

NOTTINGHAMSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

HOME TO SCHOOL TRANSPORT POLICY

SEPT 07 - SEPT 08

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HOME TO SCHOOL TRANSPORT; COMPULSORY SCHOOL AGED PUPILS (UNDER 16 YEARS OLD)

1. INTRODUCTION

This document sets out Nottinghamshire County Council's policy for the provision of school transport services and travel assistance. This policy is compliant with the new duties and powers of local authorities set out in the Education and Inspections Act 2006. It applies to all admissions to schools on and after 1 September 2007, and also sets out the additional extended rights to free transport for low income groups for secondary school pupils, which come into force in September 2008.

This policy can be viewed in conjunction with the following;

- Nottinghamshire Sustainable School Travel Strategy 2007 – 2011
(link <http://www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/gettingtoschool.htm>)
- Nottinghamshire Post -16 Transport Policy
(link <http://www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/schooltravel-post16.htm>)

The Home to School Transport policy of Nottinghamshire County Council will operate within the aims and objectives of the Council's Strategic Plan (link <http://www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/altogetherbetter.htm>) and the Children and Young Peoples' Plan)link <http://www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/changeforchildren/changeforchildrenandyoungpeoplechildrenyoungpeoplesplan.htm>) and ensure that the Council fulfils its statutory obligations. Within that context the aim of the policy is to provide a high quality transport service as efficiently and economically as possible, designed to ensure that pupils get to school within a reasonable time and travel in a safe and stress free environment. The policy will have regard to the school admission arrangements within the County.

2. TRAVEL ASSISTANCE TO QUALIFYING SCHOOLS

2.1 Entitlements to Home to School Transport

The new schedule 35B to the 1996 Act (inserted by the Education and Inspections Act) includes an extension of rights to free school travel arrangements for children in low income groups, i.e; those entitled to free school meals and those whose families are entitled to their maximum level of Working Tax Credit. These duties come into force from September 2007 for primary age children and in September 2008 for pupils of secondary school age.

2.2 Summary of Entitlements

(Unless specified these arrangements will become effective from September 2007)

2.2.1 Children aged 'rising 5'

Children aged 'rising five' are entitled to free transport to their nearest qualifying (catchment area) school up to one term before the term in which they are five, if that school is 2 miles or more from home. Free transport to a preferred school is only available if that school is 2 miles or more from home and closer than the catchment area school.

Children may travel on a contracted school bus accompanied by a parent or an escort provided approval is given by the Nottinghamshire Transport Service (NTS). If the bus is hired as an 'exclusive contract' this facility cannot be offered.

Children who enrol two or more terms before they are five may be entitled to travel assistance if they have significant Special Educational Needs (SEN). This will be assessed by Inclusion Support (IS), County Hall. Significant SEN would be indicated by:

- (a) the child having a statement of SEN
- (b) the initiation of formal assessment
- (c) the provision of a significant level of additional support in school

2.2.2 Children Aged 5-8 years

Children of compulsory school age who are under the age of eight are entitled to free school transport to their nearest qualifying (catchment area) school if it is 2 miles or more from home. Free transport to a preferred school is only available if that school is 2 miles or more from home and closer than the catchment area school.

2.2.3 Children aged 8-11 years

Children aged between eight and eleven are entitled to free transport where they live 3 or more miles from their nearest qualifying (catchment area) school. Free transport to a preferred school is only available if that school is 3 miles or more from home and closer than the catchment area school.

Children aged between eight and eleven from low income families are entitled to free transport where they live 2 miles or more from their nearest qualifying (catchment area) school. Free transport to a preferred school is only available if that school is 2 miles or more from home and closer than the catchment area school.

2.2.4 Children aged 11-16 years

Pupils of secondary school age 11 – 16 are entitled to free transport to their nearest qualifying (catchment) school if that school is 3 miles or more from home. Free transport to a preferred school is only available if that school is 3 miles or more from home and closer than the catchment area school. (For pupils attending a school on the grounds of religion or belief see 2.2.7.)

2.2.5 Children aged 11 – 16 years in low income groups (from September 1st 2008)

Pupils of secondary school age from low income families are entitled to free transport to one of the three nearest qualifying schools (catchment or preferred) between 2 and 6 miles from their home.

2.2.6 Children aged 5 – 11 attending schools on grounds of religion or belief

Children of primary school age from low income families attending the nearest suitable school preferred on grounds of religion or belief are eligible for free transport where the school is between 2 and 20 miles from their home (*see section 18 for details).

Children of primary school age attending the nearest suitable school preferred on grounds of religion or belief but not eligible for free transport are eligible for subsidised transport where the school is between 2 and 20 miles from their home age 5 – 8 years or between 3 and 20 miles age 8 – 11 years (*see section 18 for details).

2.2.7 Children aged 11 – 16 attending schools on grounds of religion or belief

From 1st September 2007, pupils of secondary school age from low income families may travel free to the nearest suitable school preferred on grounds of religion or belief, where the school is between 3 and 25 miles from their home (* see section 18 for details). From 1st September 2008 this applies between 2 and 25 miles.

From 1st September 2007, Pupils of secondary school age attending the nearest suitable school preferred on grounds of religion or belief but not

eligible for free transport are eligible for subsidised transport where the school is between 3 and 25 miles from their home (*see section 18 for details).

Children who would ordinarily be eligible for transport support and who repeat a year in school will retain that transport eligibility whilst in that particular phase of education.

3. ADMISSION OF PUPILS AGED UNDER 16 TO COLLEGES OF FURTHER EDUCATION (CFE)

Where a pupil of statutory school age attends a CFE in lieu of school then travel assistance will only be considered where the LA determines that the college should be treated as the qualifying institution. Placements determined by the school or parents will be treated as preference decisions and no assistance will be offered by NCC.

For under 16 year olds attending college full-time the travel assistance procedures are as follows:

- (a) if it is a parental preference, then normal rules as to a preferred school apply
- (b) if the pupil's previous school has recommended the attendance at a CFE, then that school is expected to pay travel costs. Assistance rules are then as for a qualifying school. Applications for travel assistance should be sent to NTS, who will then inform the school of the cost if the local authority (via EWO/LEO) has recommended the move, then travel assistance will be determined in accordance with section 2 of this policy.

4. POST -16 STUDENTS

Students enrolling at a school sixth form or a college of further education may take advantage of subsidised fares under the Nottinghamshire Post 16 Transport Policy.

5. CHILDREN WITH STATEMENTS OF SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

If the Assistant Education Officer (SEN) or the Head of Service for children with statements considers that because of overriding educational, social or other reasons a school other than the local school should be deemed the qualifying (designated) school, then travel assistance will be based on the age and walking distance criteria to that school.

6. MEASURING THE STATUTORY DISTANCES

In most cases distances are measured from the home address to school using the nearest available walking route.

In the case of low income groups the minimum statutory distances are measured by using the nearest available walking route. Distances above that are measured by using the nearest route accessible by a vehicle.

Where there is a change to the walking route (i.e. the building of a new road or path), which brings the home to school distance within the prescribed distance, pupils will no longer be entitled to free transport. This change will affect all pupils after parents have been provided with a reasonable period of notice, which is normally one term.

7. SINGLE PARENTS AND DUAL PARENTAL HOMES

No exemptions from the standard assessment criteria will be given to children with only one parent.

For children whose parents no longer live at the same address, it must be decided by the parents which home is their chosen address for travel assistance purposes. Assistance to both homes will not be provided.

8. WALKING DISTANCE EXEMPTIONS

Pupils living within the available walking distance limits and attending the qualifying school will be eligible for free travel if:

(a) The pupil has a special transport need that requires the provision of transport for them to access and attend school. The special transport need is assessed by the local authority, drawing upon medical and other advice, as required. A special transport need may arise where the pupil:

- is unable to walk
- lives within the walking distance but is unable to walk safely to school accompanied by a parent/carer
- is unable to use public transport without assistance

(b) Medical Grounds

Transport may be provided for pupils who are temporarily incapacitated and unable to walk to or from school. Parents should obtain from either the hospital or their family doctor, a certificate or letter stating that the pupil is fit to return to school if transport arrangements are made. The parent should send this authorisation to Children and Young People's Department (CYPD) who will then make the necessary arrangements.

(c) Following consultation with officers of NTS it is decided that there are exceptional circumstances in an individual case.

9. REVIEW OF TRANSPORT DECISIONS

A parent has the right to a review of a decision that free transport is not available.

This should be set out on form TA2, which specifies 3 categories

- (a) That the distance has been wrongly measured – this will be rechecked by NTS;
- (b) That the walking route measured is not available – this will be reassessed by NTS;
- (c) That there are other exceptional reasons pertinent to the specific appeal – these will be reviewed by the CYPD.

Should a review find in the parents' favour then free travel will be backdated to the start of the academic year in which the appeal is made.

The LA may consider the following as exceptional circumstances.

10. DISABLED PARENTS

In the case where one or both of the parents are registered disabled then assistance will be judged on the individual circumstances. Free travel or an escort will be provided – whichever is appropriate and provides best value.

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For children at foster or community homes the qualifying school is the one assigned to that home. Any exceptional circumstances will be considered on an individual basis. This may include short- term foster or care placements.

12. MOVING HOME AND TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION

A child attending the qualifying secondary school who moves in the last two years of their compulsory secondary education or their last year of education at a qualifying primary school will continue to receive assistance if they remain at this school. Assistance will be based on the standard mileage and age criteria (see section 2) but will be restricted to 8 miles or 45 minutes travelling time from the school. The award will be a travel pass or grant, whichever provides best value for money.

The last year(s) of education will be deemed to begin after the last day in August of the year in question. Therefore those who move during the summer holidays before the 1 September will not receive assistance.

Children of families which have to move into temporary accommodation for reasons outside their control will be eligible for travel assistance to the original qualifying school for up to a maximum of 6 months from the time of the move. These reasons will include housing renovations and movement to a women's refuge. Assistance is not provided where parents go abroad for extended periods and their children are cared for at an alternative address.

13. PERMANENT EXCLUSIONS AND MANAGED MOVES

Where, following a permanent exclusion or a managed move, a child is admitted to an alternative school, then, subject to the advice of the SEO/LEO, the school shall be regarded as the qualifying (designated) school for determining travel assistance. In normal circumstances, the LEO should pursue placement of an excluded pupil at the nearest qualifying school to the home address. A suitable school would be the nearest one at which the pupil could continue his/her education, removed from any influences, which could jeopardise his/her chance of success. If the parent elects to send their child to an alternative school, that school will be treated as a preferred school for travel assistance purposes. If the pupil was originally in a preferred school, then the follow-on school would still be classed as preferred for travel assistance purposes, unless it is the catchment area school for the home address.

14. LONG FIXED TERM EXCLUSIONS

For fixed period exclusions beyond 5 days the school governing body is responsible for arranging full-time education provision. The local authority is responsible for meeting any resulting transport costs, e.g: if the pupil receives education at an alternative school site/learning centre.

Where pupils are not within the walking distance transport will be provided which achieves value for money, and has regard to the following;

- (a) local bus/train/tram should be used wherever possible, with reimbursement of fares on a daily or weekly basis
- (b) grant payment for parents to transport their child to the place of provision
- (c) if taxis are used, NTS may have existing transport, which can be modified at low cost. (This is only feasible if the placement is for more than one month)
- (e) Taxis where (a)-(c) are not available.

15. BULLYING

Some parents change their child's school on the grounds of their child being bullied in the qualifying school. The new school will normally be regarded as a preferred school with regard to travel assistance arrangements. In exceptional circumstances where the original school acknowledges that it cannot deal satisfactorily with the problem, the Local Education Officer may deem that the new school attended will be considered to be the qualifying

school for travel assistance purposes if it is the nearest suitable school. A suitable school would be the nearest one at which the pupil could continue his/her education, removed from any influences which could jeopardise his/her chance of success. If the pupil was originally in a preferred school, then the follow-on school would still be classed as preferred for travel assistance purposes, unless it is the qualifying school for the home address.

16. NOTTINGHAMSHIRE LEARNING CENTRE

The relevant site of the Nottinghamshire Learning Centre will be considered the qualifying establishment, even if the child is on roll at a school. Normal walking distance criteria will apply.

Managers will request transport from NTS as appropriate.

Where pupils are not within the walking distance transport will be provided which achieves value for money, and has regard to the following;

- (d) local bus/train/tram should be used wherever possible, with reimbursement of fares on a daily or weekly basis
- (e) the use of Education Other Than at School (EOTAS) staff and their vehicles to provide transport should be considered
- (f) grant payment for parents to transport their child to the Nottinghamshire Learning Centre
- (g) if taxis are used, NTS may have existing transport, which can be modified at low cost. (This is only feasible if the placement is for more than one month)
- (e) Taxis where (a)-(c) are not available.

17. TYPES OF TRAVEL ASSISTANCE

Arrangements for travel assistance may take one of the following forms:

17.1 Free Pass

A free travel pass will be issued where pupils qualify for free travel in sections 2. The pass will allow one inward and one return journey on school days only, on specified services between specified points

17.2 A discounted season pass

If free travel is not available, but space is available on buses contracted by NCC, a pass may be purchased by the parent. The price of this pass is calculated from the published fares tables, with a discount applied. Where the season pass is for short distance travel to a qualifying school, the discounts are higher. In some cases NTS may be able to offer a season pass on commercially operated bus routes.

17.3 A grant in lieu of free travel

In certain circumstances a grant will be given in lieu of a travel pass:

- i) If there are no suitable transport services available to the qualifying school, or if the distance from home to the nearest bus stop is greater than one mile by the shortest walking route, a grant equivalent to the public transport mileage rate is payable, provided that the pupil qualified for free travel in accordance with the walking distance criteria (see section 2)
- ii) Grants will only be made where no local transport exists and/or where the grant payment provides best value for money for the local authority.
- iii) The grant is based on the distance of 2 return trips per day using the 'public transport rate' as the basis of calculation. Distance is measured along the shortest route taken by the vehicle
- iv) A grant-in-lieu of free travel will only be backdated to the start of the academic year in which the application is made.
- v) A grant-in-lieu of a free pass will be given to only one member of a family at any one time, where a sibling is attending the same school or site. Where a sibling is attending a different school on a different site, a grant will be paid for the total mileage.
- vi) If a 'preferred' school is both nearer than the qualifying school and over the walking distance the grant provision applies.

17.4 Grant for use of own vehicle (special cases)

If parents convey their children to/from school using their own vehicle (for medical or other exceptional reasons), then a grant will be paid based on the shortest distance by car at the public transport user rate for a return journey in each direction subject to (i) above.

17.5 Grant Variation

If bus fares increase or decrease then the grant will be amended and parents notified at the earliest opportunity.

If there is a change in the provision of school or local bus services the grant may be replaced by the issue of a travel pass, in accordance with the requirement to achieve best value for money.

18. TRANSPORT ASSISTANCE FOR PUPILS ATTENDING A SCHOOL ON GROUNDS OF THE PARENTS' RELIGION OR BELIEF.

Assistance with transport will be by means of a travel pass at a subsidised rate to the nearest suitable school by school bus or local bus, tram or train service on payment of the appropriate contribution from parents. These charges are subject to annual review.

The following detailed criteria will apply:

- A parent and pupil adheres to the religion or belief
- In the case of admission on denominational grounds, the transport application is counter-signed by the Headteacher confirming that the application was on the grounds of religion or belief. In cases where the application is on grounds of other philosophy or belief (see section 29.7) the application must be verified by the Transport Policy Officer.
- The pupil lives over the qualifying walking distance
- The pupil lives within an area defined by a radius (measured from school to home in a straight line) of 20 miles for primary pupils and 25 miles for secondary pupils.
- The pupil can travel within the maximum travelling time criteria, using the available transport services of 45 minutes for primary pupils and 75 minutes for secondary pupils. Journey time is assessed by calculating the door-to-door time by use of public transport or the equivalent time it would have taken where no public transport exists and includes any journey time to a pick up point, waiting time for connections and walking time from set down point to school.

Pupils from low income families meeting the criteria above are exempted from charges, i.e:

- pupils in receipt of free travel on denominational grounds for the school year 2006/07 and until they leave statutory education or change school or

For new enrollees:

- pupils entitled to free school meals
- pupils whose parents are entitled to their maximum level of Working Tax Credit
- where a family has 3 or more siblings attending schools on denominational grounds (up to age 16) only the two youngest children will be subject to a charge
- the LA continues to exercise discretionary powers in consideration of exceptional circumstances

The transport services provided operate from defined points or as a 'main road' type of service. Parents are responsible for making and paying for any transport arrangements to and from the nearest boarding point.

Travel Grants are only available in very exceptional circumstances and will not be made where the local authority has transport facilities available or additional costs would be incurred.

Grants are limited to a maximum of 20 miles per journey for primary pupils and 25 miles for secondary pupils per day, less the parental contribution (normal exemptions apply). A grant in lieu of a travel pass will only be given to one family member. The grant is based on the distance of two return trips, using the shortest vehicle route available, using the 'public transport rate' as the basis of calculation.

A grant in lieu is only available from the start of the school year in which the application is made and will not be backdated.

19. HOME TO BUS STOP/BUS STOP TO SCHOOL WALKING DISTANCE

Pick up and set down points are made as near to home and school as possible bearing in mind road safety issues and the length/time of the journey. Pupils are expected to walk up to one mile from door to bus stop or from bus stop to school, or a combination of distances totalling not more than one mile in either direction each day. Pupils may be exempted from this on the recommendation of the school medical officer, the family doctor or other appropriate professional adviser.

No dispensation will be made for parents who are working at the time their children travel to and from school. Parents are expected to make other suitable arrangements for someone else to accompany their children as necessary.

20. BUS ESCORTS/SUPERVISORS/PARENT OBSERVERS

20.1 Mainstream Schools

The Transport Policy Officer or Assistant Education Officer (SEN team) in consultation with NTS will determine whether it is necessary to provide a supervisor, conductor or other facilities (e.g. on-bus communication facilities) on any of the services provided. Normally this will only apply on services provided for pupils with special transport needs, where the extent of the individual pupil's disability may require additional assistance.

Parents may travel to or from mainstream school as observers on contracted buses or taxi services on approval of the head teacher and NTS. This may extend to local bus services operated commercially with the approval of the bus operator. The parent will travel free of charge and will be issued with an appropriate travel pass if they are travelling in a supervisory capacity. All applications for such travel will be assessed by NTS. Parents working on a

voluntary basis at schools may, with the permission of the head teacher and NTS, travel to or from school on services contracted by the local authority, at no charge if a seat is available. Parents will normally be expected to make their own arrangements for the return journeys to or from school. The local authority will accept no liability for any injury or loss sustained by a parent during a journey to or from school and the parent must be informed of this disclaimer by the head teacher before the journey is undertaken.

20.2 Special Schools

Escorts are provided for children with special transport needs if it is felt that without an escort there would be a risk to the health or safety of either the individual child or to other pupils travelling on the vehicle.

As an escort is provided on most transport to special schools, parents are not normally allowed to travel on home to school transport journeys. If it is necessary for a parent to attend school (e.g. for a child's medical examination or for an urgent appointment with the head teacher) and alternative arrangements cannot be made, the parent may travel on the school transport, if a place is available. Parents will normally be expected to make their own arrangements for the return journey.

21. STUDENTS ON EXCHANGE VISITS

Travel assistance is not available for pupils on exchange visits and parents of the receiving family are responsible for any transport arrangements for the journey to and from the school/college.

However, authorisation may be given by NTS for pupils on exchange visits to travel on contracted services where seats are available. Head teachers must first establish whether there are seats available by contacting NTS who will advise accordingly. If authorisation is given, a temporary travel permit (TA10) will be issued. The head teacher should submit a list of pupils' names and visiting addresses to NTS. A charge will be made to exchange visit children who are allowed a place on a contract service.

22. APPLYING FOR UNDER 16 TRAVEL ASSISTANCE

Applications for travel assistance should be addressed to the NTS at Trent Bridge House. Pupils attending special schools or special units at mainstream schools should apply via SEN Strategic Services.

All applications should be made on form TA1 which contains full details of travel assistance. Forms can be obtained from schools, area education bases or from the NTS and contact centre.

Parents should complete section 1 of the TA1 form. It must be stressed that applications for travel assistance made on behalf of secondary age pupils

must be accompanied by a current photograph, as this is necessary for the travel pass.

If assistance is being sought on the grounds of religion or belief the form must be sent via the head teacher so that he/she can certify the form appropriately.

The form should then be sent to the NTS at Trent Bridge House for assessment of travel assistance.

Parents will be made aware by post of the level of assistance awarded together with details of the relevant transport arrangements. If the application does not generate free travel, the opportunity to purchase a season ticket and its cost will be advised by NTS. Season passes can be purchased annually or in 3 instalments.

The travel pass will normally be sent to the home address or school.

23. DUPLICATE PASSES

An application for a duplicate pass, together with the appropriate fee, should be made by the school on form TA12. Any travel pass returned because of incorrect information should be sent with form TA13. The new pass will be issued free of charge.

24. LOST/STOLEN PASSES

Passes that have been lost or stolen can be replaced on payment of an administration fee of £5. No administration fee will be charged if a pupil can substantiate that the pass has been stolen (e.g. crime number). In the case of children eligible for free travel, a temporary pass (TA 10) is available. For the replacement of other passes the full cost of travel must be borne by the parents unless a locally arranged alternative scheme exists.

25. PROVISION AND ORGANISATION OF SCHOOL TRANSPORT SERVICES

25.1 Provision of Services

The arrangements for providing transport will be made in accordance with the requirements of the Education Acts 1996, 2002, the Education and Inspections Act 2006 and the Transport Acts 1985 and 2000.

The local authority will endeavour to ensure the safe movement of pupils and students and will coordinate exclusive school transport journeys and local bus services to ensure best value for money is achieved, in particular with respect to efficiency, effectiveness and economy (Transport Act 2000 s152).

25.2 Transport Requirements

NTS will determine the level of service, vehicle type and seating capacity requirements. A continuing review of the services provided will be made to ensure that the travel needs of pupils are adequately met. Services will be organised as appropriate allowing for:

- (a) the regulations relating to the provision of passenger transport services
- (b) the school or college session times, provided that the appropriate statutory procedures required have been followed. Head teachers, Principals and Governing Bodies are requested to consult with the transport departments as soon as possible on proposed changes to session times, so that the effect of any change can be assessed. Advice will be given on whether the change can be accommodated within the transport network, the likely cost implications, and any subsequent effects on other establishments and the local community as a result of the change
- (c) that it is desirable in the interests of safety and comfort to provide a seat for each pupil/student. Legislation permits pupils under 14 to be seated three to each double seat on buses not equipped with seat belts. This arrangement will only be used to cope with a marginal excess of numbers above the available seating capacity. Pupils who reach the age of 14 during a school year are deemed to be under 14 years of age until the last day of August following their 14th birthday
- (d) the need to consult with the head teachers, parents and other interested parties regarding proposed changes to the transport network
- (e) the need to monitor the services and deal with complaints as soon as possible to ensure that an efficient and reliable service is provided
- (f) environmental and sustainability issues
- (g) equal opportunities and social inclusion

26. WITHDRAWAL OF BUS SERVICES FOR FARE PAYING PASSENGERS

Subject to ensuring that statutory requirements are met in the most appropriate manner, no long term commitment is given by NCC to sustain transport for fare paying passengers. If spare places are required by children for whom there is a statutory responsibility, or should it no longer be necessary to provide the transport for statutory purposes, then fare payers facilities may be withdrawn for which 5 days notice will be given.

27. INFORMATION TO SCHOOLS, COLLEGES AND TRANSPORT OPERATORS

When appropriate, NTS will issue notes of guidance to all head teachers, regarding school transport services, which will provide information relating to school closures, accidents and poor operation. The guidance will also include information relating to transport operations for pupils with special educational needs.

When appropriate, NTS will issue to all transport operators, notes of guidance to assist them in the operation of school transport services and the procedures for checking of travel passes and dealing with emergencies and behaviour.

28. DISCIPLINE ON SCHOOL TRANSPORT SERVICES AND MISUSE OF TRAVEL PASSES

28.1 Guidance

Guidance notes to parents and students are sent either on the issue of a travel pass or on admission to special schools. Transport operators are issued with guidelines regarding discipline on journeys but retain the right to refuse travel to any student or pupil who breaches the passenger service vehicle regulations regarding conduct of passengers.

The Education and Inspections Act requires head teachers to determine what measures should be taken to promote self-discipline among pupils and encourage positive behaviour and respect for other, including the prevention of bullying. Head teachers must make and publish rules, and decide on penalties for unacceptable behaviour.

28.2 Procedures

Except for serious incidents of indiscipline (which will be dealt with on an individual basis) the following procedures will normally apply:

- (a) NTS after consultation with the head teacher will advise parents by direct contact or letter of the incident which occurred, and issue a warning.
- (b) If the problem continues a letter will be sent from NTS as appropriate advising parents that the travel pass or transport facility will be withdrawn.
- (c) In the event of further difficulties the travel pass (including free pass) or transport facility may be withdrawn for a period defined in a letter to the parents. The parents will be required to make their own transport arrangements during the suspension period. The transport operator will be informed of the action taken.

28.3 Misuse of Passes

If a pass is withdrawn by an operator because of misuse, the incident will be investigated and a report sought from the school or college. Pupils and students will be responsible for the payment of fares during the period a travel pass is withheld because of misuse. At the same time a letter will be sent by NTS informing parents of the actions of the local authority.

28.4 Boarding Passes

In the event of disciplinary or capacity problems on a local bus service which conveys pupils who do not qualify for free travel, it may be considered necessary to introduce a condition that only pupils in possession of a boarding pass will be permitted to use the service.

A decision to introduce a boarding pass scheme will be made in consultation with the bus operator and head teacher.

Boarding passes for any new scheme will be produced by NTS and will be issued free of charge. Replacement passes will be dealt with under normal pass replacement procedures.

28.5 Reimbursement for travel for pupils banned from the bus.

Whilst it is the parents' responsibility to ensure school attendance during any ban, reimbursement of bus fares or expenses at the public transport rate may be available. Such requests should be referred to NTS.

No assistance is available from the school transport budget for educational visits, career appointments or other non-educational journeys.

29. DEFINITIONS

29.1 Qualifying Schools

- community, foundation or voluntary schools
- community or foundation special schools
- pupil referral units
- maintained nursery schools
- city technology colleges (CTC), city colleges for the technology of the arts (CCTA) or Academies

29.2 Catchment Area Schools

In Nottinghamshire each school has a defined catchment area and this is generally referred to as the qualifying school for pupils living within that area. The catchment area is defined by streets or areas, or in the case of some junior and secondary schools, by the catchment area of their “linked schools.”

Full information about identifying the catchment school is available at the Local Education Base and each school normally has details of its own “catchment area.”

If the Local Education Officer or the Head of Service for children with statements considers that because of overriding educational, social or other reasons a school other than the catchment area school should be deemed the qualifying school, then travel assistance will be based on the age of the pupil and walking distance criteria to that school.

29.3 Coterminous and Overlapping Catchment Areas

In the event of 2 or more schools having a coterminous or overlapping catchment area the nearer or nearest of the schools to the home address will be regarded as the designated catchment school for transport purposes.

29.4 Schools without catchment areas

In the event of a school or schools not having a geographical catchment area the nearer or nearest school to the home address will be regarded as the designated catchment school for transport purposes.

29.5 Preferred Schools

Parents have the right to express a preference for a school other than the catchment area school and this is known as a “preferred school.”

29.6 Community Schools

Schools maintained by the local authority other than a Voluntary Aided, Voluntary Controlled, Foundation schools or Academies.

29.7 Schools attended on the grounds of religion or belief

'Religion' means any religion, and 'belief' means any religious or philosophical belief. References to "religion or belief" include references to lack of religion or belief. It therefore follows that this duty covers all religions and denominations, as well as philosophical beliefs

29.8 Voluntary Aided and Schools

Parents may choose to send their children to Voluntary Aided Schools on denominational grounds and this is supported by the local authority's travel assistance policies.

Each Voluntary Aided School has a catchment area, which is defined by the Diocesan Church Authorities. The Governing Body of a Voluntary Aided School decides whether the child attends on grounds of religion or belief. Where a home address is not included in any VA school's catchment area, the qualifying school for transport purposes is considered to be the nearest such school to the home address.

29.9 Voluntary Controlled Schools

Voluntary Controlled schools are treated the same as non-denominational Community Schools for travel assistance purposes.

29.10 Foundation Schools and Academies

All pupils attending Foundation Schools are treated the same as pupils attending Community Schools for travel assistance purposes.

29.11 Nottinghamshire Learning Centre

The NLC (previously known as a Pupil Referral Unit) is located at 4 sites across the county and caters for pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties. Admission is controlled by the NCC.

29.12 Walking Routes and Availability of Walking Routes

The walking route is defined as the nearest available walking route between the home boundary gate and the nearest school gate. To be treated as a walking route the route must be available to be walked (accompanied as necessary by an adult) with reasonable safety – taking into account highway conditions only. Personal safety is a parental responsibility. Passenger Transport Group measures the distance involved and assesses availability against set criteria. Where statutory free travel is not automatically awarded

an appeal process (TA2) exists and the case can be reassessed, at which time other factors may be taken into account.

29.13 Abbreviations/Acronyms

AEO:	Assistant Education Officer
EOTAS	Education Other Than At School
EWO:	Education Welfare Officer
ISS:	Inclusion Support Service
LA:	Local Authority
LEO:	Local Education Officer
NCC:	Nottinghamshire County Council
NLC	Nottingham Learning Centre
NTS:	Nottinghamshire Transport Services
Parents:	includes single parent and child guardian(s)
SEN:	Special Educational Needs
STN:	Special Transport Needs
TPO:	Transport Policy Officer

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