

Argyll and Bute Council
Development and Infrastructure
School Transport



School Transport

A Guide for Parents and Pupils

If you would like this document in another language or format, or if you require the services of an interpreter, please contact us.

Ma tha sibh ag iarraidh an sgrìobhainn seo ann an cànan no riochd eile, no ma tha sibh a' feumachdainn seirbheis eadar, feuch gun leig sibh fios thugainn.

Gaelic

Jezeli chcieliby Państwo otrzymaO ten dokument w innym jzyku lub w innym formacie albo jeeli potrzebna jest pomoc Uumacza, to prosimy o kontakt z nami.

Polish

यह दस्तावेज़ यदि आपको किसी अन्य भाषा या अन्य रूप में चाहिये, या आपको आनुवाद-सेवाओं की आवश्यकता हो तो हमसे संपर्क करें

Hindi

یہ دستاویز اگر آپ کو کسی دیگر زبان یا دیگر شکل میں درکار ہو، یا اگر آپ کو ترجمان کی خدمات چاہئیں تو برائے مہربانی ہم سے رابطہ کیجئے۔

Urdu

ਜੇ ਇਹ ਦਸਤਾਵੇਜ਼ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਕਿਸੇ ਹੋਰ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਵਿਚ ਜਾਂ ਕਿਸੇ ਹੋਰ ਰੂਪ ਵਿਚ ਚਾਹੀਦਾ ਹੈ, ਜਾਂ ਜੇ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਗੱਲਬਾਤ ਸਮਝਾਉਣ ਲਈ ਕਿਸੇ ਟਿੱਟਰਪੈਟਰ ਦੀ ਲੋੜ ਹੈ, ਤਾਂ ਤੁਸੀਂ ਸਾਨੂੰ ਦੱਸੋ।

Punjabi

本文件可以翻譯為另一語文版本，或製作成另一格式，如有此需要，或需要傳譯員的協助，請與我們聯絡。

Cantonese

The guidance given in this booklet applies to travel by bus or mini bus and while the majority of pupils travel this way, some pupils are also transported by ferry, train or private car. Where practical, the guidance given in this booklet also applies to travel by these other means.



SCHOOL TRANSPORT

On every school day over 10,000 pupils attend school in Argyll and Bute, approximately 3,000 of them travel to and from school on transport organised by Argyll and Bute Council. Our highest priority is getting pupils safely to and from school.

This guide provides pupils and parents with useful background information about transport arrangements for school pupils in Argyll and Bute.

This guide sets out:

- What free school transport means
- Suggestions for healthy travel options to get to school
- Who is entitled to free school transport
- What transport is provided
- The responsibilities of the Council, schools, parents, pupils, bus and taxi operators and drivers
- Safety information
- Parents' frequently asked questions
- Complaint and contact details



What School Transport Means:

The Integrated Transport Section identifies the need for the provision of free school transport to and from their home address.

The catchment area for each school is determined by Education Services and held by the Integrated Transport Section. If children live more than the maximum walking distance from their catchment school the Council will assist with school travel by making available school transport for all or part of the journey or other arrangements as practicable.

Pupils who attend an alternative school by parental choice (known as a placing request) have no entitlement to free transport. If a child attends a school as a result of a successful placing request it is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to organise transport to and from the school and the Integrated Transport Section will not provide transport.

Healthy Alternatives to Vehicle Transportation:

Could your child walk or cycle to school?

If walking or cycling to school is a practical option this could improve your child's:-

- **Fitness** – a 15 minute walk twice a day provides half of a child's recommended minimum amount of daily activity
- **Confidence and emotional wellbeing** – a walk or cycle to school is a perfect opportunity for pupils to communicate with family or friends
- **Environment** – fewer cars at the school gate will reduce congestion and CO2 emissions and make the area around your school safer.

.....and leaving the car at home will cut down on fuel bills



If you need to use a car for the school run, could you share on some occasions? Car sharing is becoming increasingly popular due to the environmental and financial savings that can be made – a reduction in the number of vehicles travelling even on only a few mornings is a difference worth making.

If you are looking for someone to car share with, even for occasional journeys, free and easy to use websites IfYouCareShare.com and spt.liftshare.com are available to everyone in our area.

Could you “Park and Stride”?

If walking all the way to school is not practical, dropping off or picking up your child a short distance away has the benefit of offering some time to walk and be active and reduces congestion at the school gates. All schools in Argyll and Bute have a School Travel Plan that supports sustainable travel where practical.



Who is entitled to School Transport?

Transport to and from school is available for pupils who live more than:-

- 2 miles away from their catchment Primary School
- 3 miles away from their catchment Secondary School

Pupils may still be required to walk to a school transport pick up or drop off point. Primary school pupils will not be required to walk more than two miles and secondary pupils will not be required to walk more than three miles from their home to the pick up or drop off point.

Pupils will not be picked up or dropped off at any point other than the designated location without written authorisation from a parent or guardian.

Exceptional Request

Consideration will be given in exceptional circumstances for school transportation where your child attends their catchment school but would not normally be entitled to transport.

Where parents believe that there may be grounds for an exceptional transport request, an application form should be completed and submitted to the Integrated Transport Section. Applications will then be referred for further assessment as appropriate.

Exceptional transport requests can be made when:-

- Your child has been recommended on health grounds by a designated medical officer.



- Your child has requirements based on educational grounds / additional educational needs.
- Your child has to walk a route which, after an assessment, is considered to be unsafe for children even when accompanied by a responsible adult.

Privilege Rides

If spare seats exist on dedicated school transport vehicles, a child who does not meet the walking distance criteria, or a placing request (who would not normally qualify for transport), may be granted a privileged seat to and from their home address which will be charged at a cost determined by the Council. (A dedicated vehicle is one exclusively used for pupil transport to school.) **It should be noted that these privilege places may be withdrawn at very short notice in the event of change of circumstance.**

Privilege Rides will be charged at £100.00 per term, reducing to £84.00 per child per term where there are two children or more (this may be subject to increase). Payment should only be made on receipt of an invoice and this number should be quoted when making payment. Payments received with applications will be returned.

Privilege rides are not available on journeys which operate as registered local bus services. In such cases non-entitled pupils can access free bus travel by applying online or preferably through their school for the Under 22's free bus travel product to be added to their Young Scot National Entitlement Card.

The Privilege Ride Application Form can either be downloaded or an application made online at the following address:-



School Transport - Argyll and Bute Council

How Do I Find Out If My Child Will Receive School Transport?

When a new P1 or S1 child is enrolled at a school the parent/guardian will complete an online application which includes an option for applying for school transport.

For all applications made outwith the registration period Application Forms can either be downloaded or made online at the following address:-

School Transport - Argyll and Bute Council

Parents will be notified of the transport arrangements to be provided for their child. Where parents need more information regarding the transport arrangements they should contact the Integrated Transport Section.

Telephone: 01436 658987

The Integrated Transport Section will inform the parent/guardian of any changes to transport arrangements that occur during the school year.

Travel Passes/Young Scot National Entitlement Cards are required for pupils in Secondary Schools who qualify for free transport. In addition to the transport application, an application form must be completed for those pupils who require a Young Scot National Entitlement Card. This can be obtained from the school and issued to parents for P7-S1 transition.



What Transport is provided?

The Integrated Transport Section is responsible for the design and management of the school transport service. Most pupils are transported by external contractors and the remainder are transported by our in-house service. There are various services used for taking pupils to and from school:-

- School contract buses hired from private companies on which travel passes are issued for pupils only
- Taxis, private hire cars and minibuses
- Public bus services on which travel passes (tickets) are issued for children to use for travel to and from the school
- Other forms of transport such as ferries, trains and private cars

School transport services are normally timed to arrive at school five minutes prior to the start of school and leave five minutes after the close of school. However, primary schools in towns often share transport with their associated high schools and there may be a requirement to bring children in earlier or take them home later.

If a family lives remotely from other children and off any established route, a mileage allowance to allow parents to drive their own children to school in their own car may be offered.



What are the Responsibilities of the Council?

- Providing assistance with school transport for entitled pupils.
- Designing transport services appropriate to pupils' needs.
- Placing contracts with bus and taxi firms to provide services.
- Ensuring the safety of pupils during the time spent on school transport journeys.
- Informing pupils and parents of transport arrangements and any changes to them.
- Once a pupil has boarded the transport the operator assumes responsibility for his/her safety. However, this responsibility is only accepted if pupils behave appropriately as outlined in this booklet.

What are the Responsibilities of Schools?

- Providing supervision for primary pupils from transport arrival in the morning to departure in the afternoon.
- Supervision of boarding areas at schools.
- Issuing travel passes / Young Scot National Entitlement Cards at the beginning of the new academic year.
- Reporting service unreliability, breakdowns and poor timekeeping to the Council's Integrated Transport Section.



What are Your Responsibilities as a Parent?

- It is your responsibility to get your children safely to and from transport pick up and set down points
 - ❖ If you are concerned about your child, you should accompany him/her to the stop and wait with your child until the bus arrives. Similarly, you should ensure that children are met when the bus returns from school.
 - ❖ If your child is unaccompanied make sure that he/she knows and follows the safest walking route, uses the safest road crossing places and knows how to behave responsibly whilst waiting to be picked up.
 - ❖ Make sure that you have discussed with your child what to do if the bus does not arrive or if he/she fails to catch the bus for any reason.
 - ❖ Make sure that your child is aware of these guidelines.
 - ❖ Ensure that you encourage your child to behave properly and safely whilst using school transport.
 - ❖ If free transport entitlement is withdrawn for disciplinary reasons, parents are responsible for making and paying for alternative travel arrangements.
 - ❖ If school transport is no longer required or there is a change in circumstances, you must inform the Integrated Transport Section.



What is Your Responsibility as a Pupil?

For your safe travel you should:-

- Leave home in good time to avoid the need to rush and dress appropriately for weather conditions.
- Use the pavement if there is one, where there is no pavement walk facing on-coming traffic. Stand well clear of the edge of the road while waiting for school transport and clearly signal to the driver that you want the vehicle to stop.
- Travel only on your assigned transport. Remember to carry your travel pass/train ticket, otherwise you may be charged a fare. Keep it in good condition as card readers will not accept damaged cards which again may result in being charged a fare.
- Let other passengers off before boarding and behave appropriately and safely when getting on, off and during your journey to and from school.
- Follow the driver's instructions. Do not talk to or otherwise distract the driver while the bus is moving. You must remain seated for the journey, fasten the seat belt if there is one and never leave the bus until it has stopped. Smoking is not permitted.
- Wait for the bus to be clear of the bus stop before crossing the road.
- Good behaviour must be maintained at train stations.

Misbehaviour on the transport provided for you could result in you losing your free school transport entitlement.



What are the Driver's Responsibilities?

Operation of the vehicle, including:-

- Deciding whether road conditions are safe.
- Duty of care for the safety and comfort of all passengers on the vehicle during the journey to and from school.
- Reporting any incidents of bad behaviour to the Integrated Transport Section or the Education Service, who will undertake disciplinary measures as may be necessary.

What are the Responsibilities of the Bus and Taxi Operators?

- Providing services as specified by the Council.
- Safe operation of their vehicle.
- Taking reasonable care of the children in their vehicles and ensuring seatbelts, where provided, are worn.
- Reporting misbehaviour to the Integrated Transport Section or the Education Service.

Safety Is Our Top Priority

Bus travel is one of the safest forms of transport and all buses are licensed with the Department for Transport and are routinely inspected by the Vehicle Inspectorate.



All taxis, private hire cars and their drivers used for school transport are required to be licensed by a council authority.

All Drivers and Pupil Escorts have undergone PVG checks by Disclosure Scotland.

Seatbelts

- Where fitted, it is the driver's responsibility to ensure that passengers under 14 years of age wear seatbelts. Passengers over 14 are responsible for wearing seatbelts. Where required, booster cushions/seats are provided for pupils. Refusing to wear a seatbelt may result in a pupil being disciplined.

**To minimise the risk of accidents, parents/
guardians should always stand on the same
side of the road as the transport pick up or set
down takes place.**



Parents Frequently Asked Questions

What Do I Do If My Child Loses Their School Travel Pass?

Your child should immediately notify their school who will arrange a replacement card.

What Do I Do If A School Bus Fails To Arrive On Time?

Your child should be at the bus pick up point at least five minutes before the scheduled pick up time. We advise your child to wait at a pick up point for up to fifteen minutes after the bus was due to arrive. After fifteen minutes it can be assumed that the bus will not run that day. You should ensure that there are suitable care arrangements in the event of school transport not running without notice.

What Do I Do If My Child Wants To Use A Different Bus?

It is not always possible to transfer to another school bus service. If there is a requirement to change then you should contact the Integrated Transport Section for further advice. Your child should not try to use a different bus before he/she receives approval and a new pass from us.

What Happens If A Child Misbehaves On School Transport?

Reports of misbehaviour will be investigated.

Any child misbehaving could be banned from using the school bus or public transport service, sometimes permanently.



What Happens If Schools Close Early Due To Bad Weather Or Any Other Emergency?

Every attempt will be made by the school to inform parents.

If you feel that your child should not walk home alone in bad weather from the drop off point or from school it will be your responsibility to meet him/her.

Drivers will not normally set children down at any point significantly different from the usual one. If it is not possible to set children down at the normal drop off point due to bad weather, then children will be taken to a nearby place of safety.

Children must follow any instructions given to them by the driver in any emergency and should not leave the bus to make their own way home.

What Happens If There Is A Cancellation Of Transport In The Morning?

If the journey cannot be completed, drivers will return children to their normal drop off point. Parents should ensure that arrangements have been made at home to cover this possibility.

If your child travels to school on connecting services, drivers will be told to wait for each other and not to leave any children standing in adverse weather conditions.

Parents must ensure that their children are warmly dressed in case the journey to school is very slow or even halted in bad weather. In normal circumstances pupils should not wait more than 15 minutes for a late bus.

If the school transport for your child does not operate in the morning because of adverse weather conditions or road closures, but you decided to take your



child to school yourself, then you are expected to collect your child either at the end of the school day or at the time of early closure.

Do not bring your children to school when buses do not run unless you are certain of being able to collect them at the end of the school day – even if the weather worsens.

It is Council policy that schools remain open, except in the severest of weather conditions. Therefore, children who live within a short walking distance of school will be retained throughout the school day.

What Information Is Available About School Transport In An Emergency Or Bad Weather?

Arrangements have been made with local radio stations to relay information about school closures. Parents can also find information about school closures on the Council website.

Please Note:-

Secondary School pupils requiring a Young Scot National Entitlement Card are required to complete an application form. The form can be obtained from the school.

It is important to carry the National Entitlement Card, which holds the transport information, otherwise a fare may be charged.



Making a Complaint and Contact Details

If you have any enquiries or concerns about school transport, or wish to make a complaint about an operator you should contact your child's school who will liaise with the Integrated Transport Section to investigate the complaint.

For matters relating to school transport delivered by the Council's in-house service please contact:-

Shelagh Croucher Administrative Officer (Tel: 01436 658987)

Integrated Transport Section
Argyll and Bute Council
1A Manse Brae
Lochgilphead
Argyll PA31 8RD

Email: schooltransport@argyll-bute.gov.uk

For matters relating to external contractors i.e. buses, taxis etc please contact:-

Martin Arnold: Contract Officer (Tel: 01546 604418)

Integrated Transport Section
Argyll and Bute Council
1A Manse Brae
Lochgilphead, Argyll PA31 8RD

Email: public.transport@argyll-bute.gov.uk





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