

TRANSPORT REQUEST FORM : GUIDANCE NOTES

Please complete the Transport Request Form and return to:-

Wakefield Council
Home to School Transport Team
Learner Support Services
Room 42
County Hall
Wakefield
WF1 2QL

If you want any help in filling in any part of the Transport Request Form (TRF) please contact your child's school, social worker/ family support worker or a member of the Home to School Transport Team on (01924) 305675 305643, 305481. **A separate Application Form will be required for Post 16 Learners.**

Completion of the Application Form does not mean that your child is eligible for transport assistance – the form is an expression of interest in order that the Home to School Transport Team can undertake an assessment.

The Transport Request Form also acts as the risk assessment. It is therefore important that you bring to our attention any information that is pertinent to your child's safety whilst travelling on home to school transport. You are declaring the information is accurate and up-to-date at the time of submission and that you will notify us of any change in your child's special needs, medical condition or behavioural issues immediately.

Incomplete or unsigned forms, or forms with insufficient information will not be processed and will be returned.

About the questions on the application form

Part 1 – Child's Details

Home to school transport is provided between the child's home address (eg main place of residence) to school and vice-versa. This does not include any alternative address (eg grandparents, childminders, nurseries, parents workplace, respite etc). Transport is provided for the benefit of the child and we cannot agree requests for specific pick up and drop off times. If parents/carers have other domestic, social, family or work commitments then they should make alternative arrangements.

Part 2 – Parent/Carer Details

There may be occasions when we need to contact you urgently regarding your child's transport to/from school (eg adverse weather conditions, school closure). It is essential therefore that you notify us of any changes to your address, mobile telephone number and/or contact details as soon as they change.

Part 3 – Emergency Contact

If we are unable to contact you in the event of an emergency we may need to contact an approved nominated person. It is very important that the nominated person is provided with the password you have included on the Transport Request Form as we will be unable to leave your child with the nominated person unless they can confirm the same password.

If necessary we may need to contact Social Care Direct who will provide us with a safe haven where we can drop off your child. You will then be expected to collect your child from this location.

Part 4 – Social Worker / Family Support Worker Details

If we cannot make contact with you we may need to contact your Social Worker/Family Support Worker (where appropriate).

Part 5 – School/College Details

Some children will be unable to attend school for full days or on certain days. Others may attend school on a short-term assessment basis. If this is the case you need to tell us what these arrangements are.

Part 6 – Family Circumstances

If we know the type of transport provision already in place for your child when undertaking other activities then it will help us to determine what is required whilst travelling on school transport. We may also take into account receipt of Disability Living Allowance (DLA) when assessing what support might be needed (eg as to the severity of the disability).

Part 7 – Mobility

Part 8 - Physical Difficulties

This is about the help your child needs to get in / out of the vehicle in a safe manner and to ensure that the type of transport we provide is appropriate to your child's needs i.e. a wheelchair accessible vehicle. The main consideration is that the pupil being transported should be able to travel in safety and with reasonable ease without undue stress, strain and discomfort.

Providing safe transport for children in wheelchairs can be a complex business. Every child's needs are unique and consequently the types of equipment with which they can travel safely and comfortably vary enormously.

Sometimes children may be issued with more than one wheelchair or provided with a different one as they grow or their condition changes. Electric wheelchairs are heavier and tend to be larger than manual wheelchairs. As well as more space being required for the wheelchair it is essential that webbing restraints are used and these take up extra space in front of and behind the wheelchair. It is important you tell us if your child changes their wheelchair so that it can still be accommodated on the vehicle. If not then your child may need to move journeys.

Your child may be unable to negotiate the stairs at home as there may be too many for them to cope with but they may be able to manage one or two steps on a bus with encouragement and physical help from an escort. We hope your information will help us to determine the appropriate level of support that should be provided for your child.

Part 9 – Independence

We accept there will always be children who will require assisted transport and escort supervision and it is important that the children with the most need continue to receive high level support. However, there are others who will be able to move towards greater independence and it is important to support them to develop their independence skills. This is particularly important where learners are looking to move into post 16 education, employment or training.

We need to know how far your child can walk, how long this takes, the effort of walking and if this is likely to cause discomfort. As a guide 100 steps equates to approx. 90 metres (100 yards)

Information provided by you on the Transport Request Form will help us to determine whether your child can travel to/from school on his/her own, with or without some degree of adult supervision. In many cases we accept your child will never be able to travel independently on school transport without help.

Where we feel pupils will benefit from independent travel training the Independent Travel Trainers will contact you to discuss further and this will provide you with an opportunity to raise questions. If you feel you would like an informal discussion with the Trainers please contact them on Tel. No. 01924 306348 / 306848.

Part 10 - Equipment

Current UK law states that all children must use the correct seat when travelling in a car until they are 12 years old or 135cm tall. New regulations are expected to come into effect in March 2017 which will change that, meaning backless booster seats will only be approved for older children.

Under new rules which are expected to come into force on 1 March 2017, backless booster seats or booster cushions will only be approved for use by children taller than 125cm and weighing more than 22kg. Currently children as young as 3, or 15kg, are able to use a backless booster seat. This means backless booster seats will no longer be approved for young children.

The new child car seat regulations only apply to new products. This means that if you're looking to buy a booster seat after the regulation change, you'll see that they're only approved for children over 125cm or 22kg. If you've got an existing booster seat you will be able to use it without breaking any rules, but it is recommended that you buy your child a high-backed booster seat which can offer more protection in a side-impact crash situation.

Some children will need to transport equipment which is essential for their daily living needs eg folding wheelchairs, suction/oxygen machines, etc but if we are not aware of the items then we cannot check there is sufficient space in the vehicle to store them. All bags and equipment must be safely stored away so as not to cause an obstruction. Some equipment can be extremely costly so you should ensure this is insured in the event of breakage/loss/theft

If your child requires additional bags (i.e. when in respite) you will need to make your own arrangements with the respite carer direct to transport these.

Part 11 – Additional Needs

Your child is unique and so it is extremely important that you provide as much information as possible. We accept that your child's primary need may for example be autism, but they may also have other associated needs such as learning difficulties or behavioural problems. We need you to tell us as much as possible about your child's additional needs so that we can provide the correct level of support and assess any potential risks

If your child requires supervision the information you provide will also be passed to the escorts so they are aware of what to look for and how to respond. This may also result in them receiving specialist training.

If your child has a seizure you need to tell us what type and what happens – are there any warnings signs? Do they fall to the floor and lose consciousness? Will they need oxygen and do they have the potential to stop breathing on the transport? Will they need emergency hospital treatment? Is your child gastrostomy fed? What happens if the tube falls out, what action is required, what are the timescales for action?

Your child may have difficulty speaking – they may have a stammer, lisp or speech difficulty and become frustrated if they cannot be understood – they may choose not to speak. If we are not aware of this then we cannot respond appropriately and this may cause your child to become frustrated.

Difficulty communicating – your child may use Makaton to communicate or may draw simple pictures.

Please do not assume we know all about your child's needs or other agencies have provided us with details. If your child has an Individual Health Care Plan it is important you let us have a copy.

Part 12 - Behaviour

The behaviour of the majority of pupils on home to school transport is generally very good and does not cause any concern. However, the behaviour of a minority of pupils can be unacceptable and unsafe.

Whilst we understand a child's special needs may be the cause of such behaviour, the consequences of poor behaviour on home to school transport can be wide ranging. In extreme cases, such behaviour can cause considerable danger to themselves, other children travelling on the vehicle, the escort, driver or the wider public.

It is therefore important you tell us if your child may be a risk to others or may be at risk from others. If we are aware of what prompts the behaviour then we may be able to put measures in place to deal with this.

If however your child brings any offensive or unsafe objects (including replicas) on the school transport which could place themselves or others at risk they will not be allowed to travel and this could result in Police involvement. This could include knives, pen-knives, craft knives, scissors, screwdrivers, cigarette lighters, lighter fuels, aerosol cans, cutlery etc.

Persistent poor behaviour on the journey to and from school may be grounds for exclusion not only from the vehicle but also from the school and this includes pupils with a statement of special educational needs/Education Health and Care Plan.

If your child has a Behaviour Management Plan you must attach this as it will be required before your child is allowed to travel.

Part 13 – Medication

Escorts will follow an agreed protocol in case of a medical emergency (i.e. ring 999 or divert to the nearest hospital if it is no more than 10 mins away) as they cannot administer any medication without the appropriate training and authorisation. This will include children who travel with buccal medication.

In a few exceptional cases only staff will be authorised to administer buccal medication but they must be trained in administering buccal medication by an appropriate health professional (eg school nurse) and parents must provide written authorisation. Even where buccal medication is administered staff will still ring for an ambulance.

Please note: if your child is accompanied by an escort who has been specifically medically trained (eg buccal

medication / oral suctioning / oxygen / epipen) and that escort is subsequently off work and we cannot find a suitably trained replacement, then on health and safety grounds your child will be unable to travel on the journey. We hope however these occasions will be kept to a minimum.

Due to issues around dignity and privacy, gender and the need for two health care professionals to be present to minimise the potential for accusations, escorts cannot administer rectal diazepam for any child but must follow the agreed 999 medical protocol.

It is important you attach a copy of the Health Care Plan for your child as this will be required before your child is allowed to travel.

Occasionally it may be necessary for the escort to deliver medicines, to a designated member of school staff, or from school to home. If this is the case it is your responsibility to ensure medicines (including inhalers) are placed in a sealed envelope/plastic wallet or in an appropriate first aid bag clearly marked with your child's name as well as the name of the person who is to receive the item and then handed to the escort for safe transportation and delivery.

Does your child have any allergies?

Please ensure you attach any supporting documentation to your application to verify any statements you may have made. Examples of these may be: letters or statements from doctors, or other health professionals who are suitably qualified to give a professional opinion.

Part 14 - Additional Information

Please tell us anything else you think we should be aware of which will help the escort to communicate with your child. Do they have an interest in dinosaurs, cars, a particular TV programme or like flicking through the Argos book? Do they constantly chatter and ask the same questions or do they like to be left alone and look out of the window? Should staff avoid certain topics i.e. emergency services as this upsets them and the sirens can cause distress?

Appeals

All requests for transport are considered by an Assisted Transport Panel. You will be notified of the outcome in writing. If the Panel are unable to agree to your request you will be provided with the reasons for this together with details of our two stage appeals process should you wish to take the matter further.

Type of Assistance that may be offered:-

It should be noted that should the Assisted Transport Panel agree to help with the learner's travel assistance there are a number of travel options which will be explored. All arrangements for travel assistance will be at the Panel's discretion, taking account of the learner's needs and best value principles.

Travel assistance may be offered as follows:-

- Personal Transport Budget (provided it is cost effective to do so);
- Independent Travel Training;
- Travel pass for use on public transport (bus/rail);
- Travel pass for use on school operated bus services;
- Council contracted taxi / minibus / specially adapted vehicle;
- Specialist Provider (for example, to respond to children with complex medical needs)
- Pupil Escort (may be shared with other children with the most need);

It will be assumed travel assistance will be shared with other children within the same location or attending the same or other schools within a given location.