



Home to School Travel in Redcar and Cleveland



**A guide for children,
young people, parents
and carers**



Introduction

This guide provides information on the transport service we provide and outlines the standards we expect in return. The standards ensure that we offer a service that is safe, comfortable, and reliable and represents value for money for all passengers. This guide is divided into four parts:

- Part A: For all users of transport
- Part B: For those using dedicated minibuses/taxis
- Part C: General information
- Part D: Safeguarding on transport

If you are assessed as being eligible for support for home to school travel costs, you may be offered one of the following:

- A travel permit for travel to school using public transport
- Contribution to costs of travel (mileage expenses)
- A seat on a vehicle (coach / minibus/ taxi) which will be appropriate to the individual needs of passengers

Please note that a charge may be made for travel passes.

We may also offer escorts to accompany children along walking routes, for example if both parents have a disability preventing them from accompanying their child and they are unable to make alternate arrangements.

If you have a mobility car allocated to support your child you may be offered mileage expenses to cover the cost of fuel used for the home to school journey.

Part A - for all users of transport

Behaviour

Children and young people need to be aware that their actions on the school journey could have very serious consequences. We will take action against anyone failing to meet the required standards.

Passenger rules:

- Always carry your pass when using school transport and this must be produced when boarding the vehicle. Travel may be refused without a valid pass. There is a charge of £12.00 for replacement permits that have been lost or damaged. School can offer a temporary permit up to 5 days only.
- Behave in a courteous and safe manner which does not threaten the health, safety or comfort of other passengers, staff or other road users. Bullying will not be tolerated.
- Remain seated in the vehicle during travel and always use the seatbelts.
- Respect the rights and feelings of others
- Store baggage in appropriate spaces or under seats. Bags should not be left in aisles or on seats.
- Leave the vehicle in a clean and tidy condition, taking any litter with you.
- Do not eat or drink on school transport.
- Do not smoke on transport which includes the use of E-Cigarettes. Lighters and matches must not to be brought onto vehicles.

Safe travel rules:

- Stand on the pavement, well back from the road, when waiting for a bus. It is dangerous to play around at bus stops.
- Wait for people to get off the bus before getting on
- Follow the driver's instructions and do not distract them
- If you do need to cross the road after getting off a bus, wait for it to move away first. This allows other road users to see you and for you to check that it is safe to cross.

Sanctions

The journey to and from school is regarded as part of the school day, and as such, 'school rules' must be followed. The Council will work with schools and colleges to manage standards of behaviour on vehicles. The following sanctions may be applied:

- Fixed term or permanent exclusion from transport
- Billing parents/guardians for the cost of any damage caused to the vehicle by their children

- Reporting acts of vandalism, theft, assault (verbal and physical) to the police and to the school / college for further action

Please be aware if transport is withdrawn, the Council will not provide any alternative travel arrangements and all transport costs will fall on to parents.

CCTV

All vehicles will be fitted with CCTV cameras. Recorded images will be used to identify those responsible for any poor behaviour and damage. The images which are of 'prosecution quality' will be used to support any action.

Time keeping

The transport service needs to operate to time. This means that you also need to be ready on time. Buses/taxis will not wait for those who are late. If you miss the bus, it will be your responsibility to get to school at your own expense. Bad weather, traffic incidents and road works can all lead to delays but if you are concerned over our service, please let us know.

Bad weather

In the event of extreme weather, the transport service may need to be withdrawn or sent early. We make decisions based on local information and there will be times for safety reasons when we will need to withdraw certain services. You are advised to contact us or your child's school for updates in the event of bad weather. Regular updates will be posted on the Council's website, Twitter and Facebook pages. There will also be times when schools need to close early and transport will be brought in as soon as it is available. The staff in the school will make every effort to inform you when this happens so that you can be at home to meet your children.

The driver has discretion to alter the route in accordance with prevailing road conditions and will attempt where safe to drop children at the usual drop off points.

Winter Plan

During times of adverse weather such as snow/ice, access into some residential streets for our buses can be very difficult and we may invoke our 'Winter Plan'. Should this be triggered you will be asked to bring your child to a different pick up point, for example to a main road. The driver or passenger assistant will inform you of any change in the arrangements. You will then need to be at this location for their return trip home.

Approved operators, vehicles and drivers

We only use approved operators for providing transport services. Such companies are required to provide vehicles that are clean, roadworthy and fit for purpose. The same vehicle should normally be used each day although there will be occasions when a change is needed for example when vehicles are off the road for maintenance.

We only use approved drivers to provide transport services. We try to minimise changes in drivers and it should usually be the same driver each day to collect your children for both journeys. There will be occasions when a change of driver is necessary, but this should be the exception. Approved drivers are subject to an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check and must also attend further driver training. Drivers can be identified by the 'Approved Photo ID badges' which they should wear whilst driving school buses or taxis.

They should drive in a safe manner and must obey the Highway Code and speed limits at all times. They should be polite and respectful of passengers and other road users and should avoid using language that may cause offence. Drivers should not smoke at least 30 minutes before picking up children. If you have any concerns over the vehicle or driver, please let us know.

Part B – Dedicated minibuses and taxis

This section provides advice for those using minibuses and taxis for the journey to and from school and college.

Passenger assistants

Passenger assistants (escorts) may be appointed to support the needs of young people on transport. Escorts are subject to enhanced DBS checks and are provided with a range of training. Escorts can be identified by their official photo-ID badge/uniform. If you have any concerns over the escort please let us know as soon as possible.

It is important that we provide as much consistency in our services for young people from home, on transport, and in school. We welcome positive suggestions from parents on how we can improve the journey for your children.

Pick up and drop off

Some children and young people on dedicated transport will be picked up and dropped off at their home address, although others will have alternative pick up and drop off points identified. It is the responsibility of parents/carers to get children ready for pick up on time in the morning and to be at the drop off for their return. It is not always possible to provide a door to door service.

If you are not at the drop off point on time we may be unable to return your child until you get there. We will wait for a maximum five minutes. If you have a second nominated drop-off address, for use in emergency situations only, which is close to your home, then we will try this address but we may charge for the additional costs incurred. If we are unable to drop off your child, we will have no option but to pass them onto Children's Services. They will then make every effort to contact you, but, if they fail, they may need to find an emergency foster placement for your child for the night.

Please be aware that the Council will withdraw transport arrangements for any parents/carers who repeatedly cause inconvenience for the service and distress for their children in this way. We may also pass on any additional costs to you (fuel/staffing).

Passengers using wheelchairs

We will only carry passengers in wheelchairs that are appropriate for use on transport. All wheelchairs will be subject to review to ensure that we comply with this standard. Once approved, the wheelchairs will be fitted with a tag.

Transport will not be provided for any passengers using a wheelchair that has not been appropriately inspected and tagged. Wheelchairs will be secured to the vehicle using appropriate four-point restraints. Additionally a floor mounted seat belt will also be provided for use by the passenger. Use of posture belts are not a suitable substitute for a seatbelt.

Review of transport

The provision of transport is reviewed on an annual basis. No changes to transport will be considered until an assessment is carried out. As children get older and of course in line with their individual development, the emphasis for the review will be focused towards independent travel.

Listening to our passengers

We want to hear from our passengers on the standard of service we provide and how we can personalise and improve our service. As part of this, passengers will be asked to complete a personal 'bus profile' telling us what they do and do not like about the journey. This will be developed with the support of staff from the school and will provide key information to enable us to provide a more tailored service. For example:

- Where do they like to sit on the bus?
- What are their likes/dislikes are about using our transport?

Furthermore, we will review our services annually with the assistance of a travel survey completed by all passengers, and where appropriate, their parents/carers.

Part C – General Information

Concerns and complaints

We rely on feedback from children, young people, parents and carers on the level of service we provide. Please let us know as soon as possible if you are unhappy with the service or wish to complain. It helps if you can provide as much detail as possible; date, name of driver, frequency, what happened etc. Leaving problems to build up does not help and without key information it can be very difficult to challenge drivers and transport operators.

We also welcome compliments and positive suggestions for improvement.

Changing address

If you are planning to move address, please let us know as your travel arrangements may be affected.

Part D - Safeguarding and safety on transport

The safeguarding of children and young people on transport remains our top priority. All drivers and passenger assistants attend annual training sessions in 'safeguarding' and our buses and minibuses display information on who to contact should anyone have any concerns or need advice over any potential safeguarding issues.

Officers from the Council will regularly monitor the quality of the transport service and will carry out both random and planned checks / visits to ensure that our drivers and passengers assistants are working to the standards we

expect and the vehicles in operation are well maintained and roadworthy. Any failings in this regard are dealt with instantly to ensure the safety of our services at all times.

If you wish to report any concerns, please contact Growth, Enterprise and Environment Services on 01642 776906.

Independent Travel Training Program

We will work closely with schools and individuals to develop the independent travel skills of young people, where appropriate. Travel training is the process by which a person learns to make a trip between two places on their own and with safety. This trip could be as simple as finding their own way to the corner shop or as complicated as undertaking a multi-component journey to another town or city.

The independent travel program aims to reduce need and reliance on transport services. By participating in the independent travel training program, you are making a positive lifestyle choice. Travel training will allow an individual to develop the confidence and skills needed to travel alone in a safe way, making it easier for them to make new friends, meet up with existing friends, access employment, college, or training and become more independent in other areas of their life.

If you think your child would benefit from independent travel training, please contact our **Independent travel trainer** on 01642 776926 or emma.birtles@redcar-cleveland.gov.uk

Other contacts:

Website: www.redcar-cleveland.gov.uk

Email: transport@redcar-cleveland.gov.uk

Phone: 01642 776906/ 01642 444974