
APPENDIX

Isle of Wight Council
**HOME-TO-SCHOOL
TRANSPORT POLICY**
For implementation from
September 2015

1 Document Information

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Explanatory Notes

The Education Act 1996 (as amended) imposes a duty on Local Authorities (LAs) to facilitate the attendance of children at schools and to ensure no parent can have a defence to a prosecution for non-attendance simply because the LA has not made suitable arrangements for transport to and from school. Therefore the authority must make suitable travel arrangements to facilitate an eligible child's attendance at school. These can include parents taking their child to school and receiving reimbursement for mileage, dedicated school buses, a pass for use on public buses or a seat in a taxi where more individualised arrangements are necessary.

The Education and Inspections Act 2006 created new duties on the IWC to provide free transport for pupils in receipt of free school meals or whose families receive the maximum level of Working Tax Credit. Statutory Guidance has been issued by Central Government, particularly *Home to School Travel and Transport Guidance (July 2014)* and *2010 Post-16 Transport Guidance (February 2014)*, and is used by all LAs to inform policy and provision of the transport service. The July 2014 Guidance requires the LA to review its Home to School Transport arrangements regularly to ensure that they provide the most cost effective service.

There is no requirement to extend pre-16 transport services to students in the Post 16 sector. All Local Authorities must publish annually a Post-16 Transport Policy Statement. The IWC statement will be updated each year and published on <http://www.iwight.com/schooladmissions>.

The legislation specifies the statutory distances (2 and 3 miles) that apply to the provision of home to school transport, when distances are calculated from a pupil's home address to school, the measure of the shortest available walking route from the centre of the home address to the centre of the school building is used to ascertain whether the pupil lives more than the minimum number of miles to be entitled to free transport provision. This is calculated using the Local Authority's Geographical Information System which draws on Ordnance Survey, Isle of Wight Rights of Way, National Land and Property Gazetteer data, using Local Authority Road Safety Officers Association Guidelines. Whilst the minimum distances of two or three miles are calculated using the above method, the particular rules relating to less than three, 6 and 15 miles are applied by calculating the distance along road routes. This is from the centre point of both home and school buildings.

Where pupils who are entitled to free transport have a temporary change of address, e.g. staying with friends or relatives while parents are on holiday or in hospital, no alternative transport arrangements will be provided by the local authority.

Qualifying school as referenced in the policy are community, foundation or voluntary schools; community or foundation special schools; non-maintained special schools; pupil referral units; or academies, including free schools.

The statutory guidance requires that IWC publishes its general arrangements and policies in respect of home to school transport. Appendix 1 "Administrative and operational arrangements" is provided as an addition to this policy and provides operational details of service delivery. The appendix may be subject to update without a review of the policy.

3 PRIMARY SCHOOL PUPILS (4-11 year olds)

1. If the pupil attends their **nearest** primary school, the following entitlements will apply for the following age ranges:
 - a) **4 - 7 year olds (school years R, 1, 2 &3)**: If the school is more than 2 miles from the pupil's home address, the pupil will be entitled to receive free home-to-school transport.
 - b) **8– 11 year olds (school years 4 – 6)**: If the school is more than 3 miles from the pupil's home address, the pupil will be entitled to receive free home-to-school transport.
2. Parents choosing to send their child to a school other than their nearest will have no entitlement to receive free home-to-school transport.
3. Furthermore, in the circumstances that a child is entitled to free school meals or their parents/guardians provide evidence that they are in receipt of their maximum level of Working Tax Credit, the following statutory entitlement will apply:
 - a) **8 – 11 year olds**: If the pupil attends their nearest qualifying school and this school is more than 2 miles from the pupil's home address, the pupil will be entitled to receive free home-to-school transport.

If the nearest primary school is full and you are allocated a school by the Local Authority then you may be entitled to receive Home-to-school transport.

If you consider that the route from your home address to the school is unsafe, you should contact the School Admissions and Transport team who will, as necessary, arrange for a risk assessment to be carried out following the Council's preferred procedure. If it is considered to be an unsafe route, free transport will be provided.

4 SECONDARY SCHOOL PUPILS (11-16 year olds)

1. If the pupil attends their nearest secondary school, the following entitlements will apply:
 - If the school is more than 3 miles from the pupil's home address, the pupil will be entitled to receive free home-to-school transport.

The school transport drop off points for any service going to either Carisbrooke College or Christ the King College are accessed using the same route (via the southern end of Wellington Road) and the drop offs are very close to each other. Those families for whom Christ the King College is the nearest school will qualify for free home to school transport to both Christ the King College and Carisbrooke College. Families do not need to make school admissions applications to both schools to qualify for transport.

2. Other than in the Christ The King College and Carisbrooke College example mentioned above parents choosing to send their child to a school other than their nearest will have no entitlement to receive free home-to-education transport.
3. Furthermore, in the circumstances that a child is entitled to free school meals or their parents/guardians provide evidence that they are in receipt of their maximum level of Working Tax Credit, the following entitlement will apply:
 - If the pupil attends one of their three nearest qualifying schools, and this school is more than 2 miles but less than 6 miles from the pupil's home address, the pupil will be entitled to receive free home-to-school transport.
4. Furthermore, in the circumstances that a child is entitled to free school meals or their family is in receipt of their maximum level of Working Tax Credit, the following entitlement will apply:
 - If the pupil attends the nearest school preferred by reason of a parent's religion or belief, and this school is more than 2 miles but less than 15 miles from the pupil's home address, the pupil will be entitled to receive free home-to-education transport. This only applies to schools on the Island.

If you consider that the route from your home address to the school is unsafe, you should contact the School Admissions and Transport team who will, as necessary, arrange for a risk assessment to be carried out following the Council's preferred procedure. If it is considered to be an unsafe route, free transport will be provided.

If the nearest secondary school is full and you are allocated a school by the Local Authority then you may be entitled to receive Home-to-school transport subject to distance or safety of route

5 CHILDREN (4 – 16) WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS & DISABILITIES

1. All pupils with special educational needs and disabilities will have access to, as a minimum, the entitlements as set out in primary and secondary areas of this document, and the same rules of access and entitlement to free transport shall apply irrespective of whether pupils attend a mainstream or a special school.
2. If the parents of a child with an Education, Health and Care Plan are allocated, by the Local Authority in the child's Education, Health and Care Plan, a place for their child at a mainstream school with a special unit, then the same entitlements to Home to School transport will exist if the two and three mile rules as set out in primary and secondary apply, in relation to that school.
3. If a pupil with an Education, Health and Care Plan does not qualify for free transport because they live within the statutory distances from their school, but are unable to walk to their school (or unit) due to their special educational needs / disabilities, then the pupil shall be entitled to receive free home to school transport subject to confirmation that they have restricted mobility. The SEN assessment team will decide entitlement to transport in these cases based on the presented evidence.
4. If a pupil with an Education, Health and Care Plan does not qualify for free transport because they live within the statutory distances from their school but the parent's or guardian's ability to walk and/or the need for primary age siblings to be taken to other schools (provided that the school is the nearest school) where the timing of the school day or the direction of the other school(s) prevent the parent or guardian from accompanying, then the pupil may be entitled to receive free home to school transport subject to confirmation of all the circumstances of the case. The Transport Team will decide entitlement to transport in these cases based on the presented evidence.
5. If the parents of a child with or without an Education, Health and Care Plan choose to send their child to an alternative independent or non-maintained school that is not named in the child's Education, Health and Care Plan, no entitlement to receive free Home to School transport will exist – irrespective of the distance of that school from the pupil's home address.
6. When free transport is provided for pupils with an Education, Health and Care Plan by the Local Authority, all arrangements are assessed to ensure they meet the requirement that routes are safe, non-stressful, and least restrictive. Parents, Schools and Special Educational Need and Disability Officers are consulted as to the nature of the child's needs and any such special travel arrangements as may be required. Most children travel using the contracted bus services but in exceptional cases transport tailored to the needs of the individual child with an Education, Health and Care Plan may be arranged.

Parents of entitled children below statutory school age, who have an Education, Health and Care Plan or being assessed and are attending special school, will normally be offered a parental mileage allowance.

6. POST-16 STUDENTS IN SIXTH FORMS AND FURTHER EDUCATION (16-19 YEAR OLDS)

1. The IWC provides no free or subsidised transport for post-16 mainstream students in further education. See the relevant Post 16 Transport Policy Statement for more information
2. If a post-16 full-time student is a Learner with Learning Difficulties and Disabilities and the school, institution or provider chosen by the student is located more than three miles from the student's home address, the student will be entitled to receive home to education transport subsidised by the Isle of Wight Council up until the age of 24. In drawing up the Learning Disability Assessment (LDA) [S139a] for young people between the ages of 16 and 24, the Local Authority Participation Team Adviser will describe the travel needs of the young person.
This entitlement can be accessed through the purchase of a termly bus pass.
3. If a post-16 full-time student is allocated, by the Local Authority in the student's Education, Health and Care Plan, a place at St George's School, then the same entitlements to Home to School transport will exist if the two and three mile rules as set out in Sections 1 and 2 apply,
4. Furthermore if a post-16 student with Special Educational Needs or Disabilities has been in receipt of particular Home to School transport arrangements due to their Education, Health and Care Plan, requiring it for their school education (4-16 year olds), then the presumption is that such arrangements will continue – unless a further assessment of needs is required in relation to the post-16 circumstances.
5. If a young person (16 – 19 years old) is not in education, employment or training (NEET), they may be entitled to financial support with travel costs associated with efforts to engage in education, employment or training. Such assistance is made available through travel tokens issued in advance of their travel. These tokens can be used for travel from their home address to the Isle of Wight Council's Participation Team or to a post 16 provider. Travel tokens are available through the Council's Participation Team based at County Hall, Newport, who can be contacted by phone on 01983 823888.
6. If a full-time student at an Island-based post-16 provider is required, for the purposes of their education / training, to travel beyond the location of their institution / provider, travel tokens can be made available. These allow for travel between secondary schools, the IW College and training providers. Secondary schools, the IW College and St George's Special School have been provided with minibuses to assist with transport arrangements between establishments.

7. Transition: children entitled under the previous policy.

Any pupil entitled under existing discretionary provision and currently receiving a free Home to School Transport service would continue to receive the same service until the end of their current phase of schooling providing there are no change of circumstances (e.g. change of address or school). If circumstances do change then the new policy will apply.

8. Exceptional Circumstances

There are particular occasions when the Local Authority may provide free transport

1. For those families who may experience homelessness free transport will be provided for a maximum period of six months for the children of families who have been relocated to a different area but have registered a request with the Housing Department to return to their previous area when permanent accommodation becomes available. A letter of confirmation from the Housing Association will be required. This provision will also apply to families housed in the Women's Refuge. Free transport will take the form of a bus pass or the cost equivalent of a bus pass. Where a parent elects to receive the cost equivalent, only one sum shall be provided irrespective of the number of children who are being transported. No other form of transport will be provided.
2. For children in the care of the Local Authority free transport (limited to a bus pass only) will be provided to children who move family placement, but wish to remain at their current school. All children must still live more than two miles from their primary school and more than three miles from their secondary school to qualify for this provision.
3. If a pupil attending their nearest secondary school and qualifying for free transport moves house nearer to a different secondary school, the Council will provide free transport to the original school, where this is requested by parents, provided that the pupil has attended for one academic term and that the move takes place while the pupil is in years 10 and 11 (GCSE) only. The service to the original school will normally only be provided by public service bus pass.

9 Appeals

Parents can challenge a decision about:

- their child's eligibility
- the transport arrangements offered;
- the distance measurement in relation to statutory walking distances; and
- the safety of the route.

If you are refused Home to School Transport, or wish to challenge on any of the latter three points above, there is an appeals process. In the first instance a case will be reviewed by a Senior Officer and there may be a further appeal to an Independent Appeal Panel. Details can be found by contacting school.admissions@iow.gov.uk

10. Comments/Complaints

If you want to make comments or complain about the home to school service you have received you can write to us at School Admissions and Transport Team, Isle of Wight Council, County Hall, Newport, Isle of Wight, PO30 1UD or alternatively you can telephone us on 01983 823455.

APPENDIX 1

Administrative and operational arrangements:

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

How can I apply for free transport?

All requests for free transport (4-16 year olds) should be made using the Isle of Wight Council's application form for free transport which can be obtained from either the child's current school, or from the Admissions and Transport Team, County Hall, Newport, (Telephone 823455) or online at www.iwight.com/schooladmissions. Completed forms should be returned via the child's current school or direct to the School Admissions and Transport Section at County Hall.

What is the definition of Home Address?

The home address will be that at which the child resides and spends the majority of his/her time. Occasionally a child will have more than one address, for example, because they live with parents who have different addresses. In this situation the address used for determining transport will be the one at which the child spends most of their time including weekends and school holidays as well as during the week. When the child lives at the other address they will not qualify for any transport arrangements other than the one provided from the primary home address.

When will the free transport become available?

Free transport (4-16 year olds) will not be arranged until the request is authorised by the Admissions and Transport Team. A valid ticket will be sent by the School Transport Team to the child's school within 10 days of authorisation.

Pupils who have been notified that they are entitled to free transport can board the school bus on the first day of term, providing they are in school uniform. Bus passes will be issued by the school during the day so that they can be used on the return journey and on all subsequent journeys.

Travel tokens that are issued to students in advance of their travel can be used at any time of the day, including weekends.

Could my request for free travel be refused?

Yes - if you do not meet the criteria as set out in this policy document.

If your request for free travel (4-16 year olds) is refused you will be told the reason(s) for our decision. However, if you disagree with this you will be able to appeal against our decision. The Notice of Appeal against a Free Transport Decision Form and a confidential Financial Questionnaire together with guidance on how to appeal can be obtained by contacting the Admissions and Transport team at County Hall, Newport.

The grounds upon which you can appeal are:

- parent or child medical needs
- exceptional family hardship
- other exceptional circumstances
- you believe that your request for free or subsidised transport has been refused based on an incorrect assessment of your circumstances.

Your case will first be considered by a senior officer and then may be heard by an Independent panel.

My child is joining a school mid-way through an academic year or not during the entrance year (Year R or Year 7). Do we have the same entitlements to free transport and how do we apply out of the regular application period?

Pupils joining a school, during an academic year have the same entitlements as those children who join the school at the normal transfer point. Parents will be informed of their entitlement when they are offered a place at a school, and will have the same right to appeal if they are refused a free bus pass.

How do I know what my nearest school is?

Parents can contact school admissions to find out their nearest school at school.admissions@iow.gov.uk

Details of the location of primary and secondary schools can be found online at www.iwight.com/schooladmissions.

If receiving a service where will my child be picked up and dropped off?

In the circumstances that an entitlement to free transport provision (4-16 year olds) exists, this will be provided from the nearest designated public bus stop or other agreed locations when a primary pupils home address is in a rural location some distance from the nearest bus stop. Parents are responsible for getting their children to the bus stop at the beginning of each school day and also for their return home from the bus stop at the end of the school day. Transport will be timed to coincide with the start and finish times of the school, institution or provider, as far as is reasonably possible.

What happens if my child needs to attend pre or after school activities? Can they use their bus pass on an earlier or later scheduled bus service?

Pupils can use their bus passes on network buses in order to attend pre or after school activities. This can be arranged through the school your child attends.

My child is not entitled to free transport, but there appear to be spaces on the buses taking pupils in the same direction. Can my child occupy one of these spare seats?

Sometimes arrangements can be made for a child who is not entitled to free school transport to occupy a spare seat on a contracted school bus service. This is on the understanding that the concession will be withdrawn should:

- the seat be required for a child entitled to transport: OR
- the existing school transport arrangements are altered.

There will be a charge for spare seats. Applications for spare seats are made to the Council's Transport Team, County Hall, Newport, Isle of Wight, PO30 1UD. Tel. 821000.

Where a spare seat is provided for a child to a school on transport serving other schools, the Authority will not accept responsibility for their safe supervision from the time the child has left the vehicle to their arrival at the home school. Similarly, the Authority accepts no responsibility for the return journey when the child is not travelling on the school bus.

Do pupils from different schools, institutions or providers travel on the same buses?

Pupils from different schools generally travel on separate buses. However, in order to minimise the number of buses used the Council will seek to combine transport for pupils to more than one school where it is considered efficient and practical to do so, particularly where schools are located in close proximity to one another. However, primary (4-11) and secondary (11-16) pupils will continue to travel on separate buses.

Will my child travel to school on a dedicated school bus, or will they travelling alongside members of the public on regular routes?

The majority of pupils will travel on a bus which is part of the Council's School Transport contract and will therefore be closed to members of the public. In a few instances, pupils will be required to travel on a public bus service due to the location of their home address, although this will not apply to the primary school age range (4-11). When primary aged pupils are required to travel on public services, then arrangements will be made to enable the parent/carer to travel with them.

I am concerned about my primary school aged child travelling unaccompanied. Will these pupils be supervised on the bus?

The Council can provide funding to a school to enable them to provide adult escorts for pupils under the age of 8 years who travel to school by bus. This role is usually carried out by a member of school staff who will be known to the children.

Where transport is provided to special schools, are specially adapted vehicles provided?

Yes, with the following provisions:

- All buses are fitted with seat belts
- Booster seats are provided when required
- All buses have at least one escort on board
- All drivers and escorts have enhanced CRB/DBS disclosures
- The same drivers and escorts operate the same route daily
- All vehicles have ramps accessible from the kerb-side for wheelchair travellers
- Escorts and drivers receive appropriate training in lifting and basic first aid
- All vehicles are issued with mobile phones for use by the escort so help can be summoned in an emergency.

Behaviour

What happens when pupils misbehave on school transport?

The Authority has a procedure for dealing with children who misbehave on school transport. The procedure is at Appendix 2. If the term ticket held by a pupil is in any way discretionary, e.g. post-16, Spare Seat, then withdrawal of the ticket and the requiring of alternative transport arrangements to be made could be a reasonable course of action to take following consultation with the school. Such alternative transport could be at the expense of the pupil or their parents.

What happens if my child is excluded from school?

If a pupil is permanently excluded from a school and an alternative placement is arranged by the Commissioner for SEN and Alternative Provision, transport will be provided to the alternative school if that school is beyond the relevant walking distance.

Alternative arrangements

What happens if a pupil or student does not qualify for either free or subsidised transport arrangements? Are there other discounts available or travel?

Southern Vectis offer concessionary bus fares for young people under the age of 19, . For further information please see the Southern Vectis website: <http://islandbuses.info/tickets02.shtml>

I wish my child to attend a school on the mainland. Are there any entitlements to free transport?

No, unless your child is supported by an Education, Health and Care Plan that requires the provision of particular transport arrangements to that school.

I wish my child to attend an independent school. Are there any entitlements to free transport?

No, unless your child is supported by an Education, Health and Care Plan that requires the provision of particular transport arrangements to that school.

My child is undertaking work experience in another part of the Island. Are there any entitlements to free transport for 4-16 year olds?

Pupils are advised to seek advice from their school. Schools will often make transport arrangements themselves.

Will I be provided with independent travel training if I face difficulty with transport?

The Local Authority (LA) encourages local education providers to support independent travel training for young people aged 16 – 19 as part of the curriculum. St George's Special School and the IW College have trained staff that can offer this service to their students. For students aged 16-24 who are attending the IW College the Learning Disability Assessment (LDA) [S139a] written by the LA Participation team advisers describes the travel needs of the young person

Information on concessionary fares is available in all secondary schools, Isle of Wight College and training providers.

What help can I apply for if I choose to travel to a Post 16 course that is on the mainland?

The student should contact the establishment that they will be attending to enquire about accessing the Post 16 bursary

Wightlink Ferries Student Fares allow students who are 16 to 18 years and in full time education at a mainland college to travel for half the normal adult price. Students can apply for an application in writing to Wightlink Ltd, Gunwharf Road, Portsmouth, PO1 2LA.

For further information please see the Wightlink website as detailed below:

<http://www.wightlink.co.uk/fares--tickets/fares/season-tickets.aspx>

Red Funnel Student Saver tickets allow students who are 16 to 18 and in full time education at a mainland college to travel on a reduced ticket rate. Students can apply in writing to Red Funnel, 12 Bugle Street, Southampton, SO14 2JY or on line at

<http://www2.redfunnel.co.uk/ferry-travel/frequent-travellers/hi-speed-saver-tickets> For further information please see the Red Funnel website at the above address.

Hovertravel offer a School Academic Year Season Card for students in full time education travelling across the Solent on a daily basis. Students over 16 years of age can apply for an application form from Hovertravel ticket offices.

For further information please see the Hovertravel website as detailed below.

<http://www.hovertravel.co.uk/pages/regular-travel-cards/>

What help is available for me if I attend a further education institution which is beyond daily travelling distance and I need residential accommodation?

The student should contact the establishment that they will be attending to enquire about accessing the Post 16 Bursary Fund.

APPENDIX 2

PROTOCOL IN RESPECT OF MISBEHAVIOUR ON SCHOOL TRANSPORT

Stage 1: If misbehaviour is reported either by the school or the operator

The Transport Team will write a warning letter to the parent, copied to the School and Children's Services.

NB: In the case of serious misbehaviour which, in the view of the Transport Team, the School, and Children's Services, warrants immediate exclusion from usual travel arrangements, a letter confirming this action will be sent to the parent by the Transport Team, which will both confirm the action taken and state the duration of the exclusion. In such cases Stage 1 will not apply and reference will be made to the relevant sections of Stage 2.

Stage 2: A first serious instance of misbehaviour or if misbehaviour occurs again

The Transport Team will contact the School and together they will decide whether an exclusion from usual transport is appropriate and for how long this will last. Before informing the parents of the decision, the Transport Team will check with Children's Services to ensure it is content that the punishment is appropriate. (This is only a safeguard so the Department can be confident that it can support the action taken if it is challenged later). The letter to the parents from the Transport Team will be copied to both the School and Children's Services.

If the transport arrangement is in any way discretionary, the requiring of alternative transport arrangements to be made could be a reasonable course of action to take following consultation with the school. Such alternative transport could be at the expense of the pupil or their parents.

Where the transport arrangement has no discretionary element in its award then with the agreement of the Council and the school, travel on usual bus service will be withdrawn. Travel on an alternative service and possibly at timings earlier in the morning and later after school will be required during the ban.