

Cabinet – 24 April 2013

Home to School Transport Policy and Post-16 Transport Policy Statement 2013/14

Portfolio: Councillor Rachel Andrew, Children's Services

Service: Walsall Children's Services Transport Service

Wards: All

Key decision: Yes

Forward plan: No

1. Summary

- 1.1 The report highlights a number of changes made to the Home to School Transport Policy, along with a refreshed Post-16 Transport Policy Statement for the 2013/14 academic year.
- 1.2 The Council is required to publish an updated Post-16 Transport Policy Statement by 31 May 2013.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 That Cabinet approves the updated Home to School Transport Policy which now reflects the direct management of services by the Council.
- 2.2 That Cabinet approves the Post-16 Transport Policy Statement 2013/14 to enable the Council to fulfil its duty under the 1996 Education Act to publish such a statement by 31 May each year.
- 2.3 That a consultation process is carried out to review how mobility vehicles and other mobility support for children impacts on home to school transport provision. Any proposed revision to the Policy will be brought back to Cabinet for approval later this year.

3. Report detail

3.1 Home to School Transport Policy

- 3.1.1 The Home to School Transport Policy attached to this report as **Appendix 1**, now reflects that this service is managed directly by the Council. Contact details within the policy have been amended to this effect.

- 3.1.2 Transport personnel section of the policy, page 12, has been amended to add that all Home to School Transport personnel must wear a Walsall Children's Services Pupil Transport Services high visibility vest at all times when undertaking their duties. This new requirement has been added as an additional safeguarding measure and to ensure that transport personnel are safer, as well as being readily identifiable.
- 3.1.3 The Post-16 students section of the policy, page 15, now includes a cross reference to the statutory Post-16 Transport Policy Statement.
- 3.1.4 A consultation process will be carried out to review how the provision of mobility vehicles and other mobility support for children should impact on the provision of home to school transport provision. Any proposed revision to the policy will be brought back to Cabinet later this year.

3.2 Post 16 transport Policy Statement

- 3.2.1 The Post 16 Transport Policy Statement has been updated to reflect the direct management of education services by the Council, see **Appendix 2**.
- 3.2.2 The detailed information within the statement has also been checked to ensure that current rates for all transport services are included.
- 3.2.3 Raising the Participation Age and the impact on SEN pupils may have a marginal impact on budgets and this will be kept under review.

4. Council priorities

The Policies contribute toward the priorities of sustainability and educational attainment.

5. Risk management

Home to School contractors will be monitored by the Council to minimise the potential risks from the operation of this service.

6. Financial implications

The Children's Services transport provision is demand led and can be subject to change in-year. The Home to School Transport contracts will be retendered later this year. This procurement exercise will ensure that high quality, "value for money" service is provided.

7. Legal implications

Local authorities (LAs) have a duty under the Education Act 1996 to publish a transport policy statement each year setting out how they will support 16- to 18-year-olds, either through transport arrangements or financial assistance with transport, to access education and training. Statutory Guidance requires this to be published by 31st May each year.

8. Property implications

There are no property implications as a direct result of this report.

9. Staffing implications

There are no staffing implications as a direct result of this report.

10. Equality implications

All children have the right to access education regardless of the ethnicity, culture or religion, home language, family background, learning difficulties or disabilities, gender of ability.

Section 508 of the Education Act 1996 places a duty on local authorities to:

- assess the school travel needs of all children and persons of sixth form age in their area; and
- to make such travel arrangements as they consider necessary for 'eligible children' within their area.

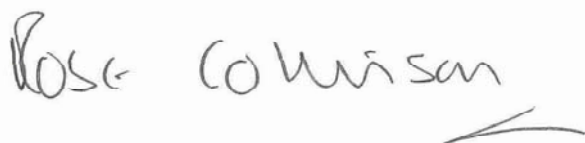
11. Consultation

The policies require approval because Statutory guidance requires an annual update of the post 16 Transport Policy statement to be published by the Council. The current Home School Transport Policy has been undergone a previous consultation process but will now be revised to remove Serco branding.

Authors

Carol Boughton
Head of Service
Walsall Children's Services
☎ 01922 686406
✉ carol.boughton@edu.walsall.gov.uk

Darrell Harman
Head of Service
Walsall Childrens Services
☎ 01922 658320
✉ harmand@walsall.gov.uk



Signed:
Executive Director:
Date: 27 March 2013



Signed:
Portfolio Holder: Councillor R Andrew
Date: 16 April 2013



Home to School Transport Policy

April 2013



For the purposes of this document, the term 'parent' means parent or carer. The term 'child' means child or young person.

This policy only applies to children resident in the borough of Walsall. Parents of children resident in other local authority areas should obtain the policy for that area from the local council.

Contacts for more information:

Transport Coordinator
Walsall Children's Services
Education Development Centre
Pelsall Lane
Rushall
Walsall
WS14 1NG.

Tel: 01922 686363

Service Manager: Planning, Admissions and Transport
Walsall Children's Services
Education Development Centre
Pelsall Lane
Rushall
Walsall
WS14 1NG.

Tel: 01922 686361



Home to School Transport

Parents have a duty to ensure that their children attend school and to make any necessary transport arrangements. When applying for a school place for their child, parents should consider the transport implications of their preferences. The authority plans school places across the borough in order to ensure that there are sufficient places in the local area. In Walsall, most families live within two miles of at least one primary school and within three miles of at least one secondary school.

This policy sets out the circumstances in which the local authority will provide transport assistance to help children get to and from school.

This policy has been produced in accordance with the requirements of the 1996 Education Act, as amended by Part 6 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006, and subsequent guidance issued by the Department for Education. Account has also been taken of sustainable travel policies and school travel plans.

FREE TRANSPORT FOR CHILDREN OF STATUTORY SCHOOL AGE (INCLUDING RECEPTION AND YEAR 11) ATTENDING MAINSTREAM SCHOOLS

Arrangements for children with a statement of special educational needs are set out on page 9.

General eligibility

Children are normally entitled to free home-to-school transport if they live in Walsall and

- attend the nearest appropriate school and
- live beyond walking distance from the school at which they are on roll.

Walking distance is defined in legislation as 2 miles for children aged between 5 years and up to 8 years and 3 miles for children aged between 8 years and the end of the school year in which the child reaches 16 years of age. Children aged 8 but under age 11 from low income families are entitled to free transport to their nearest suitable school if the distance from home is more than 2 miles (shortest walking route). Walsall's policy is to apply the 2 miles limit to all primary year groups including Reception and Years 5 and 6.

Distances are measured from the midpoint of the home address to the midpoint of the school site using the shortest route that can be walked in reasonable safety from the child's address to the nearest open gate to the school site using the Geographical Information System (GIS) used by the Transport Team.

Nationally used criteria are considered when assessing the suitability of a walking route. These criteria include an assumption that the child will be accompanied by an adult as necessary unless a disability prevents this. If a parent's working arrangements make it difficult to accompany their child to school, they have a duty to make arrangements for another responsible person to do so.

There is no entitlement to free transport for children under statutory school age other than those admitted to a reception class and who will reach five years of age during the school year.



Transport is provided in the form of a bus pass for use on journeys to and from school. No free travel arrangements will be made for parents who wish to accompany their child to school.

Pupil attendants are not provided for home-to-school transport to mainstream schools.

Denominational schools

Transport to the nearest appropriate denominational school is only provided where the qualifying distances above are met and a child is offered a place under a denominational criterion in the school's admission arrangements and for which eligibility has been shown.

Income assessed transport to secondary schools

Children of secondary school age (aged 11 to 16 years; Year 7 to Year 11) from low income families have an entitlement to income assessed transport.

Eligible children are entitled to free transport to attend:

- one of the nearest three suitable maintained schools as long as the school is more than 2 miles (walking route) but less than 6 miles from the child's home address;
- the nearest school preferred on grounds of 'religion or belief' if it is more than 2 miles (walking route) but less than 15 miles from the child's home address.

The definition of 'religion or belief' follows that of the Equality Act 2006. The definition of 'religion' includes those religions widely recognised in this country. 'Beliefs' must attain a certain level of cogency, seriousness, cohesion and importance. In the case of denominational schools, the parent must be able to demonstrate adherence to the faith; supporting evidence will also be required in the case of philosophical belief.

The following examples **do not** meet the requirements for the provision of transport on faith or philosophical grounds:

- the wish to have a child educated at a particular category of school eg grammar school, academy;
- objections to rules requiring that a school uniform must be worn;
- a belief that a particular school will provide a better education;
- the wish for a child to be taught in a particular language;
- a belief that a child should be privately educated.

Low income groups are defined as those who are entitled to free school meals or are in receipt of their maximum level of Working Tax Credit (WTC).

Entitlement to free school meals will be checked against the local authority's records. For information about eligibility for free school meals, parents should contact Benefit Services on 0845 111 2855.

Proof of maximum Working Tax Credit must be sent with the application form. This should be a copy of the most recent Tax Credit Award Notice (form TC602) or a letter from the Benefits Agency confirming receipt of maximum Working Tax Credit.



Eligibility for income assessed transport is reassessed annually. There is therefore no guarantee that free transport will be provided throughout a child's secondary education and parents should bear this in mind when considering their preferences for a secondary school place for their child.

Parents applying for the continuation of free transport must complete an application form in the summer term. If a family's financial circumstances have changed and the child is no longer eligible, transport will be withdrawn at the end of that school year. The parent would then be responsible for making transport arrangements for their child.

If a change of address means that a child is no longer eligible for free transport under the distance criteria, free transport will be withdrawn at the end of that term.

Other circumstances in which transport may be provided

1. Change of address

When a family moves to a new address, there is an expectation that the child will transfer to a school close to the new address or that parents will make their own transport arrangements to enable their child to continue attending the existing school.

Parents whose child receives free transport should send details of the new address to the Transport Coordinator. Where there is a continued entitlement to free transport and the child continues to attend the same school, it will not usually be necessary for a new pass to be issued.

Following a change of address, transport to a school in Walsall or elsewhere will only be provided for children who remain eligible on criteria relating to distance, income assessed transport or transport to a denominational school.

For children in Year 10 or Year 11, transport to a school in Walsall or elsewhere may be provided if

- transfer to a school closer to home is impractical because of syllabus requirements;
- the new address is beyond walking distance from the school at which the child is on roll; and
- the journey distance and time are reasonable.

2. Change of school

Moving a child to another school is a very serious step to take and can affect a child in many ways. In most cases things that worry parents and children can be resolved and discussion with the child and the staff at the current school should avoid a transfer between schools in almost all circumstances. Assistance with transport will only be available where a child qualifies for income assessed transport as set out above. In very exceptional circumstances where a move to another school is unavoidable, parents may request special consideration.

If a school makes arrangements for a child to attend another school, college or other setting for part of the week or to attend a work experience placement, the school where the child is on roll is responsible for agreeing and funding any assistance with transport costs.



Sometimes 'Managed Moves' are arranged where a child attends another school for an initial period prior to going on roll at that school. Transport assistance will be provided where the child meets the eligibility criteria because of the home to school distance or low family income. Low income groups are defined as those who are entitled to free school meals or are in receipt of their maximum level of Working Tax Credit (WTC).

In some cases, a child may attend a Pupil Referral Unit or similar provision for a period of time. Where appropriate, assistance with transport will be provided and parents should contact the Transport Coordinator for advice. Each case will be considered on its own merits.

3. Medical reasons.

If a child is unable to walk to school because of a medical reason, free transport may be provided. Parents must complete a *Transport Assistance Application Form* and provide supporting written evidence from the child's GP or hospital stating why they are unable to walk to school and the likely period of incapacity. Each case will be considered on its merits.

Where transport is provided on medical grounds, the case will be reviewed regularly and continued supporting medical evidence will be required.

Medical reasons relating to a parent will only be considered in exceptional circumstances.

4. Disabled parents

It is a parent's responsibility to get their child to and from school. Where the parents' disability prevents them from accompanying their child to school, requests for transport assistance will be considered. However, parents will be expected to try to make reasonable alternative arrangements, for example by asking a friend, relative or parent of another child to accompany their own child to school.

5. Selective schools

Transport assistance for children attending a selective school is only provided where the child meets the eligibility criteria because of the home to school distance or low family income.

6. Special circumstances

Consideration will be given to requests for transport in circumstances which are not covered above. Parents should complete *Transport Assistance Application Form* and provide full details of the circumstances. Free transport will only be provided in exceptional cases.

General information

Free transport is only provided from the child's permanent home address to the school where they are on roll. If a child spends time at more than one address during the school week, eligibility to transport will only be assessed from the main address and any transport arrangements will only apply to that address.



Transport usually takes the form of a bus pass for use on public bus services. The payment of travelling expenses in the form of a mileage or cycling allowance may be offered at the local authority's discretion where this is cost effective. Any such allowances will be paid termly in arrears and are dependent upon the school confirming the child's attendance on the claim form. Where mileage has been agreed, parents will be reimbursed for four journeys between home and school each day. The current rate is 22p per mile regardless of the number of children transported. Where there are two or more children living at the same address and attending the same school, and mileage has been agreed for one child, an additional mileage allowance will not be paid for additional children as all the children are expected to travel together.

Parents who transport their child to and from school are advised to make contingency arrangements for someone else to take their child to school should their own transport suddenly become unavailable. It is not possible for the local authority to provide alternative transport on an ad hoc or temporary basis. Parents whose transport becomes permanently unavailable should contact the Transport Coordinator to discuss alternative arrangements. It may take up to 5 working days for alternative transport arrangements to be set up.

Free transport is not provided for Post 16 pupils attending mainstream schools or colleges. Transport information for Post 16 pupils is available on line at www.walsall.gov.uk (follow services to schools link).

Home-to-school transport policy is subject to review. The eligibility of applications will be considered against the policy in force at the time of the application.

The following list provides some examples of where free transport cannot be provided:

- to a school other than the school where the child is on roll (unless agreed because of special circumstances, for example, where a child is on a managed move to another school);
- travel to work experience, taster or open days;
- movement between different schools or school and college;
- travel to any part time provision off the school site organised by the school;
- to/from medical or dental appointments;
- from an address other than the child's home address or the agreed pick-up point (unless agreed because of special circumstances);
- in the event of sickness where a child has to be collected early from school;
- to/from temporary addresses (unless agreed because of special circumstances).

Poor behaviour on public transport

The consequences of poor behaviour on buses can be wide ranging. Other passengers may be deterred from using public transport shared with poorly behaved school pupils. Such behaviour may jeopardise the safety and welfare of school children, other passengers and transport personnel. Where it is reasonable to do so, headteachers have powers to take action to address unacceptable behaviour even when this takes place outside the school premises and when pupils are not under the legal control of the school. Walsall Children's Services may withdraw transport assistance where a child's behaviour is unacceptable and in such cases the parent would be responsible for getting their child to school.



How to apply for transport

When a parent receives a letter offering a school place for their child, the letter will include details of the arrangements for applications for transport assistance. Parents should complete a *Transport Assistance Application Form* and return it, together with any supporting evidence, to the Transport Coordinator in good time before the start of the new school year. It may take up to 10 working days to process a fully completed application and parents will be expected to make and pay for their child's travel arrangements should the school term commence during this period.

Bus passes will be issued at the start of each term through the school attended by the child. By arrangement, parents may collect an initial bus pass from the offices of Walsall Children's Services Transport Team.

Eligibility for free transport will be reassessed each summer for the following school year. Parents applying for a continuation of free transport should complete a *Transport Assistance Application Form* and return it, together with any supporting evidence, to the Transport Coordinator.

All application forms should be sent to:

Transport Coordinator
Walsall Children's Services
Education Development Centre
Pelsall Lane
Rushall
Walsall
WS4 1NG.

Transport appeals

Parents have a right of appeal against a decision not to offer free transport for their child. Parents wishing to do so should write to the Director of Children's Services representative at the above address and provide full details and enclose any supporting evidence. Parents will be notified of the outcome of the appeal within 10 working days of receipt of the appeal. There is no further right of appeal unless there is a significant change in circumstances.

Complaints

Any complaints should be referred in the first instance to the Service Manager: Planning, Admissions and Transport who will arrange for the investigation of complaints from parents, children, schools, and transport contractors.

TRANSPORT FOR CHILDREN WITH A STATEMENT OF SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

Children with special educational needs have the same entitlement to free transport as any other child and the general eligibility criteria set out above therefore apply.



Children entitled to free transport would normally live beyond the specified distance or be unable to walk safely, accompanied as necessary, to school because of their SEN, disability or mobility problem and be attending the nearest appropriate school as determined by Walsall Children's Services.

The majority of children with special educational needs have their needs met in their local mainstream school and do not normally require assistance with home-to-school transport.

Walsall's inclusion policy places a strong emphasis on enabling children with special educational needs to be educated at a local mainstream school; however, some children with statements of special educational need can only have their needs met by resourced provision at a designated primary or secondary school or by a special school. The transport needs of such children are assessed individually; they do not automatically qualify for free home-to-school transport.

Transport need is assessed using advice gathered from various professionals through the statementing process. The starting point for consideration of transport needs is that children have the same entitlement to transport as any other child.

Where parents prefer their child to attend a more distant school, they are responsible for making and paying for transport arrangements.

Once an appropriate educational placement has been agreed for a child with a statement of special educational needs, consideration will be given to the provision of transport. The mode of travel and whether or not to provide a pupil attendant is at the sole discretion of Walsall Children's Services.

The majority of special needs transport is provided through private hire vehicles. Contracts are awarded through a tendering process. Parents and schools must accept that the transport provider may change as a result of retendering or for other reasons as Walsall Children's Services sees fit.

Where transport is provided, a child will be expected to join an existing transport route and share the vehicle with other pupils unless other arrangements are authorised by Walsall Children's Services.

Where a child is educated at a setting outside the borough of Walsall, Walsall Children's Services will explore all cost effective means of transport before reaching a decision on the type of transport to be provided.

The provision of home-to-school transport where the distance criterion is not met is subject to annual review and can be withdrawn if it is no longer deemed necessary or appropriate. Such changes would normally come into effect from the start of the term following the decision.

In all cases the nature of the transport arrangements is subject to annual review and may change. In some cases, transport may cease to be necessary as the child grows older and becomes more independent. Such decisions are taken on an individual basis and take account of the child's needs.



It is important that all children are encouraged to develop both educationally and socially. This includes working towards independent travel which is encouraged for older children where appropriate and transport arrangements may take the form of a bus pass. A change to independent travel would only take place following consultation with parents and schools.

Factors taken into account when deciding whether a child is to be offered home-to-school transport or a bus pass include:

- distance to school
- whether the journey is on a main bus route accessible to the child
- whether the child receives mobility allowance
- whether the child has serious medical problems
- whether the child has significant/complex learning difficulties which affect their ability to travel independently to school
- whether the child has a physical or sensory impairment which affects their ability to travel independently to school
- whether any severe family/personal circumstances affect a child's ability to travel to school or college
- the most cost effective mode of transport for journeys to schools and colleges outside Walsall.

Pupil attendants

The needs of each child to be accompanied will be assessed by Walsall Children's Services. Where appropriate, a pupil attendant will be provided through the contract with the vehicle operator.

Pupil attendants are responsible for the care and supervision of pupils on the journey to and from school. They will oversee the behaviour and safety of children so that the driver is unhindered in his/her duties.

Transport personnel

Criminal background checks are undertaken for all pupil attendants and drivers prior to their employment on home-to-school contracts. Following a satisfactory check, an identity badge will be issued to pupil attendants by Walsall Children's Services; this must be worn at all times and parents are asked to ensure that they only hand their child over to personnel wearing an identity badge and a Walsall Children's Services, Pupil Transport Service high visibility vest.. On occasion it may be necessary for a driver with a Private Hire (PH) licence to take on the role of pupil attendant in order to ensure that transport to/from school can be provided. These personnel must wear their PH licence identity badge.

For drivers, criminal background checks are undertaken as part of the licensing arrangements (PH licence) and an identity badge is issued by the licensing authority. Drivers with a Public Service Vehicle (PSV) licence are subject to the same background checks as pupil attendants and upon completion of a satisfactory check, an identity badge will be issued by Walsall Children's Services.

Any concerns regarding drivers/pupil attendants who fail to wear their identity badge or high visibility vests must be reported immediately to the Transport Coordinator.



Journeys covered

Where transport is provided, this will be limited to the journey to school at the beginning of the school day and the journey home at the end of the school day. There is no provision for routes to be altered to take account of medical appointments etc. Transport is not provided for work experience or to other educational settings. If a child becomes ill or is sent home because of misbehaviour, it is the responsibility of the parent to arrange for the collection of their child.

Mileage allowance

In some cases the parents of a child for whom home-to-school transport has been agreed may wish to transport their child to school in their own vehicle.

Where this is appropriate for the child's needs and is cost effective, a mileage allowance will be paid. Where mileage has been agreed by Walsall Children's Services, parents will be reimbursed for four journeys between home and school each day. The current rate is 22p per mile. Mileage allowances will be paid termly in arrears and are dependent upon the school confirming the child's attendance.

Parents who transport their child to and from school are advised to make contingency arrangements for someone else to take their child to school should their own transport suddenly become unavailable. It is not possible for Walsall Children's Services to provide alternative transport on an ad hoc or temporary basis. Parents whose transport becomes permanently unavailable should contact the Transport Coordinator to discuss alternative arrangements. It may take up to 5 working days for alternative arrangements to be set up.

Respite care

Children will be transported to/from school to respite care where this has been agreed. This may mean that a child is transported on a different vehicle to usual. Parents should give at least five working days notice of respite placements in order to enable transport arrangements to be made.

After school activities

Where arrangements do not involve the need for an additional vehicle or an additional journey, transport will be scheduled to enable a child to access after school activities at the school they attend.

Sharing information about a child

The transport contractor and personnel involved in transporting a child to school may be given confidential information relating to a child's needs which they need to be aware of. They will also be advised of any child who is prone to fits or other conditions which may affect the journey to or from school.

Vehicle occupancy

Where Walsall Children's Services agrees that a taxi is to be provided to transport an individual child to/from school and that it is appropriate for the parent to accompany the child instead of a pupil attendant, only one adult will be allowed to travel with the child.



Parental responsibilities

Parents must ensure that their child is ready for collection at the designated time and place for the journey to and from school. They are responsible for escorting their child to the vehicle for the journey to school and collecting their child from the vehicle on the journey home.

In the event of parents not being at the agreed drop off point at the scheduled time, the child will be taken to a Safe House.

Persistent failure to be ready for collection at the start or end of the school day will result in either temporary or permanent withdrawal of the transport service. In these circumstances parents would become responsible for getting their child to and from school each day.

Transport contractors must immediately notify the Transport Coordinator of any occasions when a child is not ready for collection in the morning or met at the pick-up point at the end of the school day.

Parents must provide Walsall Children's Services with emergency contact numbers which must be updated in the event of any change. Failure to do so may mean that it is not possible to contact parents in an emergency.

Behaviour

It is important that children are well behaved on journeys to and from school and that they follow instructions given by pupil attendants and drivers. Harassment, abuse and violence towards other children or personnel will not be tolerated, nor will any other behaviour which compromises their own health and safety or that of other occupants of the vehicle or results in damage to vehicles. Where a child's behaviour whilst in transit results in any of the above, transport may be withdrawn for a fixed period or permanently and/or charges for damage may be passed on to those responsible. Walsall Children's Services may refuse to transport children displaying aggressive or dangerous behaviour.

Please also see section on poor behaviour on public transport on page 8 which also applies to children with special educational needs who are travelling independently on public transport.

Post 16 students

Through on-going social and independence training, very few young people who continue their education beyond 16 years of age will require assistance with transport.

Where transport is provided by Walsall Children's Services, it will continue until the end of the school year in which a young person reaches the age of 19 years, or until they finish their course of study, providing they are attending the nearest appropriate school/college, the course is full time and they began their course on or before their 19th birthday.

The local authority publishes on its website a Post-16 Transport Policy Statement. An updated Policy Statement is published online by the 31st May each year.



Transport appeals

Parents have a right of appeal against a decision not to offer free transport for their child. Parents wishing to do so should write to the Director of Walsall Children's Services and provide full details and enclose any supporting evidence. Parents will be notified of the outcome of the appeal within 10 working days of receipt of the appeal. There is no further right of appeal unless there is a significant change in circumstances.

Complaints

Any complaints should be referred in the first instance to the Service Manager: Planning, Admissions and Transport who will arrange for the investigation of complaints from parents, children, schools, and transport contractors.

Transport policy statement for learners aged 16-18 in further education and continuing learners aged 19 and over.

Department Responsible: Planning, Admissions and Transport

1. Policy Statement 2013/14

In the West Midlands there is an extensive public transport system and for attendance less than daily there is the Ring and Ride facility which may be particularly suitable for students with disabilities.

Walsall Council will support young people to access Post- 16 education according to the policy set out below. The main priorities are to support the vulnerable, to encourage independent travel, to reduce wastage and to promote sustainable travel. Students who wish to apply for assistance may obtain concessions through the Authority or via Centro or National Express West Midlands and education provider.

Through on-going social and independence training, very few young people who continue their education beyond 16 years of age will require assistance with transport. Where transport assistance is provided by Walsall Council, it will continue until the end of the school year in which a young person reaches the age of 19 years, or until they finish their course of study, providing they are attending the nearest appropriate school/college, the course is full time and they began their course on or before their 19th birthday.

This policy statement will be updated in 2014 to reflect changes which apply for the academic year 2014/15.

2. Concessionary fares, discounts, subsidies, passes or travel cards available for learners aged 16–18.

3. What times during the day can learners use their travel pass or obtain concessionary fares?

AStars

Through the development of the Sustainable Mode of Travel strategy all schools in Walsall will be approached to join the AStars programme. AStars integrates a range of initiatives to promote and improve road safety and sustainable travel modes to reduce car use on journeys to and from school. The programme targets measures that school puts in place to encourage more children and families to walk, cycle and use public transport on the school journey.

Specific initiatives will also be available for secondary schools including Drive 2 Arrive for pre and new young drivers and the use of mobile phones whilst crossing the road. There is also further advance cycle training available.

Integrated Young People's Support Services (Prospects Information, Advice and Guidance)

IYPSS (Prospects IAG) has Internet access available in the Connexions Centre for young people to use to search for transport links; support can be provided to access the websites.

In cases of severe financial hardship IYPSS (Prospects IAG) may provide young people with bus tokens to access the Connexions Centre, training and education providers and employers for the purpose of attending interviews.

During a young person's final year at school, the IYPSS will carry out an assessment (**Learning Difficulty Assessment**) of each young person who has a "Statement of Special Educational Need" and for those students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities who will need additional support when they go on to further education or training. This assessment is used to produce a "Learner Support Plan" known in Walsall as the Moving Forward Plan (Section 139A) which outlines the support that a young person will require to access that provision and should include any transport support needed.

Further details can be obtained on our website

<http://www.connexionswalsall.co.uk/>

Where to find us:

Walsall Connexions Centre:30 Station Street, Walsall WS2 9JZ

Telephone: 01922 636333 or on Facebook: search Connexions Walsall

16 to 19 Bursary Fund

Young people who need some financial support to help them stay in education or training after 16 can apply to their school, college or training provider for the new 16 -19 Bursary Fund.

Those most in need will be eligible for a bursary of £1200* a year. This includes young people in care, care leavers, young people receiving income support and disabled young people receiving both Employment Support Allowance and Disability Living Allowance. Young people eligible for income support will include some teenage parents, young people estranged from their families and those whose parents have died.

Other students facing financial difficulties may also be able to claim a bursary to help with the costs of transport, food, equipment or other course related costs.

You have to apply directly to your school, college or training provider for a bursary. In most cases they decide on the amount you could receive, when it is paid and what conditions they might attach.

For advice speak to student support services or your tutor, or go to:

www.direct.gov/16-19bursary

**£1200 maximum bursary is correct at March 2012, but may be subject to change by the Education Funding Agency.*

Students with Special Educational Needs

If the Council undertakes to provide transport for a student with specific learning difficulties or disabilities there is no cost to the student.

Public Transport Assistance (Centro)

16-18 Photocard

There is an extensive public transport network of buses, trains and trams in the West Midlands area. Students aged 16-18 (Years 12 & 13) and in fulltime education (not less than 12 hours per week) can purchase a 'Centro 16-18 Photocard' (valid for one academic year). This photocard costs £10.00 and £5.00 to replace if the card is lost or damaged. The photocard is available by post from Centro (forms are only available from the student's school or college). The card entitles the student to pay child fares (approximately half adult cash fares) to and from school or college on buses, trains and an add on can be brought for use on the Midland Metro Service.

The card also allows students to purchase child rate season tickets.

Application forms for the Centro 16-18 photocard are only available from the school or college the student will be attending. Students cannot apply for one until they enrol. At peak times (the start of the academic year) it normally takes about ten days for the photocard to be returned.

Only season tickets valid for a term or more may be purchased as soon as they go on sale and used until 30th September without a photocard. The photocard must be in place by 1st October to continue to use the pass.

The 16-18 student concession is valid at the following times:

16-18 Photocard and Cash Fare

Monday to Friday term time only and journeys to/from the school or college only. From start of daytime services to before 0930 and from 1530 to before 1800 and, if in connection with the school or college curriculum, outside these times.

Young Person (16-18) Regional Travel card

Students who have a 16 to 18 network west midlands photocard and are staying in full time education can apply for a travel card.

Monthly - £23.00

Four week - £27.75

Term - £82.50

An add-on is available for this card which includes travel on the metro, the total cost of the card with add-on is:

Monthly - £29.00

Four week - £38.75

Term - £100.00

Student Black Country Fare saver

The fare saver is valid on all West Midland buses in the Black Country area.

It is valid all day, seven days a week and is available to students who are not entitled to a 16-18 photocard but are still in full time education. **One Term** - £118

Term Network Zones 1 to 5 (All Zones Included)

This pass allows unlimited bus, metro and train travel. Tickets also cover bus services to some areas outside of the network West Midlands area. **One Term**- £232

For further information on the areas covered in the five zones go to:

www.tickets.networkwestmidlands.co.uk

Term Network Zones 1 and 2 Only

This pass allows unlimited bus and train travel, the metro is not included with this pass. Tickets also cover bus services to some areas outside of the network West Midlands area. For further information on the areas covered in

the two zones go to: www.tickets.networkwestmidlands.co.uk **One Term**- £187

16-18 Photocard and NX West Midlands Scholar's Ticket

Scholar's tickets are not available for retail sale but may be provided for those students with Learning Difficulties and/or Disabilities from the LA, and are only valid on Travel West Midlands services. Valid Monday to Friday term time only and journeys to/from the school or college only. From start of daytime services to before 0930 and from 1530 to before 1800 and, if in connection with the school or college curriculum, any time up to 2215.

16-18 Photocard and Network Scholar Season Ticket

As above but valid on any operator's bus and train and Metro within the West Midlands County.

16-18 Photocard and Term Network

On sale 3 times per year, Autumn, Winter and Spring term, each pass covers a school term. Valid on any bus, train or tram within the West Midlands

County. 16-18 photocard with child rate season ticket is valid whenever the ticket is valid including weekends and holidays.

16-18 Photocard and NX West Midlands Term Plus

On sale 3 times per year usually Autumn, Winter and Spring term, each pass covers a school term. The term plus pass can be used all day, every day on all Travel West Midlands bus services during its validity, including weekends, evenings and relevant holidays. Can usually be purchased in August without a valid 16-18 Photocard providing person is eligible for and obtains one no later than 1st October in relevant year. Tel no 0121 254 7272 for confirmation. Not valid on certain special services.

Centro – WMPTE Free Travel Pass

Centro organizes travel concessions for visually impaired and people with certain eligible disabilities. It is available to all age groups 5 upwards providing they are a permanent resident in the West Midlands. A free permit is provided for use on bus, rail and Midland Metro services valid at the following times:

Mondays to Fridays 0930hrs to end of daytime service

Weekends and Bank Holidays anytime. There are also 'add-on' tickets that can be purchased to allow pre 9.30am weekday travel.

The Black Country fare saver, the term network passes and the regional travel card are also available to students 18 and over in full time education (minimum of 12 hours).

4. Please confirm that support will continue to be made available to learners who reach 19 whilst continuing on a course.

Where transport is provided by Walsall Council, it will continue until the end of the school year in which a young person reaches the age of 19 years, or until they finish their course of study, providing they are attending the nearest appropriate school/college, the course is full time and they began their course on or before their 19th birthday.

5. How will learners be assessed to see if they are eligible for support?

For pupils who had a statement of special education needs at the age of 16, Walsall Children's Services Special Needs Team will assess the transport needs of a student continuing in full time education.

- SEN/Disability transport - Council provides either taxi or bus pass, depending on the student's ability to use public transport. Students considered are those for whom a statement of SEN was maintained prior to age 16 and for attendance at an approved institution (see Q6). The decision on the student's ability to use public transport is made jointly with the college or school concerned.
- 16-19 Bursary Fund – Students most in need will be eligible to receive a bursary of £1200 a year. This group includes:
 - People in care
 - Care leavers
 - People claiming income support
 - Disabled young people who receive Employment Support Allowance and Disability Living Allowance

<p>6. What help do you provide for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities including those over 19 or learners facing other difficulties in following their courses?</p>
<p>Walsall Council provides free bus passes for 16 to 19 year old pupils with a statement of educational needs who meet the eligibility criteria attending maintained schools. These are intended to enable the students to complete their courses and to develop independence skills.</p>
<p>7. Mobility/independence training for learners who face difficulty with transport.</p>
<p>Walsall special schools provide independence training for their students as appropriate to their individual needs.</p>
<p>8. When should learners start to apply for transport support?</p>
<p>Pupils with a statement of special educational needs do not need to apply for transport support themselves, as when they receive their statement Walsall Children's Services Special Needs Team decide whether transport provision is required and if appropriate issue a request to the Planning, Admissions and Transport Team. Transport requirements are reassessed as appropriate.</p>
<p>9. What help can learners apply for if they need to travel to a course that is beyond your LA area?</p>
<p>Students who need to travel to a course outside the borough of Walsall should contact Walsall Children's Services Transport Team.</p>
<p>10. What help is available for learners who attend a further education institution which is beyond daily travelling distance and they need to stay away?</p>
<p>Some pupils with a statement of special educational needs attend out of borough educational provision. The needs of these pupils are assessed by the Special Needs Team to determine the level of support required which is then funded by Walsall Children's Services.</p>
<p>11. Please provide information about all points of contact for learners seeking transport support, e.g. LA/college, bus company contact. Please include any websites and e-mail addresses.</p>
<p>Planning, Admissions and Transport Walsall Children's Services Education Development Centre Pelsall Lane Rushall Walsall WS4 1NG Telephone: 01922 686363 Fax: 01922 686440 Email: linda.beech@edu.walsall.gov.uk</p> <p>Centro 16 Summer Lane Birmingham B19 3SD Telephone: 0845 303 6760 Website: www.networkwestmidlands.com</p>

Travel West Midlands

Telephone: 0121 254 7272

Email: travelcare@travelwm.co.uk

Website: www.travelwm.co.uk