

**Revised Proposed School Transport Policy**  
**(Taking account of Learner Travel (Wales) Measure 2008)**

**1. Provision of Free Transport**

There is a statutory duty placed upon the Authority to make suitable travel arrangements for pupils of compulsory school age, residing within the County Borough, with the provision of free transport to their nearest suitable school if they reside beyond “walking distance” to that school.

The law defines “walking distance” as over two miles for pupils receiving primary education and over three miles for pupils receiving secondary education.

The nearest suitable school is deemed by the Authority to be the nearest school to the home address which provides education relevant to the age, ability and aptitude of the pupil, (including, where relevant, a pupil referral unit). Distances are measured by the shortest available walking route from home to school, which may include public footpaths. The shortest available route is one along which it is considered safe for a child without a disability or learning difficulty to walk the route alone, or with an escort if the age of the child would call for such.

Transport arrangements will also be made for any child of compulsory school age, residing within the County Borough, who attends a further education institution as a full time student if it is three miles or more from their home and no arrangements have been made by the Authority for the pupil to receive education nearer home.

Individual routes within walking distances will be assessed in line with the Council’s Hazardous Routes Policy upon application, transportation will be established, at no cost to the pupil, where it is identified that the route is hazardous.

Where pupils attend, as a result of parental preference, a school which is not the nearest suitable school, it must be understood that parents accept full responsibility for transport arrangements. This will include making all the necessary arrangements as well as meeting the cost.

In all cases, the efficient use of resources will dictate the mode of transport provided (subject to any special needs requirements). Transport may be provided by means of a contracted school transport service or use of an existing public transport service.

Pupils of mixed ages, for example, primary and secondary age pupils may travel on shared transport as well as, pupils from different denominational and linguistic backgrounds.

It is not possible to arrange the routes of vehicles to pass close to the homes of all pupils. Therefore, it may be necessary to make arrangements for pupils to reach the nearest ‘pick up’ point of the vehicle.

This will be from a point reasonably near the child's home to a point reasonably near the school – not to the school door but reasonably near thereto.

## **2. Transport to Nursery Schools/Early Years Settings**

Children at the age of three who attend nursery schools or early years' settings are not eligible to receive free transport. Transport is provided from the commencement of the school year in which the child attains the age of five and qualifies under walking distance.

## **3. Looked After Children.**

Suitable transport arrangements will be made for a child, of compulsory school age, looked after by a local authority, with the provision of free transport to the school or other educational institution at which they are registered if they reside beyond the walking distance, as defined in (1) above, to that school or institution.

## **4. Parental Responsibility**

Parents have the responsibility for:

- i) getting their child to and from school where they do not qualify for free transport;
- ii) applying for free transport to determine if their child qualifies;
- iii) informing the LEA and the school of changed circumstances which may affect transport;
- iv) ensuring that their child is ready and waiting for transport at the appropriate time and place. Where children are picked up/dropped off at the home, the parent is responsible for accompanying the child to and from the door to the vehicle;
- v) making every effort to ensure that their child's behaviour while using school transport is socially acceptable;
- vi) the safety of their child to and from agreed pick up/drop off points.

**The Council's code of conduct for home to school transport details the responsibility of parents, pupils and transport operators. Copies are available from the Transportation & Asset Management Department.**

## **5. Behaviour**

Any misbehaviour by pupils while travelling on school transport that could affect the safety of pupils, drivers, escorts and/or other road users may lead to sanctions. In such situations, pupils will be subject to the normal disciplinary rules of their school.

## **6. Travel Times**

Primary age children should not spend more than three quarters of an hour being transported between home and school and for secondary age pupils the time spent should not exceed one hour. There may be times when exceptions need to be made. This will require consultation with Transport Co-ordination.

## **7. Pick-Up/Drop Off Arrangements**

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 in exceptional circumstances. Pupils will need to be at a designated pick-up point situated reasonably near to their home. 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.

Transport providers are instructed to take children to the nearest place of safety in the event that a parent or carer is unable to meet the child at the specified drop-off point/time. The additional cost of taking the child to the nearest place of safety may be charged to parents.

## **8. Additional Transport Arrangements**

If a Contractor has provided a suitable vehicle at the relevant place and time and neither the parent nor the pupil present themselves then no alternative provision will be made on that day.

### **9. a) Transport to Voluntary and Welsh Medium Schools**

Pupils attending the nearest Voluntary Aided school, Voluntary Controlled school or Welsh Medium school will receive free transport provided that the school attended is the nearest suitable school of that type and they reside beyond the agreed walking distance as defined in (1) above.

### **b) National Curriculum as described in Wales.**

Pupils attending the nearest school at which they can access the National Curriculum as expressed in Wales, in terms of the Welsh Language and Culture will receive free transport provided that the school attended is the nearest suitable school of that type and they reside beyond the agreed walking distance as defined in (1) above.

## **10. Travel Arrangements to Other Training Providers or Work Experience.**

Suitable travel arrangements will be made for pupils of compulsory school age, residing within the County Borough, who receive their education or training at different educational establishments or training providers on different days of the week, or who attend an authorised work experience placement, provided that the route from home to the establishment is beyond the agreed walking distance as defined in (1) above. This may be by the payment of the pupil's travel expenses. The Authority shall not however be responsible for the travel arrangements between educational establishments or sites.

## **11. Transport to Schools in Neighbouring Authorities**

Pupils residing within Wrexham County Borough who attend schools located in neighbouring authorities will receive free transport provided that the school attended is the nearest suitable school and they reside beyond the agreed walking distance as specified in (1) above.

## **12. Special Transport on Medical Grounds**

Free transport may be provided on medical grounds to facilitate a pupil's attendance at the school at which they are registered on the recommendation of the Authority's designated School Medical Officer where no suitable public transport exists.

## **13. Special Arrangements: Hazardous Routes**

The Authority will consider, on their merits and in line with the Council's Hazardous Routes Policy, requests from parents for free transport for pupils who live within the statutory walking distance of the nearest suitable school where the route to school is, in the Authority's view, hazardous.

## **14. Concessionary Transport**

From time to time it is possible that the number of pupils to be carried by the authority will be below the seating capacity of the vehicle being used on a specific route. In such cases the Authority will reserve the right to make spare capacity available to children attending their nearest school who live below the statutory distance as specified in (1) above for so long as such availability exists. It must be understood that the provision of concessionary seats does not represent a continued obligation on behalf of the Authority to provide transport and, is entirely dependant upon the availability of spare seats. Therefore, concessionary seats may be withdrawn at short notice, should they become required by entitled students subsequently requesting provision.

Concessionary seats will cost parents £50 per term and this charge will be reviewed annually.

### **Change of Address**

Parents who move address and wish their child to remain at their existing school, when it is no longer their nearest suitable school, will not be entitled to free school transport.

## **16. School Closures – Transport Arrangements**

If a school closes, assisted transport may be provided for displaced pupils who are registered at the school at the time of the school closure and who have to travel further to their new nearest suitable school, where considered appropriate under the arrangements agreed under the school closure plan.

## **17. Post 16 Transport**

All students aged 16 and 17 years on 1 September in the relevant academic year and, who are attending a course of full time study at a school's 6<sup>th</sup> form or college, may be entitled to free transport provided that the student is attending the nearest suitable educational establishment to home which provides the appropriate course. The mileage limit will be the same as those applying to compulsory school aged pupils.

## **18. Appeals Procedure**

Parents may appeal against the decision taken by the LEA and if they decide to do so they must indicate on what ground they base their appeal. Any appeal should be made in writing to the Chief Transportation and Asset Management Officer.