

NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY COUNCIL

HOME TO SCHOOL TRANSPORT

CONCESSIONARY TRAVEL SCHEME 2019/2020 SCHOOL YEAR

1. What is the Concessionary Travel Scheme?

- 1.1 If your child is not entitled to free Home to School transport, he or she may be able to take up a spare seat on one of the Local Authority's school contract vehicles. The Concessionary Travel Scheme applies if there is no local bus or rail service available at convenient times to provide journeys for the start and finish of the school day.

Whilst the Local Authority is keen to encourage the use of spare capacity on school transport there is a charge associated with this service. You would also have to accept the conditions of the concessionary travel scheme, which does have a number of limitations (see below).

- 1.2 It must be stressed that, as the term suggests, a concessionary ride is a concession and, therefore no guarantees can be given about the availability of a seat. You need to be aware of this and to bear in mind that at some point in the future you may have to make alternative arrangements for your child's transport. This is very important if you are thinking about basing your choice of school on the availability of concessionary travel.
- 1.3 A charge is made for concessionary travel. The charge does not apply to a child who is under the age of 8 and in receipt of free school meals. If your child is between the ages of 11 and 16 and in receipt of free school meals you may be eligible for transport under the Extended Rights to Transport Scheme. For further information and advice please contact the School Transport Team 0345 6006400 or email schooltransport@northumberland.gov.uk.

2. How Much Does it Cost?

- 2.1 The charges which will apply for the 2019-2020 school year are £120.00 per term for a return journey and £60.00 per term for a one way journey..

Payment should be made termly in advance.

The charges will be reviewed annually in accordance with the principles outlined in the Authority's Home to School Transport Policy.

3. When Will I Know if My Child Can Have a Concessionary Ride?

The position regarding the availability of concessionary seats is not usually known until after the start of an academic year, **late** September. This is because priority is given to children for whom the Local Authority has a responsibility to provide free transport and students to returning post 16 education. Parents are therefore advised to ensure that alternative transport arrangements can be made in case a concessionary seat cannot be made available. Parents are also advised to make early application as seats will be allocated on a 'first come, first served' basis.

4. Where Would My Child Be Picked Up and Set Down?

- 4.1 The routes of private hire vehicles are organized to meet the Authority's responsibilities to children who are entitled to free transport. Your child would, therefore, be collected at

the nearest existing picking-up point which may be some distance from your home. It is not possible to re-route a vehicle for the benefit of concessionary riders.

- 4.2 The picking-up and setting-down points may be altered to reflect the needs of those pupils entitled to free home to school transport.

5. **Can the Concessionary Seat Be Withdrawn?**

- 5.1 A concessionary seat can be withdrawn for a variety of reasons:-

- the number of entitled children may increase;
- a vehicle may have to be re-routed to accommodate children who are entitled to free Home to School Transport;
- a reduction in the number of children who are entitled may lead to the rationalizations of transport routes in your area, or a reduction in the capacity of the vehicle used;
- the Authority re-tenders its school transport contracts which would substantially alter the network operating in your area.

- 5.2 The Authority cannot increase the capacity of the vehicle in order to accommodate concessionary riders.

- 5.3 If a vehicle becomes overcrowded because the number of children entitled to free home to school transport increases and it is necessary to withdraw some concessionary seats, it will be done in the following order:-

- children from outside the school's normal catchment area;
- children within the area served by the school;
- children within the area served by the school, but in receipt of free school meals.

Criteria have also been agreed to prioritise, if necessary, within the above categories. Details of these are available from the School Transport Team at County Hall upon receipt of a stamped addressed envelope.

- 5.4 A valid concessionary travel permit does not provide any guarantee of a seat. Wherever possible, a reasonable amount of warning is given to parents when it is necessary to withdraw a seat, or offer a less convenient picking-up or setting-down point.

Sometimes concessionary seats have to be withdrawn at a week's notice because the Local Education Authority must give priority to those children for whom it has a responsibility to provide free transport.

- 5.5 When a concessionary seat is withdrawn and payment has been made then a refund will be given on a pro-rata basis.

6. **How is Application made for a Concessionary Seat?**

- 6.1 The application form attached to the information sheet should be completed and returned to the Passenger Transport Unit, Sustainable Transport, Local Services, County Hall, Morpeth, Northumberland, NE61 2EF.