

## Home to School Transport Policy

For children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)

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## 1. Introduction

North Lincolnshire Council is an enabling Council. In line with our One Family Approach, we want all children to be in their families, in their schools and their communities. We want children to be able to travel safely, to attend local schools and to be able to develop skills towards independence in readiness for adult life.

This policy aims to ensure children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) in North Lincolnshire are enabled and supported to be able to get to school and to develop skills towards independence in preparation for adult life, helping them to achieve the best possible outcomes in education in a way that is inclusive and encourages independence. Throughout this document, the term 'children' is used to describe children and young people residing in North Lincolnshire who attend schools, and 'parents' is used to describe parents, carers and guardians.

Children may be eligible for assistance with transport if they are unable to travel independently to school. To determine that, the Council will need to consider whether the child could reasonably be expected to make their own way to school if accompanied and, if so, whether the child's parent can reasonably be expected to accompany the child. When considering that, a range of factors may need to be taken into account, such as the age of the child and whether one would ordinarily expect a child of that age to be accompanied.

Many children go to their local school and don't need any special arrangements. Their entitlement to school transport is set out in the "Home to School Transport Policy for Pupils of Statutory School Age" which is available on the Council's [website](#).

The Council relies on co-operation and support of parents to ensure the smooth running of the transport the Council provides. Included, as an appendix, is their responsibilities in helping ensure that the service is efficient, effective and safe.

## 2. School Transport and the Law

Councils provide school transport under the Education Act 1996.

The Act requires every Local Authority (LA) to arrange the provision of free school transport if it is decided this is necessary to make it easier for children to attend school. If the LA considers transport to be necessary, then it must provide it free of charge. There are several factors that an LA should take into account when deciding if transport is necessary. They are set out in this document.

The Act also gives Local Authorities discretion to pay all or part of a child's travelling expenses even if they do not have a statutory entitlement. This could, for example, be children who live within reasonable distance or who are under five.

The Act says that parents are responsible for ensuring that a child goes to school if he or she is of compulsory school age.

### 3. Parental Preference

A parent might decide to send their child to a school other than the local or nearest suitable school that can meet their special educational needs. In such cases the parent will be expected to make their own transport arrangements or pay for transport to the preferred school, unless exceptional circumstances are identified. See Appendix 1 for a flowchart showing decision making in these circumstances.

### 4. Is Your Child Entitled to Free Transport?

Many children with Education Health and Care Plans (EHCP) do not have special transport needs. Their entitlement to free school transport is the same as other children. The policy followed in assessing their entitlement is set out in the “Home to school transport policy for pupils of statutory school age”.

The Council will make transport arrangements for all children who cannot reasonably be expected to make their own way to school because of their mobility problems or because of associated health and safety issues related to their special educational needs (SEN) or disability. Eligibility for such children will be assessed on an individual basis to identify their particular transport requirements.

In determining whether a child cannot reasonably be expected to make their own way to school, the Council will consider whether the child could reasonably be expected to make their own way if accompanied and, if so, whether their parent can reasonably be expected to accompany them. When considering that, a range of factors may need to be taken into account, such as, the distance, the age of the child and whether one would ordinarily expect a child of that age to be accompanied. The general expectation is that a child will be accompanied by a parent where necessary, unless there is a good reason why it is not reasonable to expect the parent to do so.

### 5. How will decisions about transport be made?

Referrals will usually be made by the child’s education provider in conjunction with the EHCP Coordinator and parents/carers/young people. A Transport Panel will meet weekly to consider referrals.

### 6. When will Free Transport not be provided?

The Council provides free transport only for the journey between home and school.

It is not provided for:

- Attendance at work experience placements and/or interviews, e.g., to develop the child's independence.
- Parental interviews at school.
- Visits to clinics, doctor's surgeries, hospital appointments etc. during the school day.
- After school clubs.
- To a school of the parent's preference that is not the nearest suitable school.
- To a school that is within reasonable distance and where the Council considers free transport is not necessary.
- Transport home other than at normal session times.

Transport is provided only to the child's home address. If the child's parents live at separate addresses, transport will normally be provided to where the child normally lives.

## 7. What Type of Transport will be provided?

North Lincolnshire Council is an enabling council. We prioritise empowering parents and families to find their own solutions, helping people to be independent and to access support when they really need it. The transport the Council provides depends on the child's needs, where they live, the school they are attending and vehicles available. The Council recognises that children must not only travel safely but also in dignity and comfort. When it has been established that a child is entitled to free transport, a risk assessment is carried out to make sure that the transport is appropriate for them and is the most cost effective method.

This may be:

- A bus pass to enable children to use public transport
- their parents' own transport, for which a mileage allowance of 45p per mile will be paid
- a dedicated school bus
- a walking escort (if available)
- transport provided specifically for children with special needs, with or without an escort
- a taxi

On transport, the Council provides the necessary equipment, e.g. clamps and booster seats are provided, and the transport meets the relevant regulations.

Occasionally it is necessary to make link arrangements. This may involve transfer at a safe place from a car to a minibus or other vehicle. The child will not be left alone. The first vehicle will wait until the second arrives and the transfer is complete.

The Council regularly monitors the specialised transport for children with special needs and disabilities, and chooses the transport providers with care.

## 8. Pick Up Points

Children are expected to make their own way within a reasonable distance to an identified pick-up point on the route to and from school. The Council will also consult those who understand the child's needs and capability to ensure the child can cope with the level of independence involved. In the afternoon children will be dropped off at the same point. If the child is not capable of making their own way to a pick-up point, they will, where possible, be picked up at their home. Parents are expected to go with their child to the pick-up point and collect them from the dropping-off point.

## 9. Risk Assessments

Once a child has been assessed as being eligible to receive free transport a risk assessment will be carried out in order to decide how they will be transported to school. Many children will be assessed using a generic risk assessment. Others may require an individual risk assessment to ensure that their needs are met on transport appropriately. Information is obtained to carry out the risk assessment from the school, parents, care plans, previous transport providers and other professionals who know the child. If the child's circumstances change that may affect the risk assessment, it is the child's parents responsibility to notify the school transport team. Children's transport arrangements will be reviewed regularly, and at least once a year during the review meeting of their EHCP, to ensure the development of children's skills towards independent travel in preparation for adulthood are considered.

## 10. Escorts and Drivers

The Council provides one or more escorts on the transport if, following a risk assessment, it is thought by the Council to be necessary. The allocation of escorts to routes / children is continually reviewed and where appropriate, escorts may be removed or altered. The parent will be advised about any changes.

Escorts are responsible for the care and supervision of children travelling to and from school. They oversee children's conduct and safety so that the driver is unhindered in his or her duties.

Escorts are familiarised with children's needs in order that they can provide the most appropriate care and support. This includes children with health/medical needs.

All escorts and drivers are cleared through the Disclosure and Barring Service before they are employed on school transport duties. Drivers of minibuses have MIDAS (Minibus Driver Awareness Scheme) training. All escorts receive Passenger Assistants Training (PAT) within six months of starting work with the Council. They also receive basic First Aid training and additional health training as identified.

Sometimes, if the child is travelling on their own in a vehicle, the parent may be asked to escort the child. In other circumstances parents will not be transported, for example if there are other children in the vehicle or to take the parent to meetings or events at the school.

## 11. Information to and from parents

When transport has been organised the following information will be given to parents:

- Type of transport agreed, for example bus pass, dedicated school bus, taxi, parent mileage costs etc.
- Name and phone number of the transport provider;
- Name of the escort (if applicable);
- Name of contact in the School Transport Office;
- Details of the route taken, including route number (if applicable);
- Pick -up and drop-off arrangements.

Parents are asked to provide their emergency contact details so that they can be contacted urgently if required, or another named contact. Parental permission will be sought to see the child's care plan.

It is not always possible to keep the same escort and driver on the transport route. Unless a change has to be made at short notice, parents will be told of variations to the normal arrangements in advance. Parents should always ask to see the driver's or escort's identification badges if ever they are unsure about their identity. Contact the School Transport Office if there is still cause for concern.

Parents will be advised what the transport arrangements are for the coming academic year before the start of the autumn term.

Parents are expected to tell the Council, giving as much notice as possible, of any changes such as house moves, new wheelchairs, health conditions, that might affect their child's transport. Changes will be responded to as quickly as possible. The child's eligibility for transport may also be affected.

## 12. Eating and Drinking on School Transport

Eating and drinking is not normally allowed on school transport. Parents should not send their child on the vehicle with food unless this has previously been agreed with the escort or school transport team

## 13. Medication

North Lincolnshire Council transport staff are trained in the implementation of health care protocols to cover emergency procedures.

Children who have a care plan requiring rescue medication must have both the care plan and the labelled rescue medication with them in a suitably tagged bag, otherwise transport will be refused.

## 14. Transport Reviews and Independent Travel

Periodic reviews of the transport for children with special needs and disabilities will be carried out. The provision might be changed if, for example, a child is capable of more independence or to improve efficiency. The parent and school are consulted

before changing the transport. Parents/carers and schools are encouraged to help children with special needs to become more independent, and annual EHCP and transport reviews will consider how children's skills and abilities can be developed towards greater independence including providing training for independent travel where this is appropriate and will be considered in every annual review. Developing skills in preparation for adult life is important, giving children the chance to build and use the independence skills they have been taught should be incorporated into their journey from home to school where possible.

A clear line of sight of decision making and associated reviews of children's transport arrangements is maintained through robust Council management and oversight arrangements.

## 15. Social Emotional and Mental Health Issues

Children travelling on home to school transport should follow the Council's 'Code of Conduct for Behaviour on School Transport' which is issued when transport is arranged.

To ensure safety, it is important that your child follows any instructions given by the driver or escort.

Unfortunately, sometimes a child's presenting behaviours may be of concern. On such occasions the parent will be contacted and advised what has happened and the action proposed to be undertaken. Alternatively, if a child's presenting needs cause wider concern and, following consultation with the school, transport may be paused for a period of time and the parent will be notified in advance.

If, against the instruction of an escort or driver, a child leaves the vehicle prior to their designated drop-off point, the parent, school and police (as necessary) will be contacted. All reasonable steps will be taken to ensure the safety of the child and children who may still be in the vehicle. Drivers will not drop off at a different address at the request of a child.

## 16. Short Breaks

The Council will consider providing transport between home/school and overnight short breaks when a social worker requests it, so long as resources are available.

## 17. Journey Times

The Council aims to transport children to school without undue stress, strain or difficulty so that they can benefit from their education. For children going to their local school, it is aimed to keep the journey as short as possible. Children travelling longer distances and to schools outside North Lincolnshire, may have longer journeys. If a parent or school has any concerns about the journey time for a particular child they should contact the School Transport Office.



## 18. Transport of Pre-School Aged Children

Parents of children under four who do not have an EHCP are normally expected to provide their own transport. In exceptional circumstances, the Council may use its discretion to provide transport to educational placements approved by the Council. Regular reviews of these arrangements will be undertaken through Council management and oversight arrangements.

## 19. Transport for Students aged 16 and over

Students who are in Year 12 and above and have Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) may be eligible for some assistance with transport costs. Information about this is available on our [website](#)

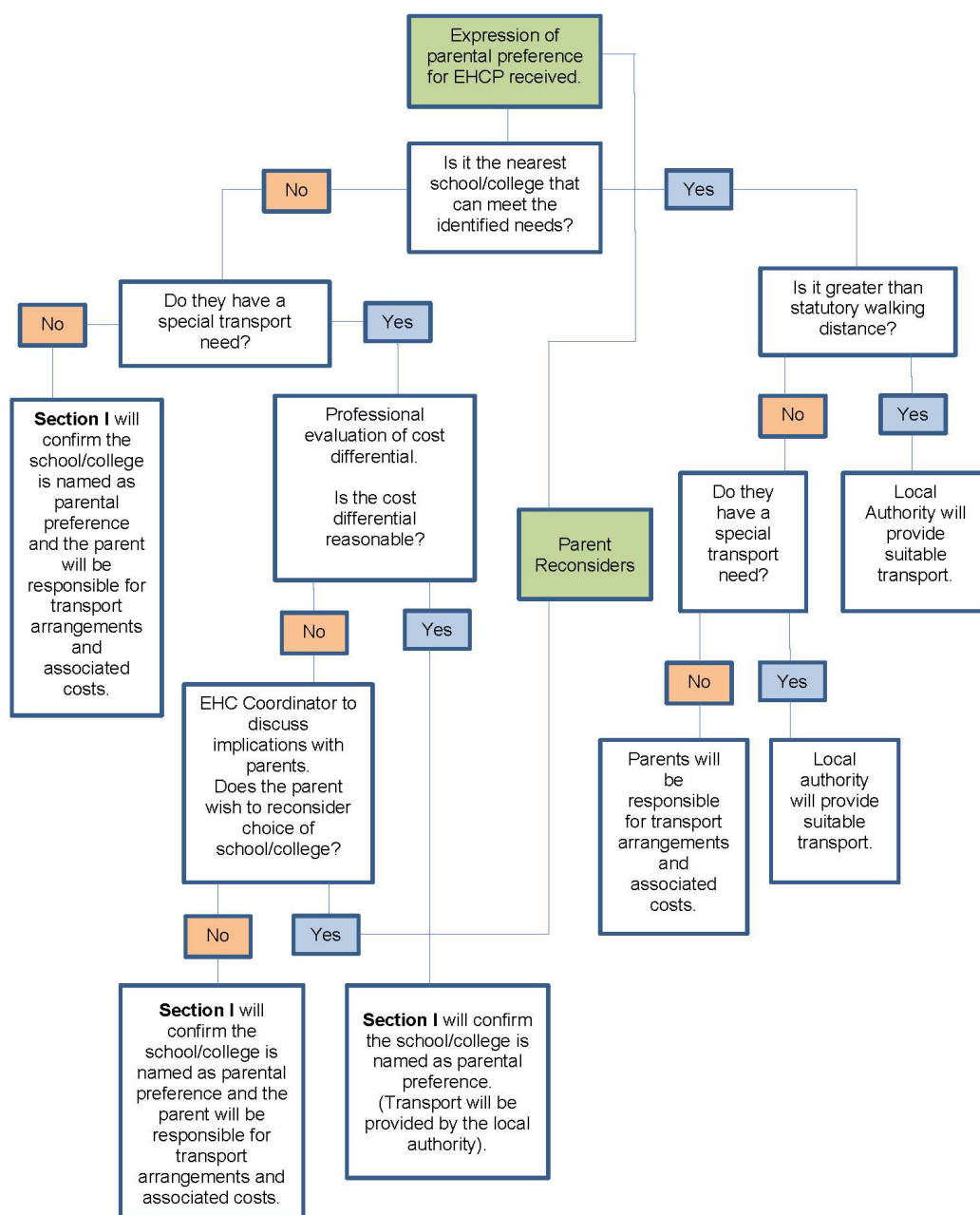
## 20. Appeals and Complaints

If you are unhappy with the service provided, please contact the School Transport Office by calling 01724 297218 or emailing [school.transport@northlincs.gov.uk](mailto:school.transport@northlincs.gov.uk) who will then refer the issues to the Transport Panel to reconsider the decision.

If you are not satisfied with the response, you should write or email, giving details of the circumstances. A senior manager will then consider your case. You may appeal against the senior manager's decision by submitting your case in agreed format to an Appeals Panel. The Panel's decision will be final.

## APPENDIX 1 – Parental Preference transport decisions

When agreeing to an EHCP a parent/carer identifies an education provider. A parent/carer might decide to send their child to a school other than the local or nearest suitable school that can meet their special educational needs. In such cases the parent will be expected to make their own transport arrangements or pay for transport to the preferred school, unless exceptional circumstances are identified



## Appendix 2 – How Parents Can Help With School Transport

Parents play an important role in ensuring the smooth running of their child's transport to and from school. They are expected to follow these guidelines to help provide a safe and efficient transport service:

- Read and understand this policy
- Raise any concerns you have about the transport provided for your child
- Support the safe transport of your child to and from school through the agreed arrangements, including where you are driving them and claiming costs
- Make sure your child is ready to be picked up at home or at the pick-up point five minutes before the allocated time.
- Go with your child to the pick-up point and wait until your child's transport arrives.
- Nominate a responsible adult to accompany your child if you are unable to do so. **The name of the nominated person must be notified to the Council or, in an emergency, to the contractor direct.**
- Always be at home or at the set-down point to meet your child. If this is not possible, please advise what alternative arrangements you propose. If you are not at home, unless any other arrangement has been agreed in advance, your child will be returned to school or to the Children's Services' Emergency Duty Team. If this happens, you will be contacted using the contact details you have provided.
- Please let the contractor know as soon as possible if your child is ill or unable to attend school for any reason.
- Tell the escort if there is a particular difficulty with your child if this should arise.
- Take any specialist equipment, which is used by the child at home, to the school yourself.
- Help to control your child's behaviour if possible by explaining to them the standards expected and supporting any action that is proposed to deal with any problems that may arise.
- Provide your emergency contact details, and those of another responsible person that can be contacted in your absence.
- Consent to the Council receiving relevant information about your child's health and care plan which can help to assess his/her transport needs.
- Consent to the use of a harness to keep your child safe on transport, where it is appropriate to do so.
- Notify any change of address in good time so that the transport can be rearranged (if entitlement to free transport still applies). At least fifteen working days' notice of such changes is required.
- Make the Council aware of any other planned changes that might affect the transport provided for your child, e.g. to his/her wheelchair.