

Education, Skills and Community Wellbeing Directorate
Policy

School Transport Policy

2025/ 26

1. Introduction

1.1 In a rural area such as Dumfries and Galloway school transport is an important part of the school day for many pupils. To support parents in this the Council provides school transport for entitled pupils. This policy sets out the circumstances under which school transport will be provided. Parents, schools, drivers and pupils all have a part to play and responsibilities to make this school transport service safe and efficient.

2. Responsibility Of The Council

2.1 Under the terms of the Education (Scotland) Act 1980, Dumfries and Galloway Council has a statutory duty to make such arrangements as they consider necessary for the provision of school transport. In this respect, this policy provides that the Council will:-

- Provide school transport for pupils who meet the criteria as set out below.
- Design transport services appropriate to pupils needs.
- Place contracts with bus and taxi firms to provide services, on a 'best value' basis.
- Take reasonable steps to ensure the safety of pupils during the time spent on school transport services.
- Inform pupils and parents of transport arrangements and any changes to them.

2.2 Dumfries and Galloway Council is required, by law, to arrange transport for pupils living outwith a specified statutory distance from their **catchment school**. Parents are responsible for the first 2 or 3 miles of travel (depending on the age of the child) to the designated pick-up point for onward transportation to their **catchment school**. Pupils who are non-catchment have no entitlement to school transport (see Section 3).

Free school transport is awarded from the pick-up point for onward transportation:

- To pupils under 8 years old who live more than 2 miles from their catchment school by the shortest walking route.
- To pupils who are 8 years old and over who live more than 3 miles from their catchment school by the shortest walking route.
- Pupils who are baptised Roman Catholic, live over 2 or 3 miles (dependent upon age, see previous 2 points) from their catchment Roman Catholic school.

2.3 The first 2 miles of travel (if the pupil is under 8), or 3 miles (if 8 or over) is the parents' responsibility and they should ensure that their child reaches and returns from the designated pick-up and drop off point safely. All routes are assessed on the assumption that the child is accompanied by a responsible person.

3. Non-Entitled Pupil Transport

3.1 There is no requirement on the Council to provide transport for pupils who have been granted a placing request to attend a school other than the school in whose catchment area they reside. If a parent chooses to make a placing request for their child, or if a young person makes such a request, then they do so on the basis that they are not entitled to free transport to that school.

3.2 Pupils not entitled to school transport may still apply for a seat if there is spare capacity on an existing school transport vehicle and the pupil lives on the route served by that transport vehicle. Any such seat would be provided on a grace and favour basis. Non-entitled transport may be withdrawn at any time if the place is required by a pupil who is entitled to school transport on the route in question. Non-entitled places are not available where transport is provided by a registered local bus service where, as a

commercial service available to the general public the pupil can use the Young Persons Free Bus Travel Scheme (set out in section 4 below) or the ticket price must be paid.

3.3 The following criteria will be used in making an offer of such places:

- firstly, to pupils with entitled siblings (should there be more pupils in this category than there are places available then those furthest from the school within catchment area have the highest priority)
- secondly, to pupils furthest from the school within the catchment area;
- thirdly, to pupils closest to the school outwith the catchment; and
- fourthly to pupils from outwith the Dumfries and Galloway Council area.

3.4 Following the commencement of the school session, non-entitled pupils awarded non-entitled transport will not be removed to accommodate other non-entitled pupils wishing to access such provision. The allocation of any non-entitled transport places would be updated the following session, following the application process for non-entitled pupils for the new school year.

4. Young Persons Free Bus Travel Scheme

4.1 All children and young people aged 5 - 21 year of age can now travel by bus free by applying for a National Entitlement Card (NEC Card).

How to apply for a National Entitlement Card

The National Entitlement card provides advantages over the school bus pass as it can be used to travel on participating buses at any time throughout Scotland and not just for home to school travel.

Children and young people who are 5 to 21 years old will need a new or replacement National Entitlement Card (NEC) or Young Scot National Entitlement Card (Young Scot NEC) to travel for free by bus. Existing Young Scot cards can be upgraded for 16+ using the Transport Scotland app. Under 16s can use their card to apply online to upgrade at www.getyournec.scot or they can complete an application and request a replacement upgrade.

A parent/ carer is required to apply on behalf of any child under 16 and provide approval for them to travel by bus. Young people 16 and over should apply on their own behalf.

A parent/ carer can apply online at www.getyournec.scot or if you don't have all of the proofs required you can pick up an application form at any library and return the completed form with necessary documents to the library Please refer to "more information about how to apply" for the documentation required.

Further information about the free bus pass scheme is available via www.freebus.scot, Young Scot and Transport Scotland.

If you require any assistance with your application, please email SchoolTransport@dumgal.gov.uk.

5. Additional Support Needs

5.1 The Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2004 provides the legal framework which underpins the system for identifying and addressing the additional support needs of children and young people who face a barrier, or barriers, to learning. The Act aims to ensure that all children and young people are provided with the necessary support to help them work towards achieving their full potential. The Act will

form the basis of the making of transport provision for those with assessed Additional Support Needs.

5.2 Normally, if a child lives within the parental responsibility distance, children with Additional Support Needs will not be provided with specialist transport. A child will only be entitled to transport where assessed needs are agreed by the Staffing and Placements Group in line with the Supporting Children's Learning Code of Practice. This is set out in the School Admissions Policy Section 8.

5.3 Requests to the Staffing and Placements Group will be considered on with evidence being required to justify a decision to provide transport. The following criteria will be considered by when assessing and reviewing requests:

- Requirement of the pupil to attend specific Learning Centres or to attend a school with a Learning Centre other than their catchment school.
- The need for contingency emergency arrangements or specialist arrangements to cater for immobility or visual impairment as supported by professionals directly involved.
- The availability and suitability of existing school transport provision to the specific needs of the pupil.

5.4 In considering a request to provide transport, evidence may be sought from professionals and/or agencies involved in providing a service to or supporting the pupil and/or family. In deciding whether to grant such a request, the Council will have reasonable regard to, but will not be bound by, the terms of any opinion from such a professional of agency.

6. Curricular Travel

6.1 Pupils may travel within the school day to access learning, either as a timetabled class within the senior phase or for access to specific learning experiences within a primary partnership. The arrangements for this are the responsibility of the school.

6.2 Where a school roll has fallen, and there are concerns over the opportunities for peer learning, transport may be offered to an alternative school. This should be considered firstly on a short-term basis in conjunction with the headteacher(s) and school community.

7. Permanent or Temporary School Closure

Where a school is closed, part of the statutory closing process sets out the arrangement for school transport for pupils to their choice of school, where they are entitled. Where a school is temporarily closed through formal arrangements, transport eligibility will be set out as part of the arrangements agreed with the school community.

8. Model of Provision

8.1 There are several ways in which the Council will provide transport, these are:-

- Bus passes which children use on local bus services
- Dedicated school contract buses
- The Council's own transport vehicles
- Taxi
- Parental transport

- 8.2 In providing transport for pupils, a number of criteria must be met. Services will be:-
- Safe
 - High quality
 - Cost effective and represent best value
 - Responsive to changing demands
- 8.3 The Council will ensure that all people involved in the dedicated transport of pupils to and from school will be subject to a Protection of Vulnerable Groups check (Disclosure Scotland) unless the person is a parent transporting only their own child.
- 8.4 The Motor Vehicles (Wearing of Seat Belt) (Amendment) Regulations 2006 prescribe the types of seat belt or child restraint to be worn by pupils under 14 years of age. These Regulations require all rear passengers in a bus or coach to wear seat belts where they are fitted and require bus operators to take reasonable steps to ensure bus passengers are notified that they are required to wear a seatbelt. The Council will ensure that transport operators are aware of these statutory duties.
9. **Information to Parents**
- 9.1 The Council has a responsibility to inform pupils and parents of transport arrangements and any changes to them. Guidance for pupils, parents and contractors is published on the Council's website. All families receiving transport, schools and drivers are made aware of this guidance on the Council website.
- 9.2 A three week notice period will be provided by the Council in respect of any changes to provision of transport.
- 9.3 Standard mileage rates for each type of school transport are updated annually and, unless in exceptional circumstances which require specific senior management approval, these standard rates will be applied. Mileages are based on return trips to the contractor's base. Mileage rates can be provided upon application.
- 9.4 The Council will calculate distances governing award of transport provision using Near Me. Parents can access this on the Council's website: via <https://nearme-dumgal.hub.arcgis.com/>
10. **Right to Request Review**
- 10.1 There is no formal statutory right of appeal against decisions made by the Council in applying this Policy. Parents, carers or young people can request a review of decisions made, except in cases where the pupil is attending a school as a result of a placing request where there is no right. Application to request a review of transport provision eligibility should be made to the Education Support Hub at Militia House, English Street, Dumfries DG1 2HR or EducationSupportHub@dumgal.gov.uk.
- 10.2 Any request to review on the grounds of road safety on a Council adopted public road will consider the suitability of the route and road environment, as well as the specified Pick-Up / Drop-Off points, on the assumption the child is accompanied by a responsible person (refer to para 2.3). This will generally apply to all pupils using that route and will be carried out by the Roads Service 'Network Strategy and Road Safety Team'.
- 10.3 If the parent/ carer remains dissatisfied with the decision, the request will be considered by the Head of Education Resources, the Transportation Manager (Economy & Infrastructure Directorate) with advice from Legal Services. The decision will be final

within the Council, unless there is a material change in the nature of the route or other circumstances after the decision has been made.

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Document History

Scheme Guidance

Version	Revision Date	Previous Revision Date	Summary of Changes
2.0	Jan 2023	2019	The previous version was 2019. This version explains the appeals process for non-entitled pupils.
3.0	November 2025	Jan 2023	Changes are to emphasise the entitlements/non-entitled pupils.

Committee Approval

Version	Committee	Committee Date
2.0	Education and Learning Committee	Jan 2023
3.0	Not agreed by Committee as no material changes.	

Distribution

The approved version of this document is distributed to:

Name	Version	Date