

**School Transport Request for Vacant Seats for Session 2020/21**

All Education Authorities are required to offer any vacant seats on school transport to pupils who live on a route, but within the specified walking distance of their school.

All such requests are granted on the basis that should any children move into the area who are entitled to school transport, those seats may have to be relinquished.

The Authority is now asking for any parents and carers who wish to make a request for a vacant seat for their child(ren) to come forward with that request between **7 September 2020 and 20 September 2020.** All requests must be made online by clicking on ‘Vacant Seat Requests’ at the bottom of page on the link below :

<http://www.shetland.gov.uk/education/policies_guidelines_and_forms.asp>

The form can be found on the Shetland Island Council’s website in the Schools Service section under Policies, Guidelines and Forms.

**No requests will be accepted or considered after 20 September 2020.**

The School Transport Policy sets out the process whereby vacant seats will be allocated. In the event that more applications are received than the number of vacant seats on any given route, then priority will be given as follows:

* To those children referred by Social Work or Health professionals;
* To those attending their catchment area school over those attending an alternative school by parental choice;
* Amongst those attending their catchment area school, to those who live furthest away;
* Amongst those attending an alternative school by parental choice, to those who live furthest away.

Please note that it is not possible to grant seats on Public Service buses which are used to transport school pupils; however non-entitled pupils may travel as members of the public and pay the appropriate fare.

Parents and carers should also be aware that due to current social distancing restrictions, there are a limited number of vacant seats available on school transport vehicles.

The allocation of any available vacant seats will be done towards the end of September, with letters being issued to parents and carers during the October holidays, advising whether or not their application has been successful and enclosing the necessary bus pass if so. Children will not be allowed to travel on school transport vehicles without a valid pass. Those pupils will be able to access their vacant seats from the start of the new term on Wednesday 30 October 2020.

Any parent or carer who is having difficulty accessing the online form should contact the Children’s Services Department Reception on 01595 744000 for assistance.

**Parents and carers who successfully applied for vacant seats for their children for the previous school session MUST re-apply.**