



Doncaster
Council

HOME TO SCHOOL TRAVEL ASSISTANCE POLICY 2022-2027



Pupil Support and Passenger Transport Section
www.doncaster.gov.uk

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Information can be made available in other languages, on other formats such as Braille or Audio Tape, on request. Please contact the Pupil Support and Transport Team on 737325 for more information, or if you need any other help or advice.

INTRODUCTION AND GENERAL PRINCIPLES

This document outlines the policy of Doncaster Council (“the Council”) in relation to the provision of travel assistance and home to school transport for pupils and students. The provision of travel assistance is a contributing factor to the Education and Skills Strategy 2030 and Doncaster Delivering Together to enable all children and young people to achieve their full potential

The primary responsibility for ensuring pupils and students attend school or college is always that of the parent or carer. In exceptional circumstances, however, in order to ensure attendance, Doncaster Council can help with travel arrangements. This policy details the responsibilities of the Council, and provides a guide to those circumstances under which support would be given to eligible pupils and students.

The Legal Framework

This Policy is prepared in response to duties of the Council (see note 1), under section 508B of the Education Act 1996, (amended by Education and Inspections Act 2006).

Schedule 35B of the Act defines eligibility with regard to children in an authority’s area for whom special travel arrangements will always be required.

Under section 508B when applicable, these arrangements must be provided free of charge.

A condition of each category is that they are of compulsory school age.

Compulsory School Leaving Age

In 2013 the Government raised the Participation Age meaning that all pupils and students must continue in some form of education or training until at least their 18th birthday. However, there was no change made to the statutory school age which remains at 5 to 16 years.

This change did not extend the entitlement to free travel assistance beyond the age of 16, as the change to the participation age does not mean that a pupil or student must stay in school. They may choose to work fulltime and study part time, continue with full time study at school or college, be involved in part time training whilst volunteering or undertake an apprenticeship.

Further information about raising the Participation age can be found on the Department of Education website at:

www.gov.uk/government/collections/raising-the-participation-age

Types of Travel Assistance

Travel assistance for those deemed eligible will normally comprise of one of the following:

- A Zoom Zero Fare Travel Pass to enable the pupil to travel to and from school on public transport
- a refund of travel expenses in accordance with the cheapest available public transport route for pupils able to access public transport services
- Independent Travel Training for pupils who are not currently able to access public transport but have the capability to do so with appropriate support and training

- The payment of a personal travel budget to allow parents/carers to make any arrangements they deem necessary to enable them to take their child to school. The amount of the budget will be determined by the Council in order to ensure best value
- The payment of a personal mileage allowance in accordance with the Council's current rate, in certain circumstances, for pupils unable to access public transport services
- Free or subsidised travel on a bus, coach, mini-bus or taxi/private hire or similar vehicle for pupils identified as having Special Educational Needs or Disabilities (SEND) or other needs which mean that they are unable to access public transport and no other form of travel assistance is suitable. The type of transport will be determined by the Council as appropriate to meet the child's individual needs during the journey if required

This is not an exhaustive list and other options may also be considered dependent upon the circumstances at the time.

Qualifying Schools

Where mentioned in this policy, qualifying schools are:

- Community, foundation or voluntary schools
- Community or foundation special schools
- Non-maintained special schools
- Pupil Referral Units
- Academies, city technical colleges or city colleges for the technology of the arts

References to "nearest qualifying school" are to be taken to mean the nearest qualifying school with places available which provide education appropriate to the age, ability and aptitude of the child taking into account any special educational needs the child might have.

If a pupil is attending an independent school which is not a qualifying school that school will be deemed to be a qualifying school if it is the nearest school to their residential address at which the child can become a registered pupil.

Dual Registration

Some pupils may be registered at more than one school. Where they are registered at two qualifying schools (which are not Pupil Referral Units), if eligible, travel assistance will be provided to whichever of the schools the pupil is attending on any school day.

Travel assistance will not be provided for transfers between schools during the school day.

Occasions when Travel Assistance will not be provided

This policy applies to home to school travel arrangements at the start and end of the school day. The school day is deemed to be the session times approved by the Governing Body of the qualifying school. Account will however be made for those children for whom their particular needs mean that they have a variable school day. Such circumstances will be considered on an individual basis.

Other than where exceptionally agreed by the SEND/Joint Resource Panel/Travel Assistance Panel/ Doncaster Children's Services Trust no assistance will be provided with travel:

- To access breakfast or after school clubs, including out of school activities
- To and from work experience placements, taster or open days, or transition visits
- To any provision off the school site organised by the school
- For transfers between educational establishments during the school day
- To and from medical, dental, psychiatric, speech therapy or similar appointments
- Following detention
- At times to suit the convenience of family arrangements
- At times when other siblings in the family have to be taken to other schools
- For late arrivals or early departures, for example in the event of the pupil or student becoming ill
- For shorter than normal days, for example during the exam season
- For those whose level of attendance is a cause of concern, but for whom no eligibility criteria are met
- For students on exchange visits
- Where the behaviour of a young person is not acceptable to the driver of the vehicle and places other travellers a risk. In these circumstances parents will be required to make alternative arrangements. Please see Section 11 for more details

Responsibility for travel in the above circumstances will rest with either the school, college or parent/carer.

PLEASE NOTE: In all cases, the Council cannot guarantee travelling arrangements to any school; such arrangements are entirely in the hands of the providers of bus services and/or South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority (SYMCA).

In addition, it is the responsibility of parents/carers to ensure their child's safety by making appropriate arrangements for their child to be accompanied to and from the nearest bus stop and along the journey if necessary.

Dual Custody Arrangements

For pupils whose parents/carers no longer live at the same address and who qualify for travel assistance, this will normally be to the address at which the pupil spends three or more school nights (Sunday – Thursday) providing that this is within the Doncaster area. Assistance to both homes will not be provided.

Where the pupil spends an equal amount of time during the school week at both addresses and they would qualify for assisted travel to school from both addresses, the Council will provide assistance from one address only and this will be the address where child benefit is paid to. This must also be within the Doncaster area.

2 ELIGIBLE PUPILS

Pupils aged under 4

As a general rule, no assistance with transport shall be given to any nursery age child unless they have a statement of SEN or Education Health Care Plan (EHP) and have had travel assistance approved by the Travel Assistance Panel.

Pupils aged between 4 and 7

For pupils less than 8 years of age (on 1st September), free travel assistance will be provided if they live more than two miles from and are attending their nearest qualifying school school/catchment school or an alternative school allocated by the Council.

Pupils aged between 8 and 16

For pupils who are aged 8 years or older (on 1st September) and still of compulsory school age free school travel assistance will be provided if they live more than three miles from and are attending their nearest qualifying school school/catchment school or an alternative school allocated by the Council.

Pupils from Low Income Families

The Education and Inspections Act 2006 introduced free travel assistance for pupils from low income families. Pupils meeting the following criteria will receive free travel assistance usually in the form of a Zoom Zero Fare Bus Pass:

- **Pupils aged between 8 and 11 years (Primary aged Pupils)**
For pupils who are on free school meals or whose parents are in receipt of the maximum level of Working Tax Credit free school travel assistance will be provided if they are attending their nearest qualifying school/catchment school or an alternative school allocated by the Council and live more than two miles from school
- **Pupils aged between 11 and 16 years (i.e. Years 7 to 11 inclusive)**
For pupils who are on free school meals or whose parents are in receipt of the maximum level of Working Tax Credit free school travel assistance will be provided if they are attending one of their three nearest qualifying schools which are more than two miles but not more than 6 miles from their home address
- **Pupils attending School on Grounds of Religion or Belief**
For pupils in years 7 to 11 who are on free school meals or whose parents are in receipt of the maximum level of Working Tax Credit free school travel assistance will be provided up to 16 years of age (end of Year 11) if they are attending their nearest appropriate denominational school on grounds of religion or belief, where the distance between home and school is more than two miles but not more than fifteen miles

PLEASE NOTE: Free travel assistance on denominational grounds will not be provided unless families qualify under the low income criteria below.

Once eligibility has been determined and confirmed, the pupil will remain eligible until the end of the school year for which the assessment has been made. Parents/Carers will need to re-apply for assistance annually.

Distance Measurements

Distances referred to in this section are measured as follows:

- Up to two miles – as per the statutory walking distance, along the nearest available walking route
- Up to three miles – as per the statutory walking distance, along the nearest available walking route
- The six mile/fifteen mile upper limits – along road routes passable by suitable motorised transport.

All measurements are made according to the “nearest available walking route” which is not necessarily the shortest distance by road.

For the purposes of this policy, the walking distance will be measured from the front gate of the address where the Council has accepted the pupil or student is ordinarily resident, to the nearest designated entrance of the school or college to which assistance is being considered under the relevant clause of the policy. i.e. at the entrance to the grounds/boundary of the school or college.

The route will be measured using a computerised Geographical Information System. The Council considers this as an exact measure and cannot be considered marginal. If the Council considers it necessary a route may also be measured by calibrated pedometer. These are the only forms of measurement the Council will take into account in determining the distance between home and school for the purposes of this Policy.

Available Walking Routes

This is the shortest route along which a child, “accompanied as necessary”, may walk with reasonable safety and may include footpaths, bridleways and other pathways, as well as recognized roads. This means that a route will be available even if the child would need to be accompanied along it by an adult.

The assessment of the availability or otherwise of a route will be based on a child being accompanied by an adult. It will be irrelevant for the purposes of that assessment whether or not the child would or would not be so accompanied when attending the school or college.

If the walking route, or alternative routes, to the school the pupil could reasonably be expected to take is/are not considered to be reasonably available even when accompanied by an adult, the Council will provide appropriate travel assistance which will normally be through the provision of a Zoom Zero Fare Travel Pass.

Assessment of the comparative safety of a route will involve such factors as:

- the age of the child;
- whether any potential risks might be mitigated if the child were accompanied by an adult;
- the width of any roads travelled along and the existence of pavements;
- the volume and speed of traffic travelling along any roads;
- the existence or otherwise of street lighting; and
- the condition of the route at different times of the year, at the times of day that a child would be expected to travel to and from school.

Pupils not attending their nearest qualifying/catchment school

Under the 1996 Education Act parents are able to express a preference for their choice of school, and the Council both recognises this and has responsibilities under the same Act in respect of those preferences. However, in order to ensure the efficient use of its resources, the Council will normally only provide free travel to pupils meeting the relevant eligibility conditions attending the school designated as the nearest qualifying school or catchment school for the area in which the Council has determined the pupil is ordinarily resident for the purposes of admissions to schools

Exceptions to the above

Assistance in the form of a Zoom Zero Fare Travel Pass will only be offered for pupils in the following exceptional, age appropriate circumstance:

- Where the Council is unable to make a place available at the pupil's nearest qualifying school/catchment school and makes a place available at the next nearest school (the allocated school), which is the statutory qualifying distance.

PLEASE NOTE: *The Council previously provided travel assistance under the following exceptions for pupils not attending their catchment school or allocated school:*

- *Pupils attending an alternative school which was the statutory qualifying distance. On the basis that the Council would not incur any additional cost, a zero fare bus pass to enable the pupil to attend the alternative school was provided equivalent to that which the pupil would have received had they attended either the nearest/catchment, or allocated, school as the case may be.*
- *A further exception was also previously provided when pupils moved home within the Doncaster Area whilst in Years 10 or 11, and wished to remain at the school they had been attending to complete their course, free travel assistance was provided where the distance between their new home and their school was more than the statutory qualifying distance.*

Following a Consultation in 2021/22, these exceptions were removed and the following pupils will not qualify for assistance under these exceptions:

- *Pupils whose families request an in year school transfer after the date of publication of this policy*
- *Pupils whose families move house who request assistance after the date of publication of this policy*
- *All pupils starting a new phase of education on or after 1st September 2023.*

Pupils who were already in receipt of assistance prior to 1st September 2023 will continue to receive assistance (if they remain eligible) until they finish their current phase of education (in most cases the end of Year 11).

General information

When selecting alternative schools, parents/carers must do so in the knowledge that, unless they qualify under the above exception, free transport, or assistance with transport costs, will not be available, regardless of the distance involved.

Additionally, the Council cannot guarantee travelling arrangements to any school: such arrangements are entirely in the hands of the providers of bus services and/or South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority (SYMCA). Therefore, as an additional factor in making their decision parents/carers, should also consider the consequences of possible future alterations to bus services.

Parents/carers should ensure their child's safety by making appropriate arrangements for their child to be accompanied to and from the nearest bus stop and during the journey if required.

3 POST 16 – SIXTH FORM/FURTHER EDUCATION STUDENTS

Unless a pupil qualifies for assistance due to Special Educational Needs or Disabilities (SEND) there is no provision of free travel assistance for Post 16 students entering into further education at Sixth form or College for the first time or undertaking new courses.

However the Council does have a duty to publish a Post 16 Policy Statement by the 31st of May each year. This statement is reviewed and published on the Council website annually and covers the following areas:

- Details of concessionary fares, tickets, discounts, subsidies, passes or travel cards available for Post 16 students attending sixth form at school, college or other places of learning or training
- The 16-19 Bursary Fund
- Help for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities or students facing difficulties in following their courses
- Information on travel assistance for Special Educational Needs Students over the age of 19
- Independent Travel Training
- Cross Boundary Travel/Transport
- Residential Education Placements
- Care to Learn funding
- How to appeal against a decision made on transport assistance
- How to make a complaint
- Useful contacts, links and further information

The policy and further details can be found at:

at: www.doncaster.gov.uk/services/schools/transport-policy-statement

4 EXCLUDED PUPILS AND STUDENTS

Pupils of Compulsory School Age Attending Schools

Where a pupil has been excluded from his/her school, and the Council allocates an alternative school, which is the statutory qualifying distance (appropriate to the age of the pupil) from where the pupil is ordinarily resident, a Zoom Zero Fare Bus Pass to enable attendance will be provided.

Where the parents/carers of the pupil choose for him/her not to attend the allocated school and accept a place at an alternative school then the Council will not provide assistance with travel costs.

When selecting alternative schools, parents/carers must do so in the knowledge that, unless they qualify under the above exceptions, free transport, or assistance with transport costs, will not be available, regardless of the distance involved. As an additional factor in making their decision, they should also consider the consequences of possible future alterations to bus services.

Pupils of Compulsory School Age attending other Provision

Where a pupil has been excluded from his/her school, and the Council arranges education provision for the pupil at institutions other than a school, assistance with travel will be considered as if the alternative provision was a school in line with existing protocols.

Managed Moves

Travel assistance will not be provided for a pupil or student when a move between schools is agreed between two schools. In this case parents/carers will need to speak to the schools concerned if they require assistance with travel costs. Assistance will not be provided if as a result of parental preference the child is moved to a school that is not the nearest suitable school.

5 TRAVEL ASSISTANCE ON MEDICAL GROUNDS

Pupils in Reception and Years 1 to 11 with a medical condition who are fit to attend school, but are unable to do so because they are unable to walk or are unable to travel by their normal means of transport, may be temporarily considered for free travel assistance to school.

Parents/carers will need to complete an Application for Travel Assistance form. This form should be requested via the school in the first instance. Further information can be obtained from the Travel Assistance Service either by e-mail at: Transport@doncaster.gov.uk or by telephone on 01302 736027/736002

The request for assistance on medical grounds must be supported by a medical practitioner. Officers may request additional information and evidence from the parent/carer.

All requests will be referred to the Travel Assistance Panel for review and the Panel will either uphold or refuse the request based upon the evidence provided. In the event of a refusal parents/carers will have the option to appeal against the decision.

6 PUPILS & STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS & DISABILITIES (SEND)

General

Each pupil or student identified by the Council as having Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) will have their individual travel assistance needs assessed against set agreed criteria, taking into account their age, mobility and the effect of their SEND on

their ability to travel. If it is concluded that a pupil or student does not require transport assistance under this section, then consideration will be given under the other sections of this policy as appropriate.

Parental Preference

Travel assistance will not be provided under this section where the Council has identified an institution or provider to meet a pupil or student's need but the parents/carers choose to send their child to a more distant institution or provider of the same type. If the parents prefer the school or college that is further away, the Council may agree to name this provider in the Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) but parents/carers will need to provide transport themselves.

Type of Travel Assistance Provided

The type of travel assistance provided will be the most appropriate to the child's age, safety and needs and will normally be one of the following:

- A Zoom Zero Fare Travel Pass to enable the pupil to travel to and from school on public transport. Parents/carers must ensure their child's safety by making appropriate arrangements for their child to be accompanied to and from the nearest bus stop and along the journey if required
- A refund of travel expenses in accordance with the cheapest available public transport route for pupils able to access public transport services
- Independent Travel Training for pupils who are not currently able to access public transport but have the capability to do so with appropriate support and training
- The payment of a personal travel budget to allow parents/carers to make any arrangements they deem necessary to enable them to take their child to school. The amount of the budget will be determined by the Council in order to ensure best value
- The payment of a personal mileage allowance in accordance with the Council's current rate in certain circumstances for pupils unable to access public transport services (full details are outlined in Section 1 of this Policy)
- Free or subsidised travel on a bus, coach, mini-bus or taxi/private hire or similar vehicle for pupils identified as having Special Educational Needs or Disabilities (SEND) or other needs which mean that they are unable to access public transport and no other form of travel assistance is suitable. A pupil or student will normally be expected to share a vehicle with other pupils and/or students, individual transport will only be provided in exceptional circumstances where such a need has been clearly identified. Pupils and students who are assessed as requiring travel on a coach, mini-bus, taxi/private hire or similar vehicle, will be picked up and dropped off at the most convenient designated point nearest to their home address, with due regard to their needs and safety. Pupils will only be guaranteed collection and drop-off from outside their home address if their needs are assessed to require this

Independent Travel Training

Independent travel training is vitally important to prepare young people for further education, and life after education, by giving them the independence and confidence to travel on public transport and opening up opportunities for employment in the future.

Secondary age pupils and students over compulsory school age with SEND previously assessed as requiring travel assistance, will receive support with independence training

as part of their school/college curriculum with the aim of reducing their reliance on individual transport in preparation for adult life.

This will require plans to encourage independent travel to be put in place by the school/college and parents/carers working in partnership, to mutually agreed targets. Progress should be evidenced at each annual review. There is a specific duty on schools and Councils to begin planning for the transition to adulthood formally from Y9.

The Council has an Independent Travel Training Team who can help with travel training and provide advice support and guidance on this important skill. Further information can be obtained from the team by e-mail at ITT@doncaster.gov.uk or by telephone on 01302 736316.

School and parents/carers should encourage their children to take up public/community travel options at the earliest opportunity – this will be regarded as a positive achievement towards the pupil or student's attainment in becoming an independent traveller. Where transport is ceased under this section, pupils and students may be eligible for support under other sections of this policy as appropriate.

Personal Budgets

In order to qualify for a personal budget a pupil must satisfy the following criteria:

- the pupil must have an EHC Plan, or
- be assessed as requiring additional assistance by the Travel Assistance Panel and
- must fall into one of the four categories of 'eligible child' (please see Note 7 for definition of 'eligible child') and
- there is no suitable transport running in the area so that the daily cost of the budget is less than the cost of transport to the Council

Parents/Carers wishing to use a personal budget to assist them in making their own travel arrangements for their child will need to request this option in discussion with the SEND team/ Travel Assessment Officer when looking at travel assistance to school.

Where appropriate, the Council may ask for evidence that the amount requested is proportionate and to be used solely for the purpose specified.

Personal budgets will generally be paid at the end of each month based on the rate agreed by the Council, although in certain circumstances it may be possible to pay a proportion of this in advance.

PLEASE NOTE: If paid in advance, this payment is based on the assumption that the pupil will attend school regularly in order for this payment to continue. Any long term absence, will result in a corresponding deduction in any future termly payments and/or a request for repayment to the Council, as deemed appropriate in the circumstances.

Mileage Allowance

In order to qualify for a Mileage Allowance a pupil must satisfy the following criteria:

- the pupil must have an EHC Plan, or
- be assessed as requiring additional assistance by the Travel Assistance Panel and
- must fall into one of the four categories of 'eligible child' (please see Note 7 for definition of 'eligible child') and
- there is no suitable transport running in the area so that the daily cost of the budget is less than the cost of transport to the Council

Parents/Carers wishing to use a mileage allowance to assist them in making their own travel arrangements for their child will need to request this option in discussion with the SEND team/Travel Assessment officer when looking at travel assistance to school.

Mileage allowances will generally be paid at the end of each month based on the rates below although in certain circumstances it may be possible to pay a proportion of this in advance. :

	Circumstances	Suggested Rate Per Mile
1	Parents offer to undertake transport but pupil can fit on existing transport at nil or reduced cost.	Nil – Request refused
2	Parents transport their own child and any alternative is more expensive than the agreed mileage rate	45p per mile – this is the current Council mileage rate. Any change to this rate will also result in a change to the amount paid to parents/carers

The payment will be calculated using the mileage between home and school E.g. 10 miles between home and school = 40 miles (2 return journeys) x 45p x 20 days (January) = £360. The mileage will be determined by the Travel Assistance Service along the shortest route using an appropriate mileage calculation system.

PLEASE NOTE: If paid in advance, this payment is based on the assumption that the pupil will attend school regularly in order for this payment to continue. Any long term absence, will result in a corresponding deduction in any future termly payments and/or a request for repayment to the Council, as deemed appropriate in the circumstances.

What if a Budget/Allowance is not agreed?

The Council will explain in writing if they do not agree with a parental or eligible young person's request in relation to a personal budget or mileage allowance. Parents and/or the eligible young person can ask for a review of the decision where:

- an aspect of provision in the EHCP has not been offered as a Personal Budget or mileage allowance and they would like to have this reconsidered;
- a personal budget or mileage allowance has not been offered at all;
- it is felt that the personal budget is insufficient to meet the identified needs and outcomes.

The Council will confirm the outcome of a review in writing and will not reconsider a decision more than once.

Travel not Eligible for a Budget/Allowance

The payment of a Personal Budget for travel will only be paid to support a pupil's attendance at school or College.

The responsibility for the following type of travel lies with the School, College or parent/carer and will not be covered by the personal budget:

- travel to and from work placements
- travel to and from medical, dental, psychiatric, speech therapy or other similar appointments
- travel to and from extra-curricular activities, after school clubs, where this is in addition to home to school transport.

Parents and carers who require assistance to get their child to and from school will need to request an Application for Travel Assistance form from the SEND Team/ Travel Assessment Officer at the Council. This must be completed and returned to the SEND Officer/Travel Assessment Officer who will review the contents of this request and discuss the most appropriate form of Travel Assistance with parents/carers. The type of assistance will be determined by the Council as the most appropriate to meet the pupil/student's individual needs during the journey.

In some circumstances this request may also be referred by officers to the Travel Assistance Panel for a decision.

Any travel assistance agreed to meet a pupil's need will be in accordance with the provisions of this section and will be reviewed and, if necessary, reassessed at each annual review of the EHCP. Where it is decided that the type of travel assistance needs modification or travel assistance is no longer required then the pupil's records will be amended accordingly and changes made.

Equipment

Any special equipment or supervision arrangements required because of the pupil/student's needs will normally be arranged by the Council.

PLEASE NOTE: Out of hours activities, parents/carer work commitments and other Social reasons are not valid factors in determining the type of transport assistance for a child.

It is the responsibility of parents/carers to ensure their child's safety by making appropriate arrangements to accompany their child to and from the designated stop/pick-up point, or see them safely onto and off the vehicle.

Where a parent/carer consistently fails to deliver/receive their child at the pick-up/drop-off point at the agreed time, the provision of transport will be reviewed and may be withdrawn

Changes to Travel Arrangements

Approval will not be given for ad hoc or occasional variations to the arrangements determined by the Council. If parents/carers request a variation to the arrangements, for example, for their child to be collected from, or dropped off at a relative/neighbour/child-minder's address, an amendment to the agreed travel arrangements will only be given where:

- the request is for a permanent change on each school day; and
- no change to the transport provider will be required; and
- no additional cost will be incurred by the Council; and
- the request would not add unreasonable additional travelling time for any other pupils in the vehicle.

Where these requirements cannot be met the request will be declined.

Travel Assistance for Boarding Arrangements

The type of travel assistance provided will be the most appropriate to the child's age, safety and needs. Any assistance or help with the costs of travel will be as follows:

- For pupils/students who board for 5 days assistance will be provided at the start and end of each school/college week
- For pupils/students who board for 7 days assistance will be provided at the start and end of each school/college term and half term. In addition pupils who are in the National Curriculum Year Group 7 or below i.e. who have not yet had their twelfth birthday, and who board for 7 days, will be provided with additional return journeys for two weekends per half-term.

Pupils and Students with SEND but no EHCP

For pupils and students with SEND but without an EHCP, an assessment of transport need will be undertaken by the appropriate Officer(s) at the time a decision is taken. Where it is determined that the provision of a Zoom Zero Fare Travel Pass would not be appropriate to meet the needs of the pupil or student, the provision of transport will be in accordance with the provisions of this section and will be reviewed and, if necessary, reassessed annually by the appropriate Officer(s).

Requests for Parents to Travel

From time to time the Council receives requests from parents to accompany their child on the home-to-school journey. As a general rule this will not be agreed, but there may be special circumstances which merit consideration.

These may include where a parent has to attend the annual review and has no transport and they live a considerable distance from the school. Such cases will be exceptional and the Council will consider what is reasonable in the circumstances.

For such a request to be agreed, there must always be an escort present on the vehicle if other pupils/students are travelling, sufficient room for the parent so as not to disturb the normal travel arrangements and there must be no additional cost to the Council.

7 PUPILS AND STUDENTS WITH SEND AGED UP TO 16 (END OF YEAR 11)

The Policy outlined in Section 6 above will apply.

8 PUPILS AND STUDENTS WITH SEND AGED 16-19 (YEARS 12-14)

General

Parents/Carers who require travel assistance to and from school/college for Post 16 students will need to request an Application for Travel Assistance form from the SEND/Participation and Transition Service at the Council. This must be completed and returned to the SEND/Participation and Transition Service at the Council who will review the contents of this request and discuss the most appropriate form of Travel Assistance with parents/carers. The type of assistance will be determined by the Council as the most appropriate to meet the pupil/student's individual needs during the journey.

This may also involve an assessment for Independent Travel Training if it is felt that this is an option for the pupil/student. Failure to attend assessment could mean transport is not provided. Where assistance with transport is deemed necessary it will be provided in accordance with the provisions of this section. Assistance with transport will, if necessary, be subject to an annual review and/or reassessment.

College Transport

Where a college has several sites at which the student is required to attend, transport will be provided to one designated site agreed between the Council, the student and the college authorities. Any inter site transfer will be the responsibility of the college to provide.

Where attendance at a college other than Doncaster College (or Dearne Valley College if that is nearer to the student's permanent address) has been agreed and the student could attend by boarding but elects to travel daily, no transport will be arranged. Instead, the student will be assisted by a payment towards the cost of travel, which will be calculated as follows:

- i) The total cost of daily travel for the academic year will be calculated as if it had been arranged by the Council in accordance with this policy;
- ii) from this figure shall be deducted the residential costs that would otherwise have been payable by, or on behalf of, the student.

9 STUDENTS WITH SEND POST 19

General

Individual transport needs will be assessed against set agreed criteria, by the appropriate Officers for students who are;

- over the age of 19 and under 25 years of age on 1 September each year; and
- ordinarily resident in the borough; and

- have (or have had) a S139a, an EHCP and a Social Services Assessment of Need which has a specific requirement for transport; and
- be registered (or registerable) as disabled under the Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons' Act 1970; and
- attending a course funded by the Education and Skills Funding Agency at a local FE College agreed as appropriate to meet the needs of the student, unless attendance on a course at another institution has been agreed as more appropriate to meet a specific educational and/or social need of the student.
- Progression in learning must be evidenced against outcomes in the EHCP. Lack of progression will mean that transport will no longer be approved. Funding will not normally be provided where a student repeats a course or studies at the same academic level as one previously studied

Assessment may include undertaking a specialist transport/independent travel training assessment. Failure to attend assessment could mean transport is not provided. Where assistance with transport is deemed necessary it will be provided in accordance with the provisions of this section either until the completion of the course for which it was approved or the end of the academic year in which the student attains the age of 25 years, whichever is the earlier. Assistance with transport will, if necessary, be subject to an annual review and/or reassessment.

College Transport

Where a college has several sites at which the student is required to attend, transport will be provided to one designated site agreed between the Council, the student and the college authorities. Any inter site transfer will be the responsibility of the college to provide.

Where attendance at a college other than Doncaster College (or Dearne Valley College if that is nearer to the student's permanent address) has been agreed and the student could attend by boarding but elects to travel daily, no transport will be arranged. Instead, the student will be assisted by a payment towards the cost of travel, which will be calculated as follows:

- i) The total cost of daily travel for the academic year will be calculated as if it had been arranged by the Council in accordance with this policy;
- ii) from this figure shall be deducted the residential costs that would otherwise have been payable by, or on behalf of, the student.

10 APPEALS

Parents/carers will have the right to appeal against any determination made on assistance with transport by Officers of the Council under this policy. This will be a 3 stage process as follows:

The Stage One Review

This Review will be undertaken by a Senior Officer of the Council.

- Parents/carers will have 20 working days from receipt of the Council's decision to refuse their application to complete and return a Notice of Appeal Form requesting a review. This form should be completed by the parent/carer and give details of

any personal or family circumstances that the parent/carer believes should be taken into account when the decision is reviewed.

- Within 20 days of receipt of this form, the Senior Officer will review the case and send out a letter notifying the parent/carer of the decision.
- The letter should explain how the review was conducted, information about other Departments or Agencies that have been consulted as part of the process, the rationale for the decision reached and information about how the parent can escalate their case to stage 2 if necessary.

The Stage Two Review

This Review will be undertaken by an Assistant Director of the Council.

- Parents/carers will have 20 working days from receipt of the Council's decision to refuse their application to complete and return a Notice of Appeal Form requesting a review. This form should be completed by the parent/carer and give details of any personal or family circumstances that the parent/carer believes should be taken into account when the decision is reviewed.
- Within 20 days of receipt of this form, the Assistant Director will review the case and send out a letter notifying the parent/carer of the decision.
- The letter should explain how the review was conducted, information about other Departments or Agencies that have been consulted as part of the process, the rationale for the decision reached and information about how the parent can escalate their case to stage 3 if necessary.

The Stage Three Review

This Review will be undertaken by an independent appeal panel (the Awards Grants and Transport Appeals Committee)

- A parent/carer will have 20 working days from receipt of the Stage 2 decision to make a written request to escalate the matter to Stage 3.
- Democratic Services will be informed that an appeal has been received, they will arrange a date for the Hearing and will send out Agendas and invites to the meeting.
- Within 40 working days of receipt of the parent/carer's request The Awards Grants and Transport Appeals Committee will consider written and verbal representations from both the parent and Officers involved in the case
- Democratic Services will send out notification of the outcome of the appeal within 5 working days which will set out:
 - i) The nature of the decision reached.
 - ii) How the review was conducted, information from other agencies or departments consulted, what factors were considered, the rationale for the decision reached and information about the parent's right to put the matter to the Local Government Ombudsman.
 - iii) It will be made clear that a referral of a complaint to the Local Government Ombudsman should only be made if the complainant considers that there was a failure to comply with the procedural rules or if they consider that there have been any irregularities in the handling of the appeal.

All hearings of the Panel will be conducted in accordance with the approved protocol.

11 CEASING ASSISTANCE WITH TRANSPORT

The Council has adopted a Code of Practice for the safety and behaviour of pupils on Home to School transport. If any pupil endangers their own safety or that of others by not adhering to this code, consideration will be given to ceasing their transport assistance and parents/carers will then be expected to make alternative arrangements to ensure their child attends school.

In addition to the Code of Practice the Council has, in conjunction with the other 3 South Yorkshire Authorities and SYPTE, produced a policy for managing criminal and unacceptable behaviour on public transport. Any breach of this policy may result in the withdrawal of the Zoom Zero Fare Travel Pass and/or further measures being taken as appropriate.

In cases where individual transport is provided by taxi or minibus, parents are requested to cancel transport when not required i.e. in case of holidays or illness. Repeated failure to cancel transport when not required may lead to a recharge of the cost or, ultimately, cancellation of the transport.

NOTES

1 **Parent/Carer**

Reference to parent and/or carer in this policy means any person having parental responsibility for the child (for who assistance with transport is being sought) within the meaning of the Children Act 1989.

It is the responsibility of those applying for assistance with transport to satisfy the Council that they have parental responsibility for the child for whom assistance is being sought.

2 **Ordinarily Resident**

Reference in this policy to 'ordinarily resident' means where a pupil or student is habitually and normally resident at their address other than for occasional absences and for a settled purpose, which is not solely to receive education i.e. the residence at which the child resides during the normal school week at the closing date for receiving applications for admission to school during the normal admission round.

It is the responsibility of those applying for assistance with transport to provide such information as the Council requires in order to be satisfied as to where the pupil or student is ordinarily resident.

3 **Full-Time Course**

References in this policy to a 'full-time course' is a reference to a course of which the student is required to study for at least 12 guided learning hours per week.

4 **Closing date for applications for Bus Passes**

No refunds will be made for travel expenses incurred as a result of a late application for travel assistance. The closing date for new bus pass applications is 30th June. Whilst we can process bus pass applications at any time we cannot

guarantee that they will be available for the start of term unless received by the closing date.

5 Definition of Eligible Child

The following are examples of an Eligible Child:

- i Children who attend schools beyond the statutory walking distance**
These children are eligible for free school travel assistance, provided that the Council has made no “suitable arrangements” for boarding accommodation or attendance at a nearer school and the children live beyond walking distance and attend their nearest suitable school/catchment school. The statutory walking distance is 2 miles for children under 8 years old and 3 miles for children of 8 or over.
- ii Children with SEND or mobility problems**
These children may live within the statutory walking distance and have special educational needs, a disability or mobility problem which means that they cannot reasonably be expected to walk to their school and no suitable arrangements have been made by the LA to enable them to attend a nearer school.
- iii Children whose route to school is unsafe**
These children may live within the statutory walking distance but they cannot reasonably be expected to walk to their nearest suitable school because the route is not deemed an available walking route, even when accompanied.
- iv Children from low income families**
 - Secondary school age children who attend schools over 2 and up to 6 miles from their home, even if the school they attend is not their nearest suitable school, providing there are not three or more suitable schools which are nearer to their home, or
 - Secondary age children from low income families who attend a school over 2 miles but under 15 miles away from home, if their parent has expressed a wish for them to be educated at that particular school based on the parent’s religion or belief and, having regard to that religion or belief, there is no nearer suitable school. This applies to parents with a particular religious or philosophical belief, including those with a lack of religion or lack of belief.
 - Primary age children (aged 8 – 11) from low income families who live more than 2 miles (rather than 3) from their nearest suitable school.