring the safety of pupils during the time spent on school transport journeys
- informing pupils and parents of transport arrangements and any changes to them
- working with individual schools and parents/guardians to deal with any cases of unacceptable behaviour.

### **Providing services (Contractors, Drivers and Escorts) are:**

- providing services as specified which meet all relevant legislation and guidance governing safe operation of vehicles, and duties and responsibilities of drivers and escorts.
- ensuring that pupils are taken directly to the intended destination and not undertake other work whilst engaged on a contract, unless prior agreement has been made.
- reporting problems regarding operational matters, pupil behaviour or medical matters, as soon as is practicable to relevant officers within Council services
- ensuring the safety and wellbeing of those being transported specifically in relation to, supervision of children, boarding or alighting from vehicles, handling of medication, responding to illness and accidents.
- engaging with service/school staff, pupils and parents/guardians in respect of emergency situations.

### **Relying upon services (parents and guardians) are:**

- ensuring safety and wellbeing to and from transport pick-up and set down points for both outward and return journeys for their child.
- informing if school transport is no longer required or ensuring an application is submitted each school year to request non entitled transport.
- engaging with their child to ensure that they are aware of their rights and responsibilities, expected behaviour and arrangements in the event of an emergency situation.
- assuming responsibility for making and paying for alternative travel arrangements if transport entitlement is withdrawn

**Accessing the service (pupils) are:**

- ensuring that they are at designated pick up points in time to access the service provided and travel only on the transport on which they have been allocated travel
- behaving appropriately and safely when boarding, travelling and alighting from school transport including remain seated for the journey and fastening seatbelts.
- following the driver, or escort's instructions as relating to the transport provided and following up any concerns relating to these with school staff.

**7. FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS****What do I do if my child loses his/her school bus pass?**

They should immediately obtain a temporary pass from the school which will allow them to travel until a permanent replacement can be obtained.

**What do I do if school transport fails to arrive on time?**

Your child should be at the pick-up point at least 5 minutes before the scheduled pick-up time. We advise your child to wait at a pick-up point for up to 15 minutes after the transport was due to arrive. After 15 minutes it can be assumed that their transport will not run that day. You should ensure your child knows what to do if the transport fails to turn up. You should ensure that there are suitable care arrangements in place in the event of school transport not operating.

**What do I do if my child wants to use a different bus?**

It is not always possible to transfer to another school bus service. If there is a requirement to change then you should contact the Council for further advice. Your child should not try to use a different bus before he/she receives approval and a new pass from the Council.

**What happens if a pupil misbehaves on school transport?**

Incidences of misbehaviour will be investigated. Any pupil misbehaving could be banned from using school transport, sometimes permanently.

**What happens if there is a cancellation of transport in the morning?**

Drivers will then return children to their normal drop-off point. Parents/guardians should ensure that some arrangement has been made at home to cover this possibility.

If your child travels to school on connecting services drivers will be told to wait for each other and not to leave any pupils standing in adverse weather conditions. Should the connecting service not arrive pupils will be returned home.

If the connecting service does arrive but cannot complete the journey to school, that driver will return pupils to their homes.

**What do I do if I want to make further enquiry or complaint in respect of school transport provision?**

In the first instance you should make contact with Education Support Services as outlined in the

further information section.

**What happens if, during adverse weather, I am able to transport my child to school if the normal school transport be unable to?**

It will then be your responsibility to transport your child home at the end of the school day.

## 8. FURTHER INFORMATION

Supplementary information on matters relating to this guidance and the application of the School Transport Policy can be obtained from Education Support Services, 122 Irish Street, Dumfries.

[Educationssupport@dumgal.gov.uk](mailto:Educationssupport@dumgal.gov.uk)

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Education and Learning Committee, November 2019