

Transport for Pupils with Additional Support Needs

A Guide for Parents/Carers



Falkirk Council
Development Services

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Introduction

Each day, Falkirk Council transports approximately 500 pupils with Additional Support Needs (ASN) to/from school using around 140 vehicles.

Requests for ASN Transport are made by the Headteacher/Manager of the pupil's school/nursery following advice from an Educational Psychologist, Social Worker or Health Care Worker. Once the request has been made, approval must be given by an ASL Advisor from the Council.

If approved, the transport provided can be a taxi, minibus or local bus where the pupil may be issued with a pass to travel. Generally, parents are not permitted to accompany their children on contract vehicles.

The Council does not normally provide pupils with transport where they do not attend the nominated school.

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Pupil Transport Assistants (PTA's)

When a pupil's needs are such that a PTA is required, the PTA will be employed by the Council.

All PTA's are vetted by Disclosure Scotland and must wear their official Falkirk Council identification badge.

PTA's are responsible for helping pupils on/off the vehicle, using specialist equipment if necessary and ensuring pupil's safety, dignity and comfort during the journey.

PTA's can also relay information between home and the school if required.

PTA's are not responsible for taking pupils to/from their home to/from the transport vehicle - this is the responsibility of the parent/carer.

3

Pupil Behaviour

Parents/Carers are expected to tell their child(ren) about the need to behave well on the vehicle. If behaviour is unacceptable, transport may be withdrawn and parents/carers will be responsible for transporting their child(ren) to/from school.



Transport Helpline

01324 504782/504709 (Mon-Fri 0900-1700)

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Parent/Carer Responsibility

Parents/Carers are responsible by law for the safety of their child.

Parent/Carers should make sure that their child is ready to join the transport vehicle when it arrives in the morning. The vehicle will only be able to wait for a few minutes before moving to the next pick-up point. Similarly, in the afternoon parents/carers **must** meet their child when the contract vehicle arrives. If the parent is not at home, the child will be placed into the care of the emergency contact person. If this is not possible, the child will be returned to the school or placed into the care of Social Work Services.

If your child misses the transport vehicle in the morning, you should get him/her to the school as soon as possible. If he/she misses the transport vehicle in the afternoon, he/she should tell the school.

Falkirk Council **will not** pay for alternative transport to/from school when a child misses the transport vehicle through his/her (or his/her parent's/ carer's) fault.

Parent/Carers should advise their children to wear seatbelts where they are fitted to school transport vehicles.

Parent/Carers **must** notify the school and TPU of any changes in their circumstances, especially any change of address, so that transport can be altered accordingly. Please note that transport operators will only take instructions from Transport Planning staff.

If your child becomes ill during the school day you may be required to provide or pay for alternative transport home. If your child soils the transport in any way, you will be responsible to pay the current soilage change as detailed by Falkirk Council, Licensing Section.

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Vehicles

All vehicles contracted by the Council (excluding service buses) are required to have seatbelts fitted.

Smoking on any school transport vehicle is illegal and any person caught smoking will be subject to appropriate actions.

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Wheelchairs, Special Seats and Harnesses

Where pupils have particular mobility requirements, or need specialist equipment, drivers and PTA's will be briefed accordingly.

All equipment must be used strictly according to the manufacturers requirements and in accordance with the law. Wheelchairs must be of an appropriate design and strength for transport purposes.

7 Booster Cushions

If a pupil is required to use a booster cushion in a taxi or private hire car, the booster cushion will be provided by the Transport Planning Unit. Drivers/PTA's should be fully conversant with the correct use of the booster cushion which must be used strictly in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions and relevant laws.



8 Accidents and Breakdowns

In the event of an accident or breakdown pupils will be instructed to stay on the vehicle until alternative transport arrives. If the situation is deemed to be dangerous the pupils will be guided to a safe place by the driver or PTA.

9 Adverse Weather

The driver will use his discretion about the safety of any road during adverse weather conditions. If a morning journey is abandoned the driver will return all pupils to their pick-up points into the care of the parent or an emergency contact.

10 Change of Address

If you change address you will be required to re-apply for school transport from your new address to the school. Please note that transport can take a few days to arrange, so please give the Transport Planning Unit as much notice as possible.

11 Monitoring of Transport and Feedback

The Transport Planning Unit monitors contractor performance and scholar behaviour on school transport through inspections and liaison with schools, the Vehicle and Operator Services Agency, the Council's taxi licensing staff and the Police.

We welcome feedback from parents and scholars about school transport issues.



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