

Wrexham County Borough Council School Transport Policy

As adopted with reference to the Welsh Assembly's Learner Travel Wales Measure

Provision of Free Transport – Mainstream Schools

There is a statutory duty placed upon the Local Authority to make suitable travel arrangements for pupils of compulsory school age – reception pupils to end of Year 11, 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 accompanied if the age of the child would call for such.

1 Assessment Process

The nearest School assessment is calculated using the Council Education Section ONE software system – which is used by many Local Authorities throughout Wales. The GPS mapping layer used to assess measurements is amended each October, and any changes to Highways Infrastructure in the County are included. No other mapping systems, such as Google Maps or AA Route Finder are considered for assessments. Identification of the nearest school for free transport assessment is calculated by way of the shortest walking route from Home to School. The route to school will be measured from the Home to the nearest school gate, and may include public footpaths, bridleways and other pathways, as well as adopted roads. It is not necessarily the shortest distance by road. Once the nearest school is identified on assessment by the ONE system, transport is granted if over 3 mile for Secondary school or 2 mile for Primary however, transport is refused if under 3 mile for Secondary school or 2 mile for Primary school. The Authority will consider, on their merits, 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, deemed unavailable. In all cases, the efficient use of resources will dictate the mode of transport provided. Transport may be provided by means of a contracted school transport service and / or use of an existing public transport service. 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. Should parents/carers wish to check which is their nearest suitable school they may do so by contacting the Council School Transport Unit. 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 Definition of Criteria

A suitable school is deemed to be the Local Education Authority (LEA) maintained school closest to the pupil's home by the nearest available walking route which provides education for the relevant age, ability and aptitude of a pupil, and / or for any Additional Learning Needs (ALN) that he/she may have. The nearest Welsh medium school – Ysgol Morgan Llwyd is the only designated Welsh Medium Secondary School in the Wrexham County Borough and the nearest Faith school – St Joseph's is the only designated Faith Secondary School in the Wrexham County Borough. 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 suitable school or to schools maintained by other authorities where admission to those schools is a result of parental preference, unless that school is the nearest school or for pupils who reside outside the County Borough but who receive their education in a County Borough school. Application should be made to the Authority in which they reside, if appropriate. The LEA is required to provide free transport for eligible pupils of compulsory school age. The LEA does not provide transport for pupils attending Nursery School or Nursery Classes at the age of three. The LEA do not provide transport for sixth-form schools and colleges for post-16 students.

3 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.
- vii) ensuring that their child(ren) are aware of and understand the [All-Wales Travel Behaviour Code](#).

4 Pupil Behaviour

Under the provisions of the Travel Behaviour Code, 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 and/or the withdrawal of transport provision. In such situations, pupils will be subject to the normal disciplinary rules of their school.

5. Journey Times

The Policy does not specify a time limit for journeys, however, the following factors will be taken into consideration in assessing journey times:

The nature, purpose and circumstances of each journey / the learner's age / any special needs of the learner / location of the learner's home in relation to available schools.

6 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. Parents to ensure that their child (Ren) are present at the agreed pick up/drop off points 10 minutes before the scheduled transport arrival time. If no contact can be made the transport providers must contact the School Transport Unit for instruction. Transport providers may be 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 or back to school. The additional cost of this may be charged to parents.

7 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.

8 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. Assessment Process). 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. Assessment Process).

9 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. Assessment Process). 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.

10 Transport to Schools in Neighbouring Authorities

Pupils residing within Wrexham County Borough who attend schools located in neighbouring authorities within Wales 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. Assessment Process). However, if their nearest school is identified as in England, pupils will receive free transport to the nearest school in Wrexham County Borough if parents require education in the Welsh curriculum.

11 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.

12 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. Assessment Process) 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 dependent 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 £100 per term and this charge will be reviewed annually.

13 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 no longer be entitled to continued free school transport.

14 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.

15 Children with Additional Learning / Special Needs ALN/SEN.

Suitable transport arrangements will be made for a child with ALN/SEN with the provision of free transport to the school or other educational establishment on referral from the Council's Education ALN/Inclusion Section.

16 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. Assessment Process).to that school or establishment on referral from the Council's Social Services Department.

17 Post 16 Transport

No transport is provided by Wrexham County Borough Council for sixth-form schools and colleges for post-16 students. This applies to any students who previously received transport due to their ALN statement. Any post-16 students requiring transport are advised to contact their specific sixth form establishment for information and advice regarding private transport arrangements that may be available.

18. Appeals Procedure Panel

Parents may appeal against the decision taken by the Local Authority and if they decide to do so they must indicate on what ground they base their appeal within the Transport Policy. Any appeal should be made in writing to:

Head of Environment and Technical, The Guildhall, Wrexham, LL13 8BG.