



Falkirk Council
Children's Services

Transport Policy Operational Guidance

November 2017

CONTENTS

- 1. DISTANCE ENTITLEMENT TO SCHOOLS**
- 2. REQUESTS & AUTHORISATION (CHILDREN'S SERVICES)**
 - 2.1 PLACING REQUESTS
 - 2.2 ALTERNATIVE PLACEMENTS
 - 2.3 SCHOOL TRANSFERS (CIRCULAR 33)
 - 2.4 PRIMARY 1 CHILDREN/YOUNG PEOPLE (LUNCHTIME TRANSPORT)
 - 2.5 TRANSPORT ON MEDICAL GROUNDS
 - 2.6 OPERATIONAL GUIDANCE LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN/YOUNG PEOPLE
 - 2.7 PROMOTION OF THE WELFARE OF CHILDREN/YOUNG PEOPLE IN NEED
 - 2.8 HOMELESS ACCOMMODATION TRANSPORT
 - 2.9 ADDITIONAL NEEDS TRANSPORT
 - 2.10 RE-INTEGRATION OF ENHANCED PROVISION TO CATCHMENT PRIMARIES
- 3. PARENT/CARER INFORMATION**
 - 3.1 CONCESSIONARY PLACES
 - 3.2 SEASON TICKETS/TRAVEL PASSES
 - 3.3 BEHAVIOUR
 - 3.4 PARENTAL CONVEYANCE CONTRACTS
- 4. INFORMATION FOR HEAD TEACHERS/MANAGERS**
 - 4.1 CONSORTIA TRANSPORT FOR PUPILS WITH ADDITIONAL SUPPORT NEEDS
 - 4.2 NOMINATED MEMBER OF STAFF WITH RESPONSIBILITY FOR ADDITIONAL NEEDS TRANSPORT
 - 4.3 CONSORTIA TRANSPORT
 - 4.4 TRANSPORT ENQUIRIES
 - 4.5 OUT OF SCHOOL HOURS LEARNING TRANSPORT
 - 4.6 AD HOC TRANSPORT ARRANGEMENTS IN SCHOOLS
 - 4.7 TRANSPORTING OF OTHER CHILDREN BY PARENTS/CARERS (not necessarily their own)
 - 4.8 TRANSPORT PROVIDED BY STAFF
 - 4.9 SCHOOL MINIBUSES AND PTA MINIBUSES
 - 4.10 VOLUNTEER DRIVERS
 - 4.11 TRANSPORT ASSISTANTS
- 5. HEALTH AND SAFETY**
 - 5.1 SEATBELTS AND CHILD RESTRAINTS
 - 5.2 WHEELCHAIR ACCESSIBLE TRANSPORT
 - 5.3 SAFETY OF DROP OFF/PICK UP POINTS
 - 5.4 EMERGENCY SCHOOL CLOSURES/ADVERSE WEATHER
 - 5.5 NO-ONE AT HOME OR PARENT/CARER DEEMED UNFIT
 - 5.6 PLANNED EARLY CLOSURES

APPENDICES

- 2.1 RISK ASSESSMENT TOOL

1. DISTANCE ENTITLEMENT TO SCHOOLS

- 1.1 The Transport Planning Unit determines distance entitlement using digital mapping systems and the following criteria:

The legislation refers to the nearest available safe walking route. The nearest safe walking route will be the shortest route suitable for a child accompanied by an adult, from their home gateway nearest to the school to the nearest designated school gate(s).

- (a) If there is no home gateway, then the measurement for the distance entitled criteria will be taken from the bottom step of the main entrance of the house/ block of flats.
- (b) A school gate or gates is designated as suitable for children and young people's use by the headteacher/manager in conjunction with advice from the Director of Children's Services. A gate assessed as unsuitable will not be used as a designated school gate for the purpose of distance measurement.
- (c) If the shortest walking route is deemed unsafe, the next nearest safe walking route will be used in the calculation of distance entitlement.

- 1.1 Within this policy, a child's 'home' is considered to be their place of residence. Where a child has more than one residence, for example when parents/carers live separately, transport will only be considered from the address which is registered with the school as the home address, or prior to admission, the address used on the enrolment form.

- 1.1 The Transport Planning Unit will authorise all transport for pupils eligible on grounds of distance or safety.

2. REQUESTS & AUTHORISATION (CHILDREN'S SERVICES)

2.1 PLACING REQUEST

- 2.1.1 Where a child living within the Falkirk Council area attends a Falkirk Council school as a result of a successful parental placing request, transport assistance is not provided, regardless of distance.
- 2.1.2 Cross-boundary placing requests both into and outwith the Falkirk Council area receive no help with transport, with the exception of some pupils with Additional Support Needs and Looked After Children/young people.
- 2.1.3 Some children/young people with Additional Support Needs attend a specialist educational provision outwith the Falkirk Council area. Where Children's Services has placed the child, transport will be provided. Where the attendance is the result of a successful parental placing request, transport may be provided at the discretion of the service manager Individual and Additional Support.

2.2 ALTERNATIVE PLACEMENTS

The Transport Planning Unit will be advised of Alternative Placements by the Forward Planning Team and transport will be offered to pupils that qualify according to the normal distance/safety criteria. Award of transport in any other (exceptional) circumstances will require authorisation by the relevant Service Manager, Children's Services.

2.3 SCHOOL TRANSFERS (CIRCULAR 33)

The sending school can authorise and should request the necessary transport arrangements by contacting the Transport Planning Unit directly. The Transport Planning Unit will advise the Forward Planning Team in Children's Services of all transport arrangements for Circular 33 transfers.

2.4 PRIMARY 1 CHILDREN/YOUNG PEOPLE (LUNCHTIME TRANSPORT)

- 2.4.1 Parents/Carers of entitled P1 pupils must apply to the Transport Planning Unit (TPU) for lunch time transport. Transport Planning Unit and Children's Services will liaise accordingly to ensure appropriate transport is arranged and schools/parents/carers are notified.

2.5 TRANSPORT ON MEDICAL GROUNDS

- 2.5.1 Parents/carers of pupils who would not otherwise be entitled to free school transport must apply in writing to Children's Services who may authorise transport on medical grounds.
- 2.5.2 Parents/carers of pupils who are already entitled to school transport must apply in writing directly to the Transport Planning Unit who can authorise the necessary changes in transport provided.

2.6 OPERATIONAL GUIDANCE LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN/YOUNG PEOPLE

- 2.6.1 Authorisation for transport for looked after children/young people (not otherwise eligible for school transport) will be provided by the Social Work Area Team Manager responsible for the child.
- 2.6.2 Risk Assessment will determine what kind of transport is provided (see Appendix 2.1).

2.7 PROMOTION OF THE WELFARE OF CHILDREN/YOUNG PEOPLE IN NEED

- 2.7.1 Requests for transport will be made by the headteacher or manager to the appropriate Service Manager for Children's Services.

2.8 HOMELESS ACCOMMODATION TRANSPORT

- 2.8.1 The Homeless Officer can authorise and should request the necessary transport arrangements by contacting the Transport Planning Unit.

- 2.8.2 Transport will be arranged by TPU for first 4 weeks, after which homeless co-ordinator will be responsible for arranging transport.
- 2.8.3 Where children/young people are escaping domestic abuse and there is Social Work involvement, the request can also be made directly by the Social Work Area Team Manager.

2.9 **ADDITIONAL SUPPORT NEEDS TRANSPORT**

Requests for Additional Support Needs transport should be made by the headteacher/manager and sent to the Additional Support Team for approval.

2.10 **RE-INTEGRATION OF ENHANCED PROVISION TO CATCHMENT PRIMARIES**

- 2.10.1 When a child in enhanced provision is reintegrating to their catchment primary, the enhanced provision school should submit transport requests as detailed in 2.9. The relevant travel claim form should also be submitted in respect of staff travelling to support the children/young people.

3. **PARENT/CARER INFORMATION**

3.1 **CONCESSIONARY PLACES**

Parents/carers should contact the Transport Planning Unit to discuss the availability of a place. If a place is available it will only be awarded on receipt of a written request. Concessionary places will not be awarded on fare paying school buses.

Concessionary transport can only be granted for the current or forthcoming school session. A new application is required for each school session.

Where a place is available on a private hire contract vehicle and at no additional cost, a concessionary place may be offered to the child. Concessionary places may be withdrawn at short notice if circumstances change, e.g.:-

- change of contract specification;
- when an entitled child requires the place; or
- if a child using a concessionary seat causes any disruption.

Requests for concessionary places will be prioritised by age, with the youngest children given priority.

If the contract incurs extra costs due to a concession, the parent/carer will be liable for the additional amount.

3.2 **SEASON TICKETS/TRAVEL PASSES**

- 3.2.1 Parents/carers of children/young people awaiting travel passes must make their own arrangements until the pass arrives. Ten working days after receipt of the application, parents/carers will be allowed to claim for reimbursement of any further transport costs, provided valid bus tickets are submitted.

- 3.2.2 Full-time and part-time season tickets can be offered to Looked After children/young people and those with Additional Support Needs.
- 3.2.3 If a season ticket is lost, then the parent/carer is responsible for obtaining the replacement. One Scholar's Travel Voucher may be issued to enable the child to travel home. No further vouchers will be issued.
- 3.2.4 Schools must advise the Transport Planning Unit of any child who is no longer entitled to a season ticket, on a month-to-month basis.
- 3.2.5 Schools must ensure season tickets are withdrawn and returned to the Transport Planning Unit. If not, the Transport Planning Unit must be informed immediately.
- 3.2.6 Lists of children/young people currently using transport which are forwarded to schools from the Transport Planning Unit should be checked and returned by the date requested with any additions, deletions and amendments made.

3.3 BEHAVIOUR

- 3.3.1 Where a child/young person behaves in such a way as to cause concern, the operator should contact the headteacher/manager. Transport may be withdrawn on a temporary basis until the parents/carers and child sign a Behavioural Agreement.
- 3.3.2 A permanent ban from transport may be considered where there are persistent behavioural issues and the child has been subject of a Behavioural Agreement. Any decision about the withdrawal of transport will be made by Children's Services in consultation with Transport Planning Unit. The Transport Planning Unit will inform the parents/carers and the Director of Children's Services of the decision in writing.
- 3.3.3 If the reasons for exclusion from provided transport are related to the child's additional support needs, the headteacher/manager should call a review to provide advice to Children's Services and the Transport Planning Unit.

3.4 PARENTAL CONVEYANCE CONTRACTS

- 3.4.1 Parents can apply for re-imburement of mileage expenses at the end of each term using the "Parental Contract: Mileage Claim Form"

A contract of agreement will be issued by the Transport Planning Unit specifying:-

- (a) The pupils and journeys covered by the contract.
- (b) The start and end date. A single school session (August to June) will be the maximum duration for a Parental Conveyance Contract.
- (c) The approved mileage rate.

Claims submitted can only include the days that pupils attend school.

A maximum of one return journey to school can be claimed for each school day.

- 3.4.2 Calculation of Mileage Payable:

The rate offered will be according to the current HMRC "Approved Mileage Rate" (currently 45p per mile (March 2017)).

- 3.4.3 The distance for mileage payable will be calculated as the shortest driveable route from the pupil's home to their school. The distance will be calculated using the Falkirk Council digital mapping software and based on the public road network. Private roads, such as long driveways and farm tracks, will not be included in the calculated mileage.
- 3.4.4 This distance will be payable twice for each school day, once for the morning drop-off and once for the afternoon pick-up.
- 3.4.5 Payment will only be made for the one-way journeys where a pupil is the passenger, home to school in the morning and school to home in the afternoon. Return mileage home (AM) or to school (PM) cannot be claimed.
- 3.4.6 Distances will be calculated from and to the address where the pupil(s) is/are normally resident
- 3.4.7 Only 1 mileage will be payable per household (i.e. where more than 1 pupil attends the same school).
- 3.4.8 Additional mileage can be claimed for another child in the same household if they attend another school and it is further away, requiring a longer journey.
- 3.4.9 Additional mileage cannot be claimed for temporary road closures or bad weather conditions that result in a longer journey.
- 3.4.10 Permanent road closures or road network changes will require a re-assessment of the shortest driveable route. Once validated, payment will be back-dated to the date a claim for additional mileage is received.

4. INFORMATION FOR HEAD TEACHERS/MANAGERS

4.1 CONSORTIA TRANSPORT FOR PUPILS WITH ADDITIONAL SUPPORT NEEDS

- 4.1.1 Requests for transport under Consortia arrangements for pupils with additional support needs should be made by the headteacher/manager. The request will be sent to the Service Manager for the Individual and Additional Support Team who will make a decision based on the advice of the professionals involved with the child.

4.2 NOMINATED MEMBER OF STAFF WITH RESPONSIBILITY FOR ADDITIONAL NEEDS TRANSPORT

- 4.2.1 The school will provide the Transport Planning Unit with the name of a nominated member of staff who will ensure that:
- (a) a copy of the essential information form, including emergency contact details should be completed and updated for all children/young people using additional support needs transport;
 - (b) specific details of all transport requirements are provided to the Individual and Additional Support Team;
 - (c) procedures for emergency school closures are followed;
 - (d) subject to parental consent, transport assistants are provided with relevant information regarding the child and family/carers. This should be carried on all journeys by the transport assistant;

- (e) at the time of leaving the school grounds, agreed safety arrangements are adhered to.

4.3 CONSORTIA TRANSPORT

- 4.3.1 Each 'home' school should submit a list of children/young people intending to participate in the scheme to the Transport Planning Unit who will make the necessary arrangements. Transport Planning Unit must be informed immediately by the host school of any pupils who withdraw from the scheme.

4.4 TRANSPORT ENQUIRIES

- 4.4.1 Headteachers/managers should deal with initial enquiries about transport and provide parents/carers with an appropriate application form.
- 4.4.2 Headteachers/managers should deal with initial complaints but after this stage, parents/carer should be referred to the Transport Planning Unit.
- 4.4.3 Any permanent changes to transport arrangements should be submitted in writing to the Transport Planning Unit.

4.5 OUT OF SCHOOL HOURS LEARNING TRANSPORT

- 4.5.1 Subject to specific, individual requests, looked after children and children/young people who are normally distance/safety entitled may be provided with Scholar's Travel Vouchers to use on bus journeys home after an out of school hours learning activity has finished.
- 4.5.2 Schools will arrange distribution of these Scholar's Travel Vouchers to entitled children/young people, subject to needs assessment.
- 4.5.3 Taxi transport will only be provided if the child normally travels by taxi and the taxi can operate at the later time at no additional cost. The individual school will be liable for any additional transport cost.

4.6 AD HOC TRANSPORT ARRANGEMENTS IN SCHOOLS

- 4.6.1 When schools require transport on an ad hoc basis, they should contact the Transport Planning Unit for guidance on using operators
- 4.6.2 All coaches, buses, minibuses and taxis that are used on private hire school outings must be fitted with seatbelts.

4.7 TRANSPORTING OF OTHER CHILDREN BY PARENTS/CARERS

Due to PVG and insurance requirements, parents are not to be used to transport children other than their own.

4.8 TRANSPORT PROVIDED BY STAFF

- 4.8.1 Children's Services staff who use their own car to transport children/young people require private car insurance covering them for business use. The relevant travel claim form should be submitted to reclaim the mileage costs.

4.8.2 The Falkirk Council Driving at Work Policy applies to all members of staff transporting children/young people in their own vehicles.

4.9 **SCHOOL MINIBUSES AND PTA MINIBUSES**

4.9.1 Any person who drives a minibus, either owned by Falkirk Council or a Parent Teacher Association or similar should have a valid and appropriate driving licence for the class of vehicle. The vehicle must be appropriately insured, licensed, and have a current MOT certificate. First Use Vehicle check should be made by the driver before taking the vehicle out to ensure that there are no faults.

4.9.2 The log book should be completed at the end of the journey so that the driver can detail any faults with the vehicle. The School/PTA must also ensure that the vehicle is regularly serviced and inspected by a qualified vehicle engineer.

4.9.3 The Falkirk Council Driving at Work Policy applies to all members of staff driving school (or PTA) minibuses.

4.9.4 All drivers of minibuses should be PVG registered.

4.10 **VOLUNTEER DRIVERS**

Falkirk Council will ensure the suitability of volunteer drivers via the following measures:

- All volunteer drivers will be PVG registered.
- All volunteer drivers will have written confirmation of fitness to drive from their GP.
- All volunteer drivers will provide 2 character references.
- All volunteer drivers will attend induction training and Child Protection Awareness training and any other training deemed pertinent to the job, provided by Falkirk Council.

4.10.1 Volunteer drivers will be required to submit an Authorisation to Drive form on an annual basis.

4.10.2 Volunteer drivers will be required to submit a copy of their car insurance certificate, including business use, on an annual basis.

4.11 **TRANSPORT ASSISTANTS**

Generally, Primary School children with additional support needs will be provided with a transport assistant. This is discretionary and will depend on the specific needs of the child.

Secondary school pupils with additional support needs attending Carronrange School will generally be provided with a transport assistant.

In the interest of promoting independence, looked after children and those with ASN who attend other Falkirk Council specialist provision will only be provided with a transport assistant when assessed necessary following risk assessment.

4.12 RISK ASSESSMENT

When requesting transport for Looked After children and those with additional support needs, a risk assessment should be undertaken to determine whether any additional safety measures are required (see Appendix 2.1 for the risk assessment tool).

5. HEALTH AND SAFETY

5.1 SEATBELTS AND CHILD RESTRAINTS

- 5.1.1 Statutory guidelines and approved codes of practice must be followed by all contractors providing school transport for Children's Services .
- 5.1.2 In vehicles of seven or fewer passenger seats, it is the driver's responsibility to ensure that where seatbelts are fitted to a vehicle, the seatbelts are used by the children/young people and fastened properly. No child should be permitted to travel in such vehicles without wearing a seatbelt where these are fitted, without special exemption sanctioned by the Director of Children's Services.
- 5.1.3 In all other vehicles with eight passenger seats or more, where seatbelts are fitted, the children/young people must be made aware of the belts but it is the parents/carers responsibility to ensure their use. If a pupil transport assistant is present on the vehicle they can assist in the use of the belts but cannot enforce their use.
- 5.1.4 Current legislation should be referred to for guidance in specific cases.
- 5.1.5 In cars or taxis with seven or fewer passenger seats, the rear doors must be fitted with child proof locks and these should be used to ensure the safety of the children/young people where appropriate.
- 5.1.6 All transport for school trips should only use seatbelt fitted vehicles.
- 5.1.7 Where needed to comply with current legislation, car seats should be used by pupils/young people.

5.2 WHEELCHAIR ACCESSIBLE TRANSPORT

- 5.2.1 When specified all vehicles used on Children's Services contracts which are wheelchair accessible must be equipped with wheelchair restraints, and fully functional lap and diagonal wheelchair passenger restraints. All restraints must be secured to the vehicle.
- 5.2.2 Contractors, drivers and transport assistants must know how to use all specialist equipment. Where a transport assistant is employed, it is the duty of the transport assistant and the driver to ensure that specialist equipment is appropriately used. The driver has sole responsibility for this where there is no transport assistant.

5.3 SAFETY OF DROP OFF/PICK UP POINTS

5.3.1 The arrangements at drop off/pick up points at educational establishments vary depending on a variety of factors:

- (a) Volume of traffic on roads outside educational establishments.
- (b) Percentage of parents/carers dropping off/picking up children.
- (c) Ability of roads near the educational establishment to cope with the increase in traffic including school transport taking into account width of roads, cul-de-sac, etc.
- (d) Ability of children/people to have clear, safe and supervised access to school transport.

5.3.2 In order to ensure safety headteachers/managers must consider the following:

- (a) Supervision of children/young people boarding school transport
- (b) Segregation of school transport from parents/carers car parking areas
- (c) Agreement with the Transport Planning Unit about safe times for school transport to arrive and leave

5.3.3 Risk assessments should be carried out at each school boarding and alighting point to ensure the safety of children/young people using school transport. Responsibility for this lies with the headteacher/manager. If necessary, the school must ensure that there is a responsible person present to supervise pupils boarding and alighting school transport.

5.4 EMERGENCY SCHOOL CLOSURES/ADVERSE WEATHER

5.4.1 Headteachers/managers and the Transport Planning Unit are responsible for making transport arrangements when there is an emergency closure. If the contractor cannot provide the journey, they must inform both the school and Transport Planning Unit.

5.4.2 In adverse weather conditions the contractor must liaise with the headteacher/manager and/or the Transport Planning Unit regarding travel decisions.

5.4.3 It is the contractor's decision as to whether a road is passable or not. If a morning or inward journey is abandoned, all the children/young people must be returned home and into the care of the parent/carer or emergency contact. If weather conditions deteriorate during the day, contractors should also liaise with the school/Transport Planning Unit regarding an early closure.

5.4.4 If in adverse weather conditions, contractors cannot set children/young people down at their normal drop off point, children/young people will not be allowed to walk home without being accompanied by a responsible adult. If this is not feasible, the contractor should return the children/young people to the relevant school and place them into the care of the headteacher/manager who will make appropriate arrangements.

5.4.5 In the event of transport being immobilised by weather conditions or blocked roads, children/young people should be instructed to remain in the vehicle until rescue can be organised. If the circumstances are deemed to be dangerous, the pupils should be guided in a safe and orderly manner to a place of safety.

5.5 NO-ONE AT HOME OR PARENT/CARER DEEMED UNFIT

- 5.5.1 In the event that the parent/carer is not at home, the driver/transport assistant must place the child into the care of the emergency contact person. If this is not possible, the driver/transport assistant must consult with the appropriate headteacher/manager to consider returning the child to school. In the case of Looked After Children, Children's Services must be contacted for advice.
- 5.5.2 If the parent/carer is deemed by the transport assistant or driver to be unfit to care for the child, the Transport Planning Unit and Children's Services should be contacted immediately.
- 5.5.3 Where a child is not returned to their normal address, parents/carers should be informed at the earliest opportunity of the location of the child.

5.6 PLANNED EARLY CLOSURES

- 5.6.1 When schools close early on the last day of term, headteachers/managers must provide transport operators with sufficient notice to re-arrange transport. Priority will be given to primary schools and then secondary schools that have no suitable commercial buses available.

Other planned closures should be notified to the Transport Planning Unit one month in advance. The Transport Planning Unit will advise the school of the operators to be contacted.

Appendix 2.1

Risk Factor	Risk to Self/Others	How can this be managed?	
Violence/Aggression/ Behavioural Issues	<input type="checkbox"/>	Transport Assistant Volunteer Driver Other	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
Sexually inappropriate behaviour/ sexual exploitation	<input type="checkbox"/>	Transport Assistant Volunteer Driver Other	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
Self Harm	<input type="checkbox"/>	Transport Assistant Volunteer Driver Other	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
Absconding	<input type="checkbox"/>	Transport Assistant Volunteer Driver Other	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
Relationships with Other Children	<input type="checkbox"/>	Transport Assistant Volunteer Driver Other	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
Physical/Mental/Emotional	<input type="checkbox"/>	Transport Assistant Volunteer Driver Specialist Seating	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
Medical/Medication Carried	<input type="checkbox"/>	Transport Assistant Volunteer Driver Specialist Seating	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
Other Risk Factor (please specify)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Transport Assistant Volunteer Driver Other	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>

Please Note: Where risks cannot be managed satisfactorily, transport should be discussed with a Senior Manager.