

Travel Support Policy

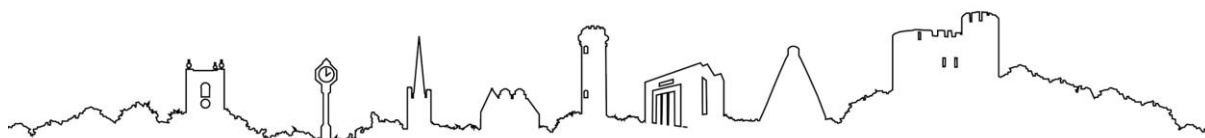
Transport use by Children's Services outside of Home to School Transport

Practice Note:	Transport use by Children's Services outside of Home to School Transport
Author:	Travel support Team. Dudley's Centre for Professional Practice Children's Services, Dudley Council
Date:	4 th October 2023
Effective From:	4 th October 2023
Review Date:	4 th October 2025
Reference Number:	

Definitions

For the purpose of this policy the following definitions apply:

- CIC refers to a Children in Care
- SEN refers to a young person with an active Education, Health & Care Plan (EHCP).
- The Travel Support Team is a part of the Children's Services Directorate within the Business Support Division.



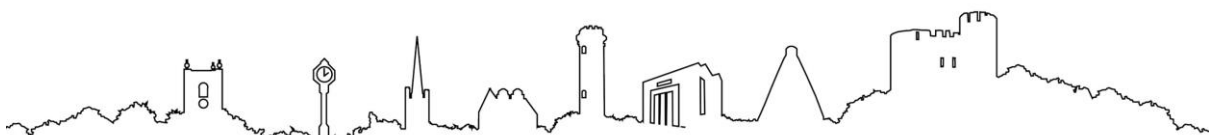
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- Short breaks are normally overnight stays at an authorised carers address.
- A Passenger Assistant is a suitable and registered adult authorised by the Directorate to supervise children and young people on contracted transport.
- Family time is normally an arranged meeting with family members or relatives attended by a Child Looked After.
- EDT refers to the Emergency Duty Team who provide out of hours cover for Children's Social Care.
- RLAA refers to Remands to Local Authority Accommodation.
- ITT relates to Independent Travel Training and can seek to be facilitated through the Travel Support Team.

1. Introduction

- 1.1. Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council's arrangements relating to the provision of Travel Assistance for children and young people **attending school and college** are laid out in its *All-Age Travel Support Policy* published in April 2023 (aka Home to School Transport). The Policy applies to all children and young people CYP:
 - a. whose parents/carers are normally resident in Dudley or
 - b. who are the responsibility of Dudley Council (the Corporate Parent)
- 1.2. The above *All-Age Travel Support Policy* can be accessed via:
<https://www.dudley.gov.uk/residents/learning-and-school/education-travel-support/>
- 1.3. It states that Children Looked After will be treated in exactly the same way as other Dudley CYP, that any arrangements made will be non-intrusive and do not set the child apart from other children (section 9). It also states that eligibility for travel support will be determined using the same criteria as for all other children (section 4).
- 1.4. However, there are circumstances where children known to Children's Services may require travel support or transport which fall outside the All Age Travel Support Policy, ie which is not 'home to school transport'.

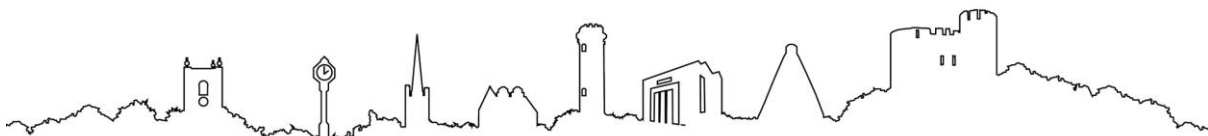


2. Purpose

- 2.1. This policy therefore sets out the circumstances in which travel support or transport, which is not related to home to school journeys, will be considered and when approved, delivered.
- 2.2. It is also intended to comply with the principles as laid out in Section 2 of the *All Age Travel Support Policy*:

3. Scope

Home to school transport or travel support is based on 2 trips per day (morning and afternoon) for 190 days per annum from the child's home to their school or college, and is provided free of charge for children and young people of statutory school age. Children in care are eligible for home to school transport or travel support irrespective of where they live, subject to conditions contained in Section 9 of the All Age Travel Support Policy and the scenarios summarised in the following table:

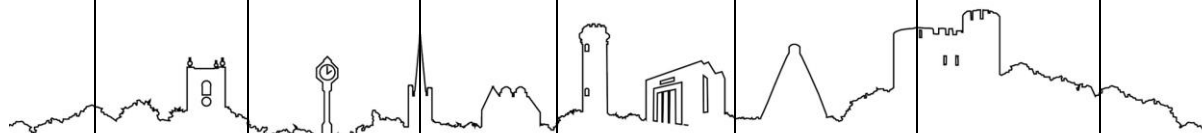


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Table 1

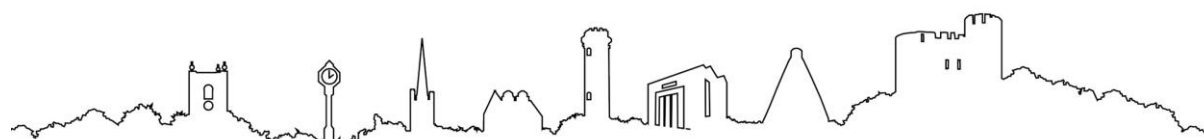
Corporate Parent	Home Address	School Address	EHCP Holder	Attending school named on EHCP	Short Term Home Placement	Long Term Home Placement	Eligible for Travel Support (Policy)	Decision	Decision Reasons
Dudley	Dudley	DUDLEY or other LA	Dudley	Yes	Yes		Yes	H2S Budget	H2S funding for 6 weeks up to a review.
Dudley	Dudley	Dudley or other LA	Dudley	Yes		Yes	Yes	H2S Budget	School agreed by SEN for placement and therefore treated like any other child regardless of LAC status. Reviewed case by case.
Dudley	Dudley	Dudley or other LA	Dudley	Yes			No	CSC Budget	Travel Support policy not met therefore funding not available from H2S.
Dudley	Other LA	Dudley	Other LA	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes / No	CSC Budget	EHCP will transfer to the LA in which the child resides. The host LA and Dudley CSC will make education placement decisions. Funding for transport to school should be considered when deciding on the school placement and all costs should be met by CSC. Transport may be



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									requested from the LA in which the child resides and recharged to Dudley CSC.
Dudley	Other LA	Other LA	Other LA	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes / No	CSC Budget	EHCP will transfer to the LA in which the child resides. The host LA and Dudley CSC will make education placement decisions. Funding for transport to school should be considered when deciding on the school placement and all costs should be met by CSC. Transport may be requested from the LA in which the child resides and recharged to Dudley CSC.
Other LA	Dudley	Dudley	Dudley	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes/No	Other LA	No transport to be provided by Dudley until a purchase order received from Other LA
Other LA	Other LA	Other LA	Other LA	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes/No	Other LA	No transport to be provided by Dudley



- 3.1. Section 9.3 of the All Age Travel Support Policy states that *'When a child first becomes looked after, or is subject to care proceedings, Dudley Council has a commitment to maintaining a child's attendance at their original school where this is judged to be beneficial to the child for reasons of stability and continuity. However, wherever possible, children should transfer to a school local to their placement at the end of care proceedings or following the move to a more permanent placement, and in any case within six months or by the start of the next academic year.'*
- 3.2. Any transport or support required by children known to children's social care which falls outside the above two conditions will be the responsibility of children's social care or CDT, and either be paid directly by social care or by carers from their grants/fees as appropriate.
- 3.3. The following travel support/transport is within scope of this policy:
- a. Facilitation of short breaks, family support packages or respite care
 - b. Travel support /transport to maintain placements which do not meet 3.2 above
 - c. Support to maintain an educational placement of a CIC unless they have an EHCP (SEN) and qualify under the home-to-school travel support policy
 - d. To facilitate family time and there is no other way of ensuring attendance
 - e. To ensure that an element of a care plan or court directed matter is pursued
 - f. Secure Transport – **To be sourced through the regional CAFFS framework via engagement with Childrens commissioning and not through the travel support team**

4. Management of Applications

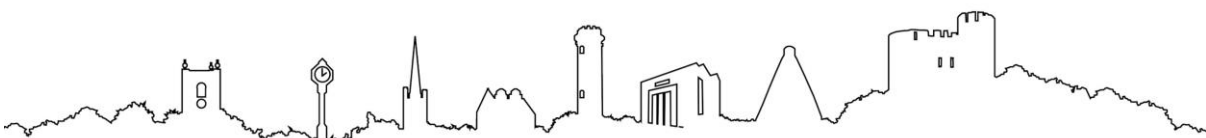
- 4.1. All applications for transport will be considered individually, taking into account the relevant legal requirements and the circumstances of each child or young person.
- 4.2. The general principle should be applied that funding of transport by taxi will only be authorised in exceptional circumstances
- 4.3. In all cases the Social Worker making the request will need to confirm that consideration has been given to other transport options:
- a. The use of public transport;



- b. Transport provided by parent or carer (do they receive a mileage allowance?);
 - c. Transport provided by social care staff, i.e. Social Worker, Young Persons Advisor, Family Support Worker, Residential Social Worker;
 - d. Volunteer transport.
 - e. Independent Travel Training.
 - f. Eligibility under the All Age Travel Support Policy, in particular children with EHCPs. NB this can include children placed out of borough.
 - g. The use of existing transport e.g spare seats
- 4.4. For children placed out of borough and which do not meet conditions in 3.2 above it may be more practicable for the transport to be sourced by the LA in which the child is residing. Advice must be sought from the Travel Support Team. This is a mirror image of ID's E and F in Table 1

5. Principles to be applied when arranging transport

- 5.1. Children under secondary school age should not travel alone on public or taxi transport and a carer or worker with whom they are familiar should escort them on non-routine journeys.
- 5.2. Consideration of educational placement and family time arrangements should be highlighted as part of the assessment of need for placement choice.
- 5.3. If a child or young person is established in school prior to being looked after, the placement should initially be maintained, taking into account the wishes and feelings of the child and in consultation with the parents.
- 5.4. No school placement for a CIC should be changed for the purposes of this policy prior to agreement at the first statutory review unless to maintain the placement would expose the child to the risk or likelihood of significant harm.
- 5.5. All changes of school for CIC should be planned, agreed and written into the child's personal education plan and endorsed by the CIC review.
- 5.6. A balance should be made between the continuity of educational provision, the stress of lengthy travel arrangements and the child's isolation from the neighbourhood peer relationships particularly when it is likely that the placement will last beyond 6 months.



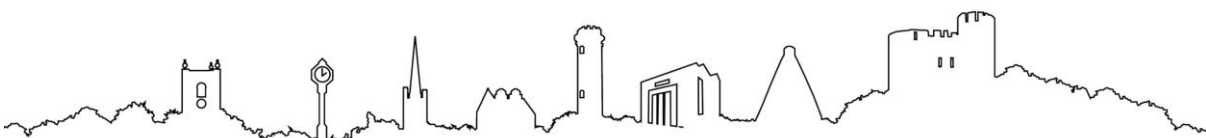
- 5.7. There is an expectation that carers e.g. foster carers (but not limited to just this cohort) will transport children in their care to school and family time if this is required as part of the support to the child's education or care plan and falls under their contractual arrangements, unless for reasons of distance or other child care arrangements/commitments this would be inappropriate.
- 5.8. When a child is looked after they may be eligible for a bus pass under the home-to-school transport policy. Enquiries should be made to establish if this option is available when arranging transport.
- 5.9. Where it is agreed that the Directorate is able to assist parents to attend family time, court and other meetings, reimbursement will be made at public transport rates only (we have a duty to promote contact).

6. Authorisation and review of transport arrangements

- 6.1. All transport arrangements must be approved and authorised by the appropriate Service Manager, in line with the Scheme of Delegation, who will have ensured that alternative transport options have been considered in line with Sections 4 & 5 of this policy.
- 6.2. All arrangements should be agreed at the point of placement as part of the placement agreement and family time plan. Appropriate ratification will be sought by The Team manager and associated social worker. Details of all new requests will be indicated to the appropriate weekly Panel where these are chaired by a Head of Service.
- 6.3. All transport arrangements funded by the Directorate should be subject to review in line with the review of the care plan and as required to panel processes .
- 6.4. All transport arrangements should be considered/reviewed prior to the statutory review (and more frequently if required) as part of the care planning to confirm that the principles of best practice, safeguarding of children and best value are maintained.

7. Out of hours (Duty)

- 7.1. EDT has a list of transport contractors and are authorised to make bookings direct as required. The Transport Manager and the appropriate Service Manager must be notified of any bookings (by email) as soon as it is possible to do so.



8. Authorised contractor staff

- 8.1. All contractors used by Dudley Children's Services have been authorised and cleared by the Travel Support Team. Each passenger assistant and driver has been subject to an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service check and has undergone mandatory 1st Aid and passenger assistants training.
- 8.2. Drivers and passenger assistants will have received Child Protection Training
- 8.3. All authorised drivers and passenger assistants are to wear a Contractor ID badge when carrying out work on behalf of the Directorate;

9. Complaints

- 9.1 General complaints are to be directed to the Transport Manager who will investigate and resolve in line with the Directorates Transport Contract terms and conditions.

10. Protocol for Remands to Local Authority Accommodation

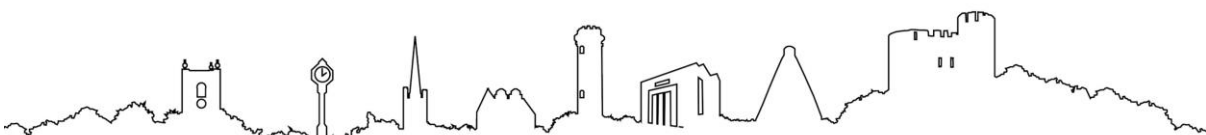
- 10.1. There are separate protocols for the transportation of children and young people remanded to secure and non-secure accommodation by the courts.

11. Monitoring and quality control

Monitoring and quality is managed by the Transport team. They will carry out spot checks on vehicles, checking Drivers and Passenger Assistants performances, ID's, licenses & DBS.

12. Invoices and payment

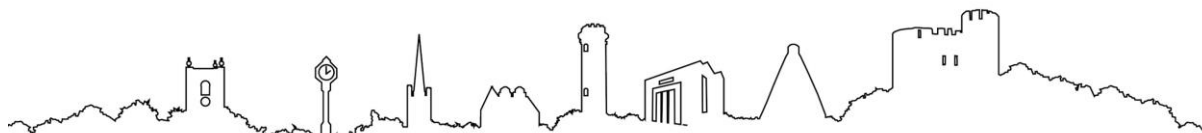
Invoices are sent to the transport team from contractors for transport carried out and are then sent onto the finance team for payment.



Annex A – Extract from All Age Travel Support Policy April 2023

9. ASSISTANCE FOR LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN WHO ARE IN THE CARE OF THE COUNCIL

- 9.1. The majority of looked after children will attend a local school, particularly when a placement is identified as the child or young person's long-term placement or is expected to last for more than a six-month period. This enables a child or young person to access local facilities, build social relationships with their peers and participate in local activities.
- 9.2. The aim of this policy is to establish stable yet flexible transport arrangements that meet the needs of looked after children and ensures that these arrangements are non-intrusive and do not set the child apart from other children. This will be undertaken by using the principles (See Section 4 above) and making the same arrangements as would be made for any child in Dudley:
- a. A looked after child of primary school age will normally be escorted to school by a carer, whether this is on foot, using public transport, or the carer using their own transport.
 - b. The presumption will be that all looked after children over the age of twelve will be able to use public transport, or other appropriate forms of transport, rather than taxis.
 - c. Taxis and private hire vehicles will only be approved in exceptional circumstances, and only after all other options have been explored. Social Care staff will be expected to explain why such transport is required. A possible exception to this would be for foster carers who have a number of children in placement that attend different schools.
 - d. The council has a responsibility to promote appropriate independence skills. This is particularly so for looked after children. All young people will be supported and encouraged to travel independently to school, including public transport, usually from age twelve or when it is assessed as reasonable for them to do so.
 - e. The need to manage resources carefully eg the Council will ensure that foster care allowances have been used before any other funds are accessed.
- 9.3. When a child first becomes looked after, or is subject to care proceedings, Dudley Council has a commitment to maintaining a child's attendance at their original school where this is judged to be beneficial to the child for reasons of stability and continuity. However, wherever possible, children should transfer to a school local to their placement at the end



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of care proceedings or following the move to a more permanent placement, and in any case within six months or by the start of the next academic year.

Exceptions to this expectation would include the need to provide continuity for those in Year 6 of primary school, or young people undertaking examination syllabuses (usually in Year 10 and Year 11).

All transport assistance for looked after children will be reviewed on a regular basis, but in any case, at least every three months.



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