

**HOME TO SCHOOL TRANSPORT
FINANCIAL SUPPORT
ACADEMIC YEAR 2009/2010**

The purpose of this document is to act as a brief guide to the circumstances in which help will be given to families in respect of Home to School Transport. It does not cover every situation and further details can be obtained from the Transport Team. This policy is reviewed annually.

1. TRANSPORT POLICY

1.1 Wakefield LA provides free travel between home and school for eligible children aged 5-16 who live in the Metropolitan District and who attend the nearest appropriate qualifying school (normally the catchment area school) in the following circumstances.

- children aged 5 – 8 years who live more than 2 miles from the nearest qualifying school (free travel at the 2 mile limit will only be provided up to the end of the term in which the child becomes 8 – after that a 3 mile limit will apply);
- children aged 8 – 16 years who live more than 3 miles from the nearest qualifying school;
- children aged 5-16 years who attend a denominational school within the Wakefield District, who are of that faith, subject to the above 2/3 mile qualifying distance criteria;
- Children entitled to free school meals or whose parents receive the maximum level of Working Tax Credit:
 - (a) who are over the age of 8, but under 11 and live more than 2 miles from the nearest qualifying school;
 - (b) who are aged 11 to 16 and attend one of their 3 nearest qualifying schools, which are above 2 miles, but no more than 6 miles from their home.
- Children who are of secondary school age (11 to 16) and who attend the nearest school preferred on the grounds of parents religion or belief which is more than 2 miles, but not more than 15 miles from that school, where the child is either eligible for free school meals or parents are in receipt of the maximum level of Working Tax Credit.

1.2 There will be instances when parents feel exceptional circumstances apply to their children when the normal rules cannot be satisfied. The following is a list of situations, which Wakefield LA is prepared to consider as falling into the category of exceptional. This is only a guide and is not exhaustive since other situations might arise in the future, which we will consider:

- Medical reasons and where clear supporting evidence (e.g. a letter from a GP) has been received.
- Children taken into care or a domestic violence refuge due to emergencies (these could be reviewed on a termly basis).
- Tragic family circumstances (with supporting evidence from the Headteacher and the Education Welfare Officer).
- To maintain continuity and stability (with supporting evidence from the Headteacher and the Education Welfare Officer).
- Separation/death of parent resulting in change of address, but where there is a need for continuity of school placement.
- Substantiated cases of bullying, physical, racial or sexual abuse (with supporting evidence from Headteacher, Education Welfare Service or Equality and Diversity Service).
- Pupils in Year 6 and Year 11 to maintain continuity of provision at this vital time of their education.
- Pupils living below the statutory distances where the route is considered to be hazardous.
- Where attendance at a school other than the nearest appropriate school is based on parents religion or belief. You must provide clear written evidence to demonstrate the basis on which the choice of school has been made to substantiate your application. We may also ask for written confirmation of the admission category under which your child was offered a place in order to verify your choice.

- 1.3** In addition to the circumstances described in 1.2, parents who seek a review on the grounds of financial hardship are normally expected to be in receipt of one of the following:
- Income Support;
 - Income Based Jobseekers Allowance;
 - Support under Part IV of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999;
 - Guarantee element of State Pension Credit or Child Tax Credit with no Working Tax Credit and an annual income (as assessed by the Inland Revenue of less than £16,040.00);
 - Maximum level of Working Tax Credit;
 - Employment Support Allowance (income related).

2. PROCEDURES TO FOLLOW

- 2.1** If you feel there are special circumstances, you need to complete a review form.
- 2.2** You should give full and clear reasons on the form as to why you feel help with home to school transport should be provided.
- 2.3** In relation to items of taxable income/benefits you will need to provide relevant documentary evidence, particularly where the review is made on grounds of financial hardship.
- 2.4** When your form has been received the information will be carefully checked. If all relevant evidence is in place, a Transport Panel of Senior Officers will review the case. If the panel is persuaded by the case you have made then the application can be agreed at that stage in the process.
- 2.5** There will always be a number of cases when the Transport Panel does not feel able to make an exception to the normal transport policy and reviews will be refused at that stage. Those parents who wish to take advantage of our two-stage process can make a final submission to the Awards and Appeals Regulatory Board, which consists of elected members of the Council.
- 2.6** We will always do our best to process reviews as quickly as possible, but we cannot put a specific time limit on this due to competing demands placed on the Transport Team. If at any time you want help or advice about your review, you can contact us at the address below.

3. OTHER INFORMATION

- 3.1** Where following a review an application has been agreed, any claim for a refund of expenses already incurred will be based on the most economical public transport rate for the journey in question and it will be from the date the review form is received. It is the responsibility of parents and carers to contact the bus operators in respect of any concessionary schemes that are in place.
- 3.2** However, it may be useful for you to know that a School Plus Metrocard is available for school aged children aged 5-16 and full-time students aged 16-18. This will enable the card holder to unlimited travel on buses throughout West Yorkshire at any time of day 7 days a week for the cost of £8.00 per week or £29.50 per month (as at June 2009).

4. WHO TO CONTACT

- 4.1** Letter: **City of Wakefield Metropolitan District Council**
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Home to School Transport Team
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