



LUTON BOROUGH COUNCIL

LIFELONG LEARNING DEPARTMENT

HOME TO SCHOOL

TRANSPORT POLICIES

EFFECTIVE FROM APRIL 2000

POLICIES FOR THE PROVISION OF MAINSTREAM TRANSPORT

These policies relate to the provision of transport for children of statutory school age attending mainstream schools. The provision of transport will be arranged in accordance with the policies set out below.

ELIGIBILITY FOR LEA PROVISION

1. Transport will not usually be provided to the local catchment area mainstream school unless the pupil meets the standard mileage criteria. (two miles under eight years of age and three miles for children of eight years or over).
2. In determining entitlement to free transport, the route used in assessing the distance is the shortest available walking route following footpaths with street lighting.
3. Transport can be provided irrespective of distance on road safety grounds if the journey to the catchment area school would involve the use of roads without footpaths or lighting.
4. Free transport will be provided for children wishing to attend their nearest school, if this is not the designated catchment area school, where the distance from the pupil's place of residence to the school is over the prescribed distance or where this would otherwise be justified on road safety grounds.
5. Children attending mainstream schools which are the parents preferred choice under the Education Act 1996, will not be eligible for LEA provided transport to and from school.
6. Transport is provided to the nearest maintained religious or voluntary aided denominational school provided that relevant religious and distance criteria are met irrespective of whether or not the school is within Luton.
7. The policy with regard to the provision of transport to single sex schools is as follows: -
 - 7.1. Transport to single sex schools will not be supported unless the school concerned is the catchment area school or the school closest to the family home, where the usual transport criteria will apply.
 - 7.2. Similarly, if the catchment area or closest school, is a single sex establishment, transport will not be provided to enable the child to attend a mixed school.
 - 7.3. This policy will apply to denominational, religious and mainstream schools whether in Luton or out-borough.
8. Transport can be provided to the catchment area school on medical grounds for either short-term provision where a child has a temporary medical problem or on a long-term basis if the child has a particular long-term medical problem. In both cases recommendations must be received from the Health Authority's Community Medical Officer.
9. Pupils who live in a joint home arrangement, who fulfil the other criteria for free transport will be provided with transport from the home where they live for the greater part of the week to the catchment area school or the nearest school to that home.

10. When the family of Year 10 and 11 pupils attending their catchment area school in Luton move out of the catchment area, but remain in Luton, the pupils will be offered a bus pass to their current school, subject to meeting the standard mileage criteria.
11. A bus pass will be offered to pupils of secondary school age, whose parents have moved into or within Luton after the normal transfer age and have expressed a preference for their new catchment area school, but are unable to attend the catchment area school due to pupil numbers in the appropriate age group. This is subject to next nearest school with spare capacity in the appropriate year group by the shortest walking route meeting the standard mileage criteria.
12. Assistance at the standard parental rate for transport will be offered to the parents of pupils of primary school age, whose parents have moved into or within Luton after the normal transfer age and have expressed a preference for their new catchment area school, but are unable to attend the catchment area school due to pupil numbers in the appropriate age group. This is subject to next nearest school with spare capacity in the appropriate year group by the shortest walking route meeting the standard mileage criteria.
13. A bus pass or transport, as determined by the Pupil Placement Panel, will be offered to pupils of secondary school age, who have been placed in a non catchment area secondary school by the pupil placement panel. This is subject to the standard mileage criteria.
14. When the family of a pupil attending their catchment area school is temporarily re-housed due to domestic violence or due to exceptional circumstances such as flooding or fire, all such case should be with the agreement of the Director of Education, receive transport for a limited period of 3 months. A bus pass will be offered to pupils of secondary school age and assistance at the standard parental rate for transport will be offered to the parents of pupils of primary school age.

OTHER GENERAL POLICIES

15. Rail passes and/or bus season tickets for public service routes can be issued to pupils and students.
16. Parents/students may be able to claim mileage allowances for transport to and from school/college if there is no contracted or public service transport available.
17. Where pupils live within statutory walking distance or do not otherwise qualify for free transport, a charge may be made for "spare seats" in the school 'bus provided for pupils entitled to free transport and the route is operated on a contract basis". Charges for this concessionary transport are:
 - 17.1. Charged for on a termly basis.
 - 17.2. Waived in respect of pupils in receipt of Income Support.
 - 17.3. Revised annually by the Retail Price Index (all items) for April, to come into effect from September for the full academic year or at other times by committee decision.
 - 17.4. Issued on a first come first served basis where demand for places exceeds availability.
 - 17.5. Not available on routes registered as public service routes.

18. The general policy on the provision of escorts on contracted vehicles carrying children to and from a mainstream school is as follows:
 - 18.1. One escort to be provided where the driver is in a separate enclosed cab.
 - 18.2. One escort to be provided on double deck vehicles.
 - 18.3. One escort to be provided on vehicles used to carry senior school children together with infant and/or junior school children.
 - 18.4. One escort to be provided on coaches and 'buses which are fitted with seatbelts.
19. All minibuses of 9-16 seats supplied by contractors must have forward facing seats and must be fitted with lap and diagonal seatbelts.
20. Minibuses operated, hired or borrowed by schools must have forward facing seats and must be fitted with lap and diagonal seatbelts.
21. Parents remain responsible for their children before they board the vehicle in the morning and after they alight at night.
22. Parents will be expected to instruct their children to wear their seatbelts whenever these are provided.
23. Smoking is prohibited on all council owned vehicles when used for the transportation of school children and is a condition of hire of contractors' vehicles.

LONG-TERM MEDICAL TRANSPORT

24. That the pupils needs/requirements are assessed by the Health Authority's Community Medical Officer.
25. That the long-term physical disability does not significantly affect the pupils learning ability therefore they do not require a Statement of Special Educational Needs.
26. That the pupil is currently attending their catchment area school, but due to the nature of their disability the pupil is not able to fully access the school due to the geography of the school.
27. That the parent/guardian makes an application to the Education Department for admission to the nearest alternative school which is best able to met their child's needs. This placement should be decided by a designated officer of the LEA.

THAT THE PUPIL REMAINS AT THE DESIGNATED SCHOOL UNTIL AT THE AGE OF TRANSFER WHEN THEIR NEEDS/REQUIREMENTS WILL BE RE-ASSESSED BEFORE DETERMINING PLACEMENT INTO THE NEXT APPROPRIATE SCHOOL

POLICIES FOR THE PROVISION OF SPECIAL EDUCATION TRANSPORT

INTRODUCTION

1. These policies relate to the provision of transport for pupils with Special Educational Needs who either have a statement of Special Educational Needs or are undergoing statutory assessment under the Education Act 1996. Transport will usually be provided only to special schools or recognised special units within mainstream schools. Transport will not usually be provided for pupils with special educational needs to the local catchment area or closest mainstream school unless they meet the standard mileage criteria, or SPAG determines that these criteria should be modified in a particular circumstance. (Two miles under eight years of age and three miles for children of eight years or over). The provision of transport will be arranged in accordance with the policies set out below.

GENERAL POLICIES

ELIGIBILITY

2. Children will only be transported:
 - 2.1. Between home and the special school or nominated provision attached to a mainstream school deemed to be appropriate by the LEA.
 - 2.2. Between home and the special school at which a child is being assessed as part of the statutory assessment process (transport for one parent only may be provided for a maximum of 6 visits where spare seats are available on the relevant vehicle).
 - 2.3. Between home and the early years education centre (transport for one parent only may be provided for a limited period if necessary and appropriate).
 - 2.4. Between home and the recognised SEN provision at a designated nursery school for pre-statutory school age children.
3. A child will be eligible for LEA provided transport where one or more of the following criteria apply:
 - 3.1. Where the Statutory Provision & Assessment Group (SPAG) or the Pupil Placement Panel decides that transport is necessary because the level of the child's needs makes it impossible for them to travel either independently or escorted by a responsible adult.
 - 3.2. Where the provision deemed appropriate is more than two miles from the home of a child under eight years of age and over three miles for children of eight years or over.
4. Parents whose child has been refused transport under the above criteria may request transport from the transport officer provided the following criteria can be met:
 - 4.1. That both the child attending the special provision and one or more of her/his siblings is below the age of 11 and,

- 4.2. That because of the geographical location of the mainstream catchment school attended by the children of the family it is considered unreasonable to expect the parents to deliver the children to their respective schools without assistance and,
- 4.3. That the family are unable to use a network of support from family and friends to assist in taking the children to school.
5. Under these circumstances transport would be provided for a limited period which would cease at the end of the academic year in which either the child attending the special provision or her/his siblings reaches the age of 11. In any case this provision would be reviewed on an annual basis and could be withdrawn if circumstances no longer make it appropriate.
6. All transport provision will be reviewed on a regular basis as part of the annual review, and can be withdrawn if circumstances have changed.
7. Children, eligible for free transport under the two criteria in paragraph 2, attending schools alternative to the lea designated school through parental preference will be eligible for transport if the preferred school is closer to home than the designated school. Where the preferred school is further from home than the designated school, transport will not be provided.
8. Transport should be provided until the child leaves school but not beyond the end of the academic year when the child reaches the age of 19 years.
9. If parents move home within Luton or the child is placed in long term foster care and the lea takes the decision that the child should transfer to a school nearer their new home address then, for continuity, transport will continue to be available to the current school until the end of the academic year. However, if parents wish their child to attend the original school, transport becomes their responsibility.
10. Where a child is eligible for lea provided transport and the parents choose to provide this transport themselves a mileage reimbursement will be paid.

RESIDENTIAL PLACEMENTS

11. Boarding arrangements for residential schools can be one of the following:
 - 11.1. Termly boarding
 - 11.2. 12 day boarding
 - 11.3. Weekly boarding
 - 11.4. 12 week placement
12. With regard to termly boarding schools, transport will only be provided at the beginning and end of each term and at the beginning and end of the mid-term holiday.
13. With regard to 12-day boarding, transport will be provided on alternate weekends and at the beginning and end of each term.
14. With regard to weekly boarding, transport will be provided to school on Monday and from school on Friday each week.

15. For those few students who require 52 week placement, the LEA will provide transport up to a maximum of three return journeys per year.
16. In the interests of the efficient use of resources the LEA will, in all cases, encourage parents to transport their own child for which appropriate reimbursement will be made.
17. The cost of one parent attending one statement review per year at schools outside the Bedfordshire area will be met by the Education Department by the reimbursement, at the appropriate rate, of car mileage or by the provision of a travel warrant. No other additional costs (e.g. Other members of the family, friends, etc.) Will be met by the Education Department.
18. One parent/carer may be transported with the child to act as an escort to out-borough schools where it results in the efficient use of the LEA's resources.
19. For all boarding arrangements any additional journey to those laid out above will remain the responsibility of the parent/carer.
20. When the cost of the residential placement is shared between the education and social services departments, then the cost of any transport will also be shared.

INTEGRATION INTO MAINSTREAM

21. The policy relating to transport provided for integration purposes shown below will apply as an interim measure until decisions have been taken regarding the possible reorganisation of Luton special schools. The policy will then be reconsidered.
22. Pupils who attend special schools often take part in integration programmes with mainstream schools. It will be expected that the integration programme would involve attendance at the local catchment area school to enable the parent/carer to take or collect the child, unless that school cannot meet the Special Education Needs of the pupil. If more than one child is attending the school for integration, arrangements should be made for the children to attend on the same day and share transport. If the pupil attends a special school outside of Luton then the Authority responsible for the special school will organise any integration transport. Transport will not be provided for mainstream pupils visiting special schools.

PARENTAL RESPONSIBILITIES

23. Parents/carers must ensure that the child is ready to be picked up at the agreed time and must take the child from their home to the vehicle.
24. Parents/carers must ensure that an appropriate person is available to receive their child at the home at the agreed time and must collect the child from the vehicle.
25. Parents/carers are responsible for informing the school of any change in circumstances such as change of address, sickness, hospitalisation etc.
26. In normal circumstances the LEA will arrange for suitable seating to be provided. On occasions, where this presents particular and short term difficulties, parents will be asked to allow the lea to use any specialist seating provided by themselves for their child.

27. Parents will be expected to instruct their child to wear a seat belt or safety harness whenever these are provided.
28. Parents are responsible for the behaviour of their child whilst being transported and should remind their child good behaviour is paramount for the safety of all on board the transport.

SCHOOL/PROVISION RESPONSIBILITIES

29. The school/unit is responsible for informing the education transport team of any changes to existing transport arrangements, including address changes, sickness, hospitalisation, etc. The Special Educational Needs Assessment Team should also be advised of address changes on the appropriate form.
30. The school/unit is responsible, in conjunction with the transport team, for liaising directly with the parent/carer and the taxi company to work out a strategy to deal with a pupil's inappropriate behaviour whilst being transported.
31. Where there are problems regarding the standard of service provided by contractors the school/unit should make the initial complaint direct to the contractor. If the problems cannot be resolved at this level the complaint should be referred to the transport team.

LEA RESPONSIBILITIES

32. The LEA will endeavour to transport children in the shortest possible time and will investigate all possible alternatives if the travel time, one way, exceeds one hour fifteen minutes. Where possible, adjustments will be made to transport arrangements to reduce travel time to less than one hour fifteen minutes provided this can be achieved without a significant increase in transport costs.
33. The time-scale for arranging transport will be a maximum of 15 working days from receipt of the completed paperwork from the school by the Education Transport Team. Transport will usually commence on a Monday.
34. Transport to schools for children with moderate learning difficulties will usually be arranged on a localised pick-up point basis and for children over 11 years of age the option of a bus pass will be offered.
35. For all children other than MLD the pick-up and drop-off point will be as close as possible to the address at which they usually live. Consideration can be given in exceptional circumstances to requests for alternative permanent pick-up/drop-off points, provided the routes can accommodate this change at no extra cost. Requests should be made in writing by parents to the Education Transport Team.
36. An escort will be provided on all coach and mini-bus routes. Consideration will be given to providing additional escorts, when requested by the school/unit or contractors, on the grounds of driver safety, medical, physical or behavioural needs.
37. Whenever possible transport for respite care or family link care will be arranged using existing routes. The child's normal transport route will usually still operate.
38. The cost of transport from school to respite care or family link care establishments will be met from the Education Department funds unless the alternative arrangements incur significant additional costs. Where a respite care/family link care placement will incur such

additional expenditure it will be the responsibility of the Social Services Department or the Area Health Authority to assess the need and identify any additional funding.

39. Arrangements for transport to respite care/family link care establishments can be co-ordinated by the Education Transport Team in consultation with the Social Services Department. Both departments will co-operate to ensure that the most effective use is made of borough council resources.
40. The provision of transport will always be considered when deciding whether a placement represents an efficient use of resources