

Home to School Transport Guidance



Information for parents
Additional Support Needs

EDUCATION SUPPORT SERVICES

Inclusion in West Lothian



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Section A

Eligibility

Criteria



ADDITIONAL SUPPORT NEEDS TRANSPORT – Parental Communication

West Lothian Council provides transport arrangements for children and young people who have been assessed as requiring it because of additional support needs.

West Lothian Council places a strong emphasis on including children and young people who have additional support needs within their local schools and communities in line with the Scottish Governments guidance on the 'Presumption to provide education in a mainstream setting', therefore the council's transport policy reflects that commitment.

Section A – Eligibility Criteria

1. ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA FOR TRANSPORT

Home to school transport is provided on the grounds of:

- Distance entitlement;
Primary children (1.5 miles or over) Secondary children (2 miles or over). Distance is measured from home address to school gate via shortest walking route. A walking route is deemed acceptable for a child accompanied by a responsible adult if it meets three criteria: Being paved or a shared roadway of adequate width, having an all-weather surface, and being lit.
- additional support needs;
- local authority placement within an Additional Support Needs School out with catchment.

The distance criteria will apply to all children and young people however, some children and young people who live within the distance criteria may be considered for school transport depending on their additional support needs as detailed below.

- the child or young person has a severe and complex needs assessed by Transport Assistance group (TAG) - a panel of West Lothian Council officers from education and passenger transport services as requiring enhanced transport support. Each case is heard on an individualised basis and evidence should be submitted at point of application.
- the child or young person has a physical disability which prevents them from accessing the transport generally available to take other children and young people from that area to school.
- the child or young person attends a specialist provision or school as agreed by the Educational Placement Group (EPG). (**Please note:** the distance criteria will also apply to children and young people attending specialist provision, but transport may be provided on the basis of need).

2. PROCESS FOR ASSESSING ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

Many children and young people will be able to make use of mainstream transport where it is necessary, which ensures their inclusion and encourages independence as a priority.

The main assessment process for children who may require transportation due to their additional support needs is through the Transport Assistance Group (TAG).

In determining individual transport needs, recommendations from school staff, Psychological Services, community and allied health professionals will be sought. Information from parents or carers which is also a crucial part of this process.

Transport Assistance Group (TAG) considerations are as follows:

Consideration should be given to....

- the ability of the parent or carer to transport their child to school through a parental contract. (Personalisation)
- the ability to use public transport/route transport.
- the viability of foster carers providing transport when a child or young person is accommodated away from home.
- the ability to engage in planning activity to access school transport

If home to school transport is agreed by TAG as a necessary part of a child or young person's support plan, consideration should then be given to the following:

- Parental Mileage offer to all parents living within criteria distance offer will be made initially.
- Ability for independent travel with supervision plan until confidence is built.
- necessary equipment required for travelling – Wheelchair accessible vehicles.
- requirements for supervision (Additional Support Needs School only)

Information on all of the above will be considered when deciding on the type of transport to be provided.

3. CHANGE OF SCHOOL OR CENTRE

Children and young people who transfer to another school or centre by parental request out with their catchment school will not be eligible for transport irrespective of criteria.

4. TRANSPORT TO SPECIALIST PROVISIONS

Transport arrangements for children and young people referred for consideration to the Transport Assistance Group will be considered under the evidence provided. Once transport is allocated an application requires to be completed on an annual basis. Evidence may be requested where required.

Should any parents/carers of additional support needs school pupils wish to transfer to parental mileage they can discuss with the Headteacher of their current establishment who will submit for consideration to the Transport Assistance Group.

5. TRANSPORT FOR PLACEMENTS OUTWITH COUNCIL PROVISION

Transport arrangements for children and young people who are placed in educational settings out with the authority will be considered at Senior Officer Review Group (SORG) that is a panel consisting of social policy and education officers who will review all transport arrangements for out with placements.

Children and young people who are placed in a school or centre out with West Lothian Council as a result of a placing request by parents or carers will not be eligible for transport.

6. EQUALITY

In all decisions, the ability and age of the child or young person will be considered along with any other factors which may be relevant to ensure equality of access to educational provision within the criteria.

Section B

How to Apply



Section B – How to apply

1. REQUESTS FOR TRANSPORT

Requests for home to school transport must be made on an annual basis by the parent as the needs of the child or young person may change. Please see attached [link](#) for request for ASN Transport. All requests for transport to commence in August should be sent to the Transport Assistance Group no later than 6th May each year. Please note requests close to the end of term may result in a delay for commencement for the start of the new term.

The Transport Assistance Group meet on a monthly basis to review applications made. Please note the timescales following approval for any transport requests to implementation may take up to 4 weeks due to the contract tender process.

Where appropriate the school in collaboration with the parent/carer will be asked to develop for children and young people a life skills programme, to increase the ability to negotiate journeys and where possible independent travel should be encouraged. This may result in full independent travel or a move away from fully supported travel depending on the child's or young person's abilities.

2. TEMPORARY OR EMERGENCY TRANSPORT REQUESTS

Temporary or emergency transport may be provided for a time limited period where:

- A child or young person suffers an injury or medical condition that impairs their ability to walk or use standard transport. Parents' or carers' ability to transport their child to school will be a factor in awarding transport;
- A child or young person is displaced from home due to domestic violence or crisis and it is necessary to ensure continuity of education. Any transport provided under such circumstances will be for a maximum of 28 days. Social Work Services should be involved in this decision making.

Other exceptional circumstances will be considered on an individual basis and be negotiated depending on individual need.

Section C

Implementation and what to expect.



Section C – Implementation and What to Expect

1. ADHOC CHANGES TO CURRENT TRANSPORT PROVISIONS

If a child or young person becomes ill during the school day, the parents/carers should be contacted to transport the child or young person home if they are to leave the school early. Operators and escorts are not authorised to make any changes to normal transport arrangements unless directed by West Lothian Council.

If there is shared custody of a child the days and times of the shared custody arrangement should be submitted to the council – upon agreement there will be ability to change the arrangements until a new application is reviewed into the new session.

If care arrangements are to be amended due to relocation of a family due to domestic abuse these requests should be processed through Social Work Services in West Lothian Council.

2. USE OF ESCORTS

Escorts are provided to support transition to the following specialist provisions based on the profound needs of the children in attendance:

- Ogilvie School Campus
- Pinewood School
- Beatlie School

Where appropriate this will be reviewed regularly and if a child is able to transition in a vehicle without escort support transport arrangements will be amended appropriately.

3. REVIEW OF INDIVIDUAL TRANSPORT ARRANGEMENTS

In all cases, transport arrangements under this policy will be subject to a minimum annual review.

The provision of transport may change or cease as the child or young person grows older, or becomes more able to travel independently. Such decisions will be made with the team around the child or young person and will take full account of the child's or young person's needs.

A motor vehicle mileage allowance may be paid to a parent or carer of pupils eligible for transport assistance; if West Lothian Council are unable to provide a suitable or more cost-effective alternative.

4. SEATING ON PRIVATE HIRE VEHICLES

Where it is unavoidable, the use of the front seat of a contract vehicle is permitted as long as an approved restraint or fixed seatbelt is used with an appropriate high-backed child car seat where necessary. In such circumstances contractors will be instructed to ensure that older children and young people are seated in the front seat.

5. CANCELLATION OF TRANSPORT

It is essential that parents or carers contact the operator if their child does not require transport due to illness or other reasons to avoid unnecessary costs to West Lothian Council. Repeated failure to do so may result in the withdrawal of transport arrangements until the matter can be resolved.

6. NOBODY AT HOME

If there is nobody at home when a child or young person arrives, Transport Services at West Lothian Council should be contacted by the operator and they will make every effort to contact the parent/carer (including use of emergency contact details) to ascertain the situation. If this fails or a suitable solution cannot be found the social work department in West Lothian should be notified.

7. BEHAVIOUR

Children or young people who have additional support needs may sometimes display challenging behaviour, and this should be considered during the risk assessment process. Measures should be put in place to ensure that the risk of challenging behaviours are planned and prepared for to minimise disruption to all users.

Should consistent and injurious challenging behaviour by children and young people whilst on any vehicle persist, this should be brought to the attention of the Headteacher who will attempt to resolve the situation in the first instance.

Failure to address issues on transport may result in an alternative solution being sought or ultimately withdrawal of the service. A motor vehicle mileage allowance may be paid to a parent or carer if West Lothian Council are unable to provide a suitable or more cost-effective alternative.

8. ADMINISTRATION OF MEDICATION

Medication cannot be administered by operators or escorts under any circumstances unless they have been fully trained and authorised by Education Services to do so in respect of specific children or young people.

It is essential for escorts to know of any medical condition that may adversely affect a child or young person during a journey.

9. CONTACT DETAILS AND COMPLAINTS PROCEDURES

Any enquiries you may have in relation to ASN Home to School Transport please contact us by Email: TransportAssistanceGroup@westlothian.gov.uk

Guidance on how to make a complaint can be found at [Complaints - West Lothian Council](#)