



Doncaster  
Council

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## Home to School Transport Policy

# Formal Consultation 2021/22



### Home to School Transport Policy – Formal Consultation 2021/22

From Monday 29<sup>th</sup> November 2021, Doncaster Council will be entering a period of consultation around proposed changes to our existing 'Home to School Transport' policy.

This consultation document details the proposed changes and rationale for change which is open for public feedback for 9 weeks, closing on the 31<sup>st</sup> January 2022. The document has space for you to feedback on each proposed change.

### How to provide feedback

There are a number of ways to provide feedback on the proposed changes to the Home to School Transport Policy

- **Online**

The consultation document is attached to this letter and is also available digitally at: [www.doncaster.gov.uk/services/schools/education-transport](http://www.doncaster.gov.uk/services/schools/education-transport)

We are looking to arrange a number of virtual events to provide the opportunity to ask questions or give feedback directly. These will take place on the following dates and times via MS Teams:

1. Friday 10<sup>th</sup> December 10.00am -11.00am
2. Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> December 6.00pm to 7.00pm

If you would like to attend one of these sessions then please e-mail [transportconsultation@doncaster.gov.uk](mailto:transportconsultation@doncaster.gov.uk) requesting your preferred date(s) and we will try to accommodate as many as possible.

You can complete the feedback sections and return via email to [transportconsultation@doncaster.gov.uk](mailto:transportconsultation@doncaster.gov.uk) or;

return your printed copy to any local Family Hub (a full list of Family Hubs is available at [www.doncaster.gov.uk/services/schools/family-hubs-and-services](http://www.doncaster.gov.uk/services/schools/family-hubs-and-services)).

### Face-to-Face

We would like to also offer the opportunity for a face to face meetings to discuss these proposals further but are mindful of the ongoing Covid situation. We are monitoring this carefully and, if this does become possible in January, details will be added to the Council Website as follows:

[www.doncaster.gov.uk/services/schools/education-transport](http://www.doncaster.gov.uk/services/schools/education-transport)

If this is not possible additional virtual meeting dates will be added.

### Contact us

If you have any questions or queries about the consultation, please contact the Transport Team on 01302 736081/736080

Home to School Transport Policy - Proposed Changes

- [Changing the name of the policy](#)
- [The introduction of a monetary contribution towards the future provision of dedicated taxi and/or minibus transport for all Post 16 - 19 SEND \(Special Educational Needs and Disabilities\) pupils and students.](#)
- [Removal of bus passes issued on the basis that no additional expenditure is incurred to the Council](#)
- [Removal of bus passes issued to pupils whose families move house during Academic Years 10 and 11](#)
- [Removal of bus passes issued to pupils based on Catchment school if this is not the nearest school](#)
- [Clearer wording around 'compulsory leaving age' and 'participation age'](#)
- [Additional information regarding types of 'travel assistance'](#)
- [Clearer wording around 'dual registration'](#)
- [Additional information around occasions when we would not provide travel assistance](#)
- [Clearer wording around dual custody arrangements](#)
- [Additional information regarding criteria for suitable walking routes](#)
- [Cross Referencing the 'Post-16 Policy Statement'](#)
- [Clarification around excluded pupils and managed moves](#)
- [Addition of information around travel assistance on medical grounds](#)
- [Addition of information around parental choice of schools for pupils with SEND](#)
- [Clarification around requests for parents to travel](#)

Changing the name of the policy

<b>PROPOSED CHANGE</b>	<b>REASON FOR CHANGE</b>
<p>We are proposing to change the name of this policy from 'Home to School Transport Policy' to 'Home to School Travel Assistance Policy'</p>	<p>We feel that the name of the current 'Home to School Transport Policy' doesn't reflect the wide range of options around assistance that parent and carers can access to enable their children to get to and from school.</p>
<p><b>FEEDBACK/COMMENTS:</b></p>	

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The introduction of a monetary contribution towards the future provision of dedicated taxi and/or minibus transport for all Post 16 - 19 SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities) pupils and students.

<b>PROPOSED CHANGE</b>	<b>REASON FOR CHANGE</b>
<p>We propose asking parents of pupils and students who attend Post 16 provision for a contribution towards Post 16 Transportation – specifically for those pupils and students aged between 16 and 19 who receive direct transport to school or college in a taxi or minibus paid for by the council.</p> <p>We are currently considering the equivalent cost of a single journey bus pass for pupils and students attending provision within Doncaster (or those at Dearne Valley College if this is closer than Doncaster College to their home). This would be around £294 per Academic Year</p> <p>We are also considering the equivalent cost of a double journey bus pass for those attending provision outside of Doncaster i.e. around £588 per academic year.</p> <p>We are also looking into the possibility of payments by instalment if this proceeds.</p> <p>We would be interested to know if families would be willing to make a contribution and any other feedback and comments that they have in response to this proposal.</p> <p>We are also proposing that consideration is given to low income families’ ability to fund a full contribution with a possible reduced contribution</p>	<p>There are a number of reasons for this proposal.</p> <p>One is to align this Policy with that of the majority of our neighbouring authorities.</p> <p>Government spending cuts and increasing requests for assistance have also led to increased costs and a significant overspend of the funds available. We are trying to find a solution which means we can continue to offer the best service possible to all.</p>
<p><b>FEEDBACK/COMMENTS:</b></p>	

Removal of bus passes on the basis that no additional expenditure is incurred to the Council

<b>PROPOSED CHANGE</b>	<b>REASON FOR CHANGE</b>
<p>We propose removing the current clause within the ‘Home to School Transport’ policy which provides travel assistance under an exception for pupils not attending their nearest school or allocated school.</p> <p>These pupils are instead attending an alternative school which is the statutory qualifying distance. On the basis that the Council does not incur any additional cost, a zero fare bus pass to enable the pupil to attend the alternative school is provided equivalent to that which the pupil would have received had they attended either the nearest or allocated, school as the case may be.</p> <p>We are suggesting the removal of this exception with effect from September 2023 for all pupils starting a new phase of education. Zero fare bus passes would no longer be provided. Pupils who receive assistance under this exception prior to September 2023 will continue to receive assistance until they finish their current phase of education (in most cases to the end of year 11)</p>	<p>Changes to bus services and the removal of some services has made this increasingly contentious and difficult to administer. It is an exception and provides an added benefit to pupils based purely on where they live that others cannot benefit from.</p> <p>Additionally cuts in funding have led to a significant overspend of the funds available for Home to School Transport</p>
<p><b>FEEDBACK/COMMENTS:</b></p>	

Removal of bus passes issued to pupils whose families move house during Academic Years 10 and 11

<b>PROPOSED CHANGE</b>	<b>REASON FOR CHANGE</b>
<p>We propose removing the current clause within the ‘Home to School Transport’ policy which provides travel assistance under an exception for pupils who</p>	<p>This is an exception which was originally introduced to assist pupils maintain</p>

<p>move house whilst during Academic Years 10 and 11.</p> <p>We are suggesting the removal of this exception with effect from the publication date of the new Policy in 2022 for all pupils and we would no longer provide a zero fare bus pass after this date. Pupils who receive assistance under this exception prior to that date will continue to receive assistance until they finish their current phase of education (in most cases to the end of year 11)</p>	<p>continuity during GCSE study. However these studies often start much earlier than Year 10 now and this has led to an increase in requests which fall outside of the exception. Additionally the house move is often as a result of family choice.</p> <p>Additionally cuts in funding have led to a significant overspend of the funds available for Home to School Transport</p>
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**FEEDBACK/COMMENTS:**

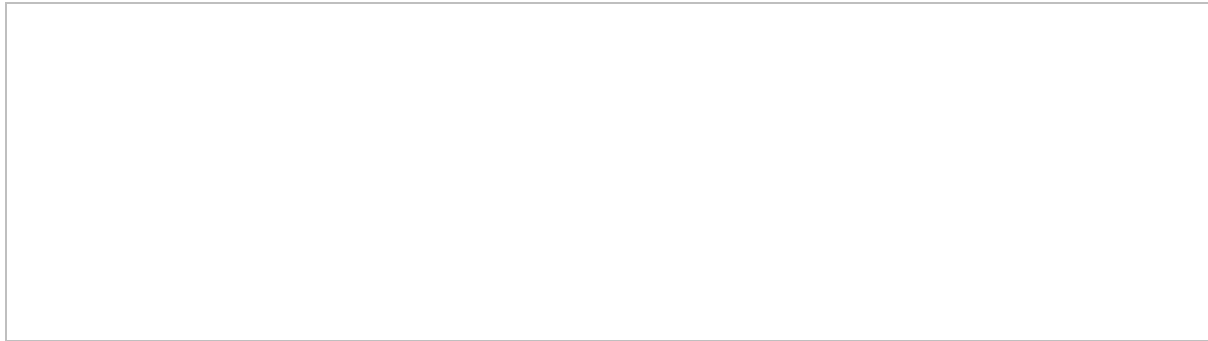
Removal of bus passes issued to pupils based on catchment school, if this is not the nearest school

<b>PROPOSED CHANGE</b>	<b>REASON FOR CHANGE</b>
<p>We propose removing the current requirement within the 'Home to School Transport' policy which provides travel assistance to pupils attending their catchment school. In future this will state their nearest available school only, if they meet the distance criteria for eligibility.</p> <p>In future travel assistance would only be provided to pupils meeting the distance criteria to the nearest school/nearest school within the Doncaster Boundary. Zero Fare bus passes would no longer be provided to the catchment school if this is different to the nearest available school.</p>	<p>In many cases the catchment school is also the nearest school but this is not always the case.</p> <p>The Catchment system is a model employed by schools, not by the Local Authority and most Local Authorities no longer recognise the catchment system.</p> <p>Removing reference to catchment from the Home to</p>

<p>We are suggesting the removal of this phrasing with effect from September 2023 for all pupils starting a new phase of education. Zero fare bus passes would no longer be provided. Pupils who receive assistance under this exception prior to September 2023 will continue to receive assistance until they finish their current phase of education (in most cases to the end of year 11)</p>	<p>School Transport Policy will bring the new policy in line with other authorities, whilst still adhering to our statutory responsibility.</p> <p>It is also an exception and provides an added benefit to pupils based purely on where they live as some families benefit from a choice of schools and others do not.</p>
<p><b>FEEDBACK/COMMENTS:</b></p>	

Clearer wording around ‘compulsory leaving age’ and ‘participation age’

<b>PROPOSED CHANGE</b>	<b>REASON FOR CHANGE</b>
<p>Change the wording in the current policy around the ‘compulsory school leaving age’ and the ‘participation age’ to read:</p> <p>“In 2013 the Government raised the Participation Age meaning that all pupils and students must continue in some form of education or training until at least their 18th birthday. However there was no change made to the statutory school age which remains at 5 to 16 years.</p> <p>This change does not extend the entitlement to free travel assistance beyond the age of 16, as the change to the participation age does not mean that a pupils or students must stay in school. They may choose to work fulltime and study part time, continue with full time study at school or college, be involved in part time training whilst volunteering or undertake an apprenticeship.”</p>	<p>In the existing policy, we talk about the impact of the raised ‘participation age’ however we feel that the difference between this and the ‘compulsory school leaving age’ is not clear for parents and carers. The clarification of the wording is needed to ensure readers are not confused by these terms</p>
<p><b>FEEDBACK/COMMENTS:</b></p>	



Additional information regarding types of 'travel assistance'

PROPOSED CHANGE	REASON FOR CHANGE
<p>Extend the existing section of the policy which details the various types of travel assistance</p>	<p>We feel that the current information available for parents and carers doesn't provide enough information about the wide range of options for travel assistance available for families, such as independent travel training, personal budgets and the option of mileage allowances in addition to transport options. This will allow parents and carers to make more informed choices that are better suited to their individual circumstances.</p>
<p><b>FEEDBACK/COMMENTS:</b></p>	

Clearer wording around 'dual registration'

PROPOSED CHANGE	REASON FOR CHANGE
<p>Amend wording around 'dual registration' with the addition of the below section:</p> <p><i>“Some pupils may be registered at more than one school. Where they are registered at two qualifying schools (which are not Pupil Referral Units or Alternative Provision), if eligible, travel assistance will be</i></p>	<p>We feel that the current wording may cause confusion for parents around the support available for those children registered at two qualifying schools.</p>



<p><i>provided to whichever of the schools the pupil is attending on any school day.</i></p> <p><i>Travel assistance will not be provided for transfers between schools during the school day”</i></p>	
<p><b>FEEDBACK/COMMENTS:</b></p>	

Additional information around occasions when we would not provide travel assistance

<b>PROPOSED CHANGE</b>	<b>REASON FOR CHANGE</b>
<p>We would like to add further examples of the times when travel assistance will not be provided such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To access breakfast or after school clubs, including out of school activities</li> <li>• To and from work experience placements, taster or open days, or transition visits</li> <li>• To any provision off the school site organised by the school</li> <li>• For transfers between educational establishments during the school day</li> <li>• Following detention</li> <li>• At times to suit the convenience of family arrangements</li> <li>• At times when other siblings in the family have to be taken to other schools</li> <li>• For late arrivals or early departures, for example in the event of the pupil or student becoming ill</li> <li>• For shorter than normal days, for example during the exam season</li> <li>• For those whose level of attendance is a cause of concern, but for whom no eligibility criteria are met</li> </ul>	<p>We feel that the new policy would benefit from having additional examples of when we are unable to provide travel assistance to ensure parents and carers have clear information and guidance to refer to.</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• For students on exchange visits</li> <li>• Where the behaviour of a young person is not acceptable to the driver of the vehicle and places other travellers a risk. In these circumstances parents will be required to make alternative arrangements.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>FEEDBACK/COMMENTS:</b></p>	

Clearer wording around dual custody arrangements

Proposed change	Reason for change
<p>Amend wording around ‘dual custody arrangements’ with the addition of the below section:</p> <p><i>“For pupils whose parents/carers no longer live at the same address and who qualify for travel assistance, this will normally be to the address at which the pupil spends three or more school nights (Sunday–Thursday). Assistance to both homes will not be provided.</i></p> <p><i>Where the pupil spends an equal amount of time during the school week at both addresses and they would qualify for assisted travel to school from both addresses, the Council will provide assistance from one address only and this will be the address where child benefit is paid to.”</i></p>	<p>We feel that the current wording may not be clear enough for parents looking for information about travel assistance and dual custody arrangements, and requires additional clarification</p>
<p><b>FEEDBACK/COMMENTS:</b></p>	



Additional information regarding criteria for suitable walking routes

Proposed change	Reason for change
<p>Amend wording regarding criteria for walking routes:</p> <p><i>“This is the shortest route along which a child, “accompanied as necessary”, may walk with reasonable safety and may include footpaths, bridleways and other pathways, as well as recognized roads.</i></p> <p><i>This means that a route will be available even if the child would need to be accompanied along it by his or her parent.</i></p> <p><i>The assessment of the availability or otherwise of a route will be based on a child being accompanied by an adult. It will be irrelevant for the purposes of that assessment whether or not the child would or would not be so accompanied when attending the school or college.</i></p> <p><i>If the walking route, or alternative routes, to the school the pupil could reasonably be expected to take is/are not considered to be reasonably available even when accompanied by an adult, the Council will provide appropriate travel assistance which will normally be through the provision of a zero fare bus pass.</i></p> <p><i>Assessment of the comparative safety of a route will involve such factors as:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>The age of the child; whether any potential risks might be mitigated if the child were accompanied by an adult</i></li> <li>• <i>The width of any roads travelled along and the existence of pavements</i></li> <li>• <i>The volume and speed of traffic travelling along any roads</i></li> <li>• <i>The existence or otherwise of street lighting; and the condition of the route at different times of the year, at the times of day that a child would be expected to travel to and from school. “</i></li> </ul>	<p>We feel that the current wording may not be clear enough when detailing the factors that were considered for identifying suitable or unsuitable walking routes.</p>

<p><b>FEEDBACK/COMMENTS:</b></p>	

Cross referencing the 'Post-16 Policy Statement'

Proposed change	Reason for change
The addition of details regarding the 'Post-16 Policy Statement' and where this is published	We have a duty to publish the contents of the post-16 policy statement by the end of May each year. Providing a sign post to this within the 'home to school travel assistance policy' will assist parents/carers with decisions regarding Post 16 Education
<p><b>FEEDBACK/COMMENTS:</b></p>	

Clarification around excluded pupils and managed moves

Proposed change	Reason for change
Amendment of the section of the policy which provides travel assistance information related to excluded pupils and managed moves	We feel we need to provide clearer information in this policy around the circumstances for excluded pupils, including when they will or will not receive travel assistance and confirming the council's approach with regards to managed moves

**FEEDBACK/COMMENTS:**

Addition of information around travel assistance on medical grounds

Proposed change	Reason for change
<p>Addition of information for parents and carers around how they can apply for travel assistance on medical grounds where appropriate and details of the process around this</p>	<p>The current policy does not hold this information and we feel that parents and carers would find this information beneficial when considering their options for travel assistance.</p>

**FEEDBACK/COMMENTS:**

Addition of information around parental choice of schools for pupils with SEND

Proposed change	Reason for change
<p>Addition of information for parents and carers around parental preference of schools for pupils with SEND to include:</p> <p><i>“Travel assistance will not be provided under this section where the Council has identified an institution or provider to meet a pupil or student’s need but</i></p>	<p>We feel we need to provide clearer information in this policy around the council’s approach regarding parents who prefer to send their child/children to an alternative education provider, to ensure they have clear guidance to make an informed choice.</p>

*the parents/carers choose to send their child to a more distant institution or provider of the same type. If the parents prefer the school or college that is further away, the Council may agree to name this provider in the Education Health and care Plan (EHCP) but parents/carers will need to provide transport themselves"*

**FEEDBACK/COMMENTS:**

Clarification around requests for parents to travel

<b>Proposed change</b>	<b>Reason for change</b>
Addition of information around requests for parents to travel	We feel we need to provide additional clarification around circumstances when requests for parents might be agreed

**FEEDBACK/COMMENTS:**

**ADDITIONAL FEEDBACK AND COMMENTS**

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