

Home to School Transport Policy

[Herefordshire.gov.uk](https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk)

Revised May 2022 V2.1



Contents

1.	Roles and responsibilities of parents.....	3
2.	Statutory provision of transport by the local authority.....	3
2.1	Pupils unable to attend their nearest school - over-subscription.....	4
2.2	Children living at more than one address.....	4
2.3	Families on low incomes.....	4
2.4	Universal Credit.....	5
2.5	Children unable to walk to school by reason of their disability, or mobility problem (including temporary medical conditions).....	5
2.6	Children unable to walk to school in safety because the route is classed as hazardous.....	5
3.	Discretionary provision of transport assistance.....	6
3.1	Permanent exclusions or managed moves.....	6
3.2	House moves.....	6
3.3	Temporary Housing.....	6
3.4	Changing School for other reasons.....	6
3.5	Exceptional Circumstances.....	7
3.6	Provision of transport to faith schools.....	7
4.	Use of vacant seats on school buses for pupils not eligible for transport assistance (paid-for places).....	7
5.	Transport provision.....	8
6.	Poor behaviour and withdrawal of transport.....	8
7.	Provision of transport for pupils with Special Education Needs.....	9
7.1	Risk Assessment.....	10
7.2	Transport provision.....	10
7.3	Transport assistance for Early Years.....	11
7.4	Review and withdrawal of service.....	11
7.5	Independent Travel Training.....	11
7.6	Use of passenger assistants.....	12
7.7	Additional discretionary powers for cases where any breach of equalities legislation may be evident.....	12
8.	Looked after children (LAC).....	12
9.	Residential schools.....	13
10.	How to apply for school transport.....	13
11.	Appeals – Two Stage Process.....	13
	Appendix 1 - Health & safety and behaviour advice for Pupils & Parents.....	15
	Appendix 2 – School transport in adverse weather.....	18
	Appendix 3 – Legislation & statutory guidance considered.....	21

Home to school transport policy

1. Roles and responsibilities of parents

Parents and carers have a legal responsibility to ensure that their children attend school regularly. This includes arranging travel to and from school, meeting the costs of this and accompanying their child as necessary.

It is the responsibility of the parent or carer to accompany a child (or arrange suitable supervision) as necessary when walking to and from school, including to and from a provided transport pick-up and set-down point, unless such arrangements form part of the provision arranged by the local authority. Passenger assistants will only be supplied on provided transport arrangements where they are necessary to meet a child's individual needs.

In some cases, the Council has a legal obligation to provide suitable free school transport. This will be provided in the most cost-effective and appropriate way for children's needs. This policy sets out the categories of eligible children, the provision offered, circumstances when assistance is not provided and how to appeal against a decision.

2. Statutory provision of transport by the local authority

Travel assistance from home to school will be provided for pupils who meet all the following criteria:

- Live in Herefordshire
- Are of compulsory school age (i.e. 5 to 16 years), and extended in Herefordshire to include 4 year olds
- Attend their nearest school
- Live over 2 miles from school if below the age of 8, and over 3 miles from school if aged between 8 and 16

In addition, there are some additional entitlements for pupils from families with low incomes (see Section 2.3).

Where the nearest school is in Wales, transport will be provided to that nearest school or the nearest school in England.

The Department for Education (DfE) defines the 'nearest school' as the nearest qualifying school with places available that provides education appropriate to the age, ability and aptitude of the child, and any special educational needs that the child may have.

Where a pupil attends a school that is not the nearest available school, as a result of parental preference, transport will not normally be provided.

For distances below those described above, transport will not be provided, as the route is considered to be within the statutory walking distance, along which a child,

accompanied as necessary, can walk reasonably safely (see section 2.6 – Hazardous Routes).

The statutory walking distance is measured by the shortest available walking route using a road and/or made up footpath using the nearest node on the transport network to the property point. The effect of this is to take you to the front door and not take into consideration other entrances (such as rear garden gates/ short cuts). This is particularly pertinent in a rural area like Herefordshire where rural properties can have multiple access points.

In producing this policy consideration has been given to Herefordshire Council's Equality Act duties, applicable legislation, and statutory guidance, a full list of which can be viewed at appendix 3.

2.1 Pupils unable to attend their nearest school due to over-subscription

Where a pupil is unable to obtain a place at their qualifying school because it is over-subscribed, travel assistance will be provided to the next nearest school that has an available place, provided that it is more than the statutory walking distance from the home address.

2.2 Children living at more than one address

The home address of a child is defined as the only or main permanent residential address, at the time of application, where the child usually resides and which is the usual address of the parent/carer with main responsibility for the child.

If arrangements are such that a child resides at two addresses for equal amounts of time, then parents must decide which address to use for school transport purposes. Where more than one parent submits an application for a child, or where there is a parent not in agreement with the preferences, the Local Authority may not be able to process any application until agreement over the preferences is reached. Failure to ensure agreement prior to submission, may result in a delay in any application being processed and in some instances, where agreement cannot be reached we may not be able to proceed until a legal resolution has been sought and the courts determine which parent can make the final decision.

2.3 Families on low incomes

Children from low income groups (defined as being entitled to free school meals or a family in receipt of the maximum level of Working Tax Credit) have the following additional entitlements to transport free of charge:

- For secondary-aged children aged 11-16, the entitlement to free transport is increased to any one of three nearest schools, where these are between 2 and 6 miles from home.
- Primary aged children of 8 and above (years 4 to 6) attending their nearest suitable school that is more than 2 miles from home are entitled to free transport.

- Where a parent or carer expresses a preference for a school based on religion or belief, then a child aged 11-16 is eligible for free transport to the nearest suitable school if they live between 2 and 15 miles of the school.

Evidence of eligibility to the maximum level of Working Tax Credit or free school meals must be supplied. Free school meals entitlement must be registered with the Local Authority.

Eligibility for transport support provided under the low income criteria above will be reviewed on an annual basis.

2.4 Universal Credit

There is no statutory duty on Local Authorities to consider receipt of Universal Credit itself in determining eligibility for Extended Rights to Home to School Transport under this section. However, currently, pupils in households that receive Universal Credit and have a household income of less than £7,400 are eligible for free school meals and it is this eligibility for free school meals specifically that entitles them to extended rights to free home to school transport under this section.

Eligibility under Universal Credit will be reviewed as and when there is further Guidance from the Department for Education.

2.5 Children unable to walk to school by reason of their disability, or mobility problem (including temporary medical conditions)

Where a child attends their nearest suitable school, which is within statutory walking distance, but is unable to walk there (accompanied as necessary), they may be eligible for transport assistance.

Applications in this category will be considered on a case-by-case basis and may require evidence from a medical professional and assessment of need. Evidence of factors such as receipt of certain disability benefits may also be requested to assess the level of need.

2.6 Children unable to walk to school in safety because the route is classed as hazardous

Where a child is attending their nearest school, which is within statutory walking distance, but the nature of the route is such that a child cannot be expected to walk (accompanied as necessary) in reasonable safety because it contains exceptional hazards, they will be eligible for transport assistance.

In order for a route to qualify in this category, it must have been assessed and classified as an unsafe walking route by Herefordshire Council. Assessments take into consideration factors such as the age of the child, vision for pedestrians and motorists, the volume and speed of traffic, street lighting, potential risks on the route, width of the road and the existence of footways.

Assessments do not take account of issues of personal security, as it is the responsibility of a parent or carer to accompany their child as necessary when walking to and from school.

Such routes will be reassessed by the local authority periodically.

3. Discretionary provision of transport assistance

In addition to the statutory duty to provide transport assistance to the eligible pupils outlined above, the local authority will exercise its discretion to provide transport to pupils as follows.

3.1 Permanent exclusions or managed moves

Where a child changes school as a result of a permanent exclusion, managed move, or peer on peer abuse then transport assistance will be provided if the school is beyond the statutory walking distance and the local authority agrees with the preference.

3.2 House moves

Where a pupil in receipt of free transport moves house and continues to attend the same school, but that school is no longer the nearest, then transport assistance will no longer be provided.

Transport support provided on exceptional grounds (see section 3.6) will normally cease if a family move to an area served by a school with places available in the relevant year group.

Transport will not be provided for children who have been displaced from their home because of family related issues (e.g. family disagreements).

3.3 Temporary Housing

Where a family has been temporarily re-housed for reasons beyond the families control consideration will be given to provide transport assistance to the child's current school whilst they are waiting for permanent housing providing the distance criteria is met. This would be considered for a maximum of two academic terms in order for families to find alternative accommodation or make their own transport arrangements.

3.4 Changing School for other reasons:

Applications for transport support following a parents' decision to change schools (whether or not the decision is supported/encouraged by the existing or receiving school) will not be considered unless all avenues of support at the current school have been pursued and the move is supported by professionals from Herefordshire Council's social work or educational teams

3.5 Exceptional Circumstances

Transport assistance may be provided in exceptional circumstances to pupils not otherwise eligible. Such circumstances may include exceptional family circumstances where the pupil might be at risk of educational disruption.

The overriding expectation is that parents should undertake their legal responsibility to get their child(ren) to and from school and as such the Council will need to be satisfied that the parent has demonstrated why they cannot undertake this duty.

Evidence to support such applications will be required from relevant professionals. Each application will be considered on its own merits.

3.6 Provision of transport to 'faith' schools

Where a parent or carer expresses a preference for a school based on religion or belief, and the child is from a low income group (defined as being entitled to free school meals or a family in receipt of the maximum level of Working Tax Credit), then a child aged 11-16 is eligible for free transport to the nearest school of their faith if they live between 2 and 15 miles of the school. See section 2.3.

Where the low income criteria are not met we may be able to provide transport to the nearest school of your faith providing your child is attending on genuine denominational grounds, in return for a contribution towards the transport costs. Your child must live between 3 and 15 miles from school, or between 2 and 15 miles from school if aged under eight.

Where transport assistance is provided you may need to meet the allocated bus at a stop along its existing route, travel between home and the stop is the responsibility of parents and carers.

The latest charges and qualifying schools can be viewed on the councils [website](#).

4. Use of vacant seats on school buses for pupils not eligible for transport assistance (paid-for places)

Where spare seats are available on vehicles contracted by the local authority to provide transport to school, these may be allocated to children not entitled to free transport. A flat rate charge is made for these seats and they are allocated according to the following priority order:

- Children with an Educational, Health & Care Plan that names the school
- Looked after children
- Year 11 pupils
- Siblings of pupils currently receiving assisted transport on that service
- Pupils nearest to the school

The situation will be reviewed each term. Places could be withdrawn at any time if they are required by pupils with an entitlement for transport assistance.

You will be required to meet the allocated bus at a stop along its existing route, travel between home and the stop remains the responsibility of parents.

5. Transport provision

Where the authority provides transport assistance, this will usually be in the form of a bus pass to use a local bus service or travel on a dedicated contract bus, coach or minibus. For certain journeys, a train pass may be provided. In some circumstances, parents may be offered a mileage allowance or personal transport budget to convey their own child to school. In some instances, where no other transport is available, a taxi may be provided.

Transport arrangements will be made that are considered reasonable and appropriate by the local authority. Equally, such arrangements will be made in the most cost-effective way for the authority.

There are no set limits for what is a reasonable journey time. This will depend on the age and needs of pupils. However, we aim to ensure that no pupil will have a journey of more than 75 minutes (secondary) or 45 minutes (primary).

The Council provides transport for one return journey from home to the school at the official beginning and end of the school day. Transport will only be provided to meet a pupil's individual timetable in exceptional circumstances, and when all reasonable adjustments have been made. Transport will not be provided for breakfast or after-school clubs, extra-curricular activities, work experience placements, work-based learning or travel between establishments (school to school).

Transport is not usually provided from door-to-door. Children may be required to walk (accompanied by an appropriate adult as necessary) to and from designated pick-up or set-down points. The distance to such a point will not normally exceed 1 mile for a primary-aged pupil and 1.5 miles for a secondary-aged pupil. These distances are a guide and not a confirmed distance. The maximum distances will depend on a range of circumstances, including the age of the child, their individual needs and the nature of the routes they are required to walk.

Generally, the driver of school transport vehicles will be the only adult present during journeys. Parents and children must follow the safety and behaviour guidelines listed in section 12 of this document when using school transport.

Lost and stolen bus or rail passes can be replaced on payment of an administration charge.

6. Poor behaviour and withdrawal of transport

In the interests of safety for everyone using school transport, it is important that pupils behave well while travelling.

Head teachers are empowered to take action to address unacceptable behaviour even when this takes place outside of the school premises, when it is reasonable to do so. This includes addressing any behavioural issues on school transport.

Any contact with Herefordshire Council employees, its contractors, or other passengers should be conducted in a reasonable way. Unreasonable behaviour would be seen as behaviour or language, in whatever form whether face to face, by telephone, social media, SMS (text message) or written that may cause employees, contractors, or passengers to feel intimidated, threatened or abused. Examples may include:

- threats of violence
- verbal abuse
- racist or sexist language
- derogatory remarks
- offensive language
- rudeness
- making inflammatory statements
- raising unsubstantiated allegations
- any form of physical abuse

The Council has a duty of care to ensure all children travel in reasonable safety and comfort. Any behaviour affecting other passengers, the public or the driver that endangers (whether intentionally or unintentionally) themselves or others may lead to the entitlement to travel being withdrawn, either temporarily or permanently. In such circumstances, the parent will need to arrange and pay for their own transport in order to meet their duty to ensure that their child continues to attend school.

7. Provision of transport for pupils with Special Education Needs

Each individual pupil's special educational needs SEND, as detailed in a formal Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP), or other form of professionally recognised assessment, will be taken into account at the time of assessment for transport.

Where the distance to the appropriate school is less than the statutory walking distances, travel assistance will be considered, taking into account the individual circumstances and the travel needs of the child. Travel assistance will be considered using supporting written evidence, within the preceding 12 months, from a range of sources. Factors that will be considered include:

Mobility

Does the child have a severe physical or medical difficulty that prevents either walking to school, or the use of available public transport even if accompanied. This may include conditions such as:

- Long term severely restricted mobility – for example, circumstances requiring the daily use of significant physical aids such as a wheelchair.

- Long term medical condition resulting in severely restricted mobility due to pain and/or extreme tiredness - for example, juvenile arthritis.
- Long term medical condition resulting in restrictive mobility leading to serious health and safety risks - for example, severe epilepsy or life threatening heart defects.
- A sensory impairment resulting in severely restricted mobility - for example, where a child is effectively without the use of sight.

Behaviour

This will involve assessing whether or not the child's behaviour is so disruptive that he/she would be deemed highly vulnerable or at serious risk of danger to themselves or others if they were to walk to school, or use available public transport even if accompanied.. This may include circumstances where:

- A child has a disability leading to significant social, and / or emotional immaturity in comparison with other children of his / her age. This may mean a child's behaviour leaves them extremely vulnerable in social settings – for example, a child with Autism who has very little awareness of personal danger
- A child with severe learning difficulties who has an inability to manage the complexity of the process with safety or demonstrates constant challenging behaviour suggesting that this child cannot make an accompanied journey.

7.1 Risk Assessment

Once a pupil is assessed as being eligible for transport assistance, a risk assessment will be undertaken to determine the most appropriate requirements for that individual pupil on the journey to and from school. This assessment will take account of measures to ensure the safety and comfort of that pupil and any other pupils or staff travelling on the vehicle. Following the assessment, appropriate safety equipment may be required on the vehicle. If a harness or restraint is likely to be necessary, this requirement will be discussed with parents or carers, who will be asked to agree to this, and may be asked to supply appropriate equipment.

7.2 Transport provision

Transport will be arranged in the most cost-effective way and may involve travel by rail, local bus, contract bus or taxi. Door to door transport will only be provided where this is necessary to meet the assessed needs of the child. Therefore, pupils (accompanied by parent or carer) may be required to get to a designated pick-up point.

If a parent or carer does not agree with any aspect of transport assistance provided by the authority, then this should be taken up with the Passenger Transport Team. If a parent or carer chooses to withdraw a pupil from transport because they do not agree with any aspect, then they will become responsible for getting the pupil to school themselves and at their own expense, until the matter has been investigated.

7.3 Transport assistance for Early Years

Children below compulsory school age attending the nearest suitable special school to access an early years placement may be provided with transport assistance if exceptional circumstances can be demonstrated, which result in the family being unable to get the child to the placement without travel support (having exhausted all possible alternatives). If discretionary support is offered, it will be the most cost-efficient option for the Local Authority. Parent/carers would be expected to make a contribution towards total costs in line with the current parental contribution rate.

A school recognised as the nearest suitable school for the purpose of early years transport assessment, will continue to be recognised as the nearest for the duration of primary education. Unless otherwise agreed by both the parents/carers and Local Authority.

In deciding whether to provide early years transport assistance the following will be considered as a minimum:

- The medical needs of the child
- The location, and travel time to the early years placement
- The impacts on the family of transporting themselves
- Any disabilities that parents/carers may have
- The cost of providing appropriate transport support

Parents/carers will be required to provide supporting information with their application which may include, medical information, supporting letters from employers, or other information relevant to the case.

7.4 Review and withdrawal of service

Travel assistance will be reviewed with parents and education and care professionals who know the child and are part of the statement or EHC Plan review. The Council may also review eligibility by a scheduled meeting or by telephone contact. Parents will be told of all decisions in writing. We need to ensure that the service provided continues to be appropriate for the pupil's assessed needs.

In the event that there is a risk to health and safety of staff or pupils and others using the transport from the misbehaviour of a pupil, access to school transport may be suspended and in serious cases permanently withdrawn as set out in the main school transport policy. When considering suspension or withdrawal of provision regard will be given to the extent to which the child's disability has impacted on their behaviour and what steps can be taken to eliminate the effect of that disability on their behaviour.

7.5 Independent Travel Training

Independent Travel Training can help support independence by developing personal, social and life skills by looking at the needs and capabilities of a young person. Where the Local Authority considers a young person is sufficiently capable, independent travel training will be arranged for them to develop the skills to be able

to travel more independently. Where they attain the necessary confidence and ability, we will expect them to travel independently to and from school.

The training will be given by an approved trainer in partnership with schools and parents or carers.

7.6 Use of passenger assistants

Passenger assistants are provided on transport only where a child has a severe physical condition, or severe behavioural difficulties meaning that the health and safety of the child, driver or anyone else travelling in the vehicle would be at risk. The use of an assistant will be reviewed regularly, since the need may change as the child grows older.

A passenger assistant's duty is to supervise students on a vehicle and to ensure a safe and comfortable journey to and from school.

Passenger Assistants will only be provided to meet more complex individual needs such as medical or health requirements where there is supporting professional evidence that such support is necessary to ensure a child's safe journey to and from school. Only Passenger Assistants who have received appropriate specific training with regard to an individual child's needs will be able to provide such support. A treatment plan will need to be agreed by the Local Authority, parents, and health professionals before any transport can commence.

7.7 Additional discretionary powers for cases where any breach of equalities legislation may be evident

If a council decides not to provide discretionary transport from its education transport budget, there may be a social care duty under s.2(1)(c) Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act 1970 (CSDPA) to provide 'assistance to [a disabled person] in taking advantage of educational facilities available to him'. Our policy allows for such discretionary intervention where appropriate.

8. Looked after children (LAC)

Where a child is in the care of the Local Authority, transport may be provided to a school which is not that child's nearest qualifying school or designated school if in the opinion of the case-worker involved with the child it would be detrimental to the child's wellbeing if he/she were to be moved to another school. Each case will be considered in consultation with the Social Care Team Manager or a delegated officer and as a general rule will be for a limited period. Such arrangements will usually only be considered for the first term/year.

In considering the merits of keeping a child at a school which is not the nearest professionals will consider the impacts of longer journey times on the child's wellbeing, the likely duration of any temporary home moves, and whether the child is in year 6, 10, or 11.

9. Residential schools

Where a child attends a residential school and is entitled to transport assistance, this is provided at the start and end of each half-term or, at the start and end of each week depending on the boarding arrangements. Transport is also provided for official school closures. Transport will not be provided at other times or for parental visits for meetings.

Where a pupil attends a qualifying residential school, transport assistance will be arranged by the local authority in accordance with the placement terms agreed.

10. How to apply for school transport

If you believe you qualify for transport assistance, or you would like to apply for a seat under the Vacant Seat Payment Scheme, please complete an application by visiting www.herefordshire.gov.uk and searching for school transport.

If your child has any medical conditions or special educational needs that need to be taken account of when assessing transport please supply any supporting information along with the completed application form.

11. Appeals – Two Stage Process

Stage 1

Parents have the right to appeal against the initial decision made by officers in Passenger Transport on the grounds of non-provision of transport.

All 1st stage appeals must be submitted by completing the Request for Review of Transport Entitlement Decision form available to download from the Council's website at this [link](#)

All appeals are individually assessed by a Senior Officer in the Transport and Access Department against the Authority's approved Home to School Transport Policy taking into account special circumstances. Evidence to substantiate any special circumstances must be supplied at the time of appeal.

Appellants are advised in writing, within 20 working days of receipt of the appeal detailing reasoning for the decision, including what factors were considered, details of who was consulted and information of how to escalate to the next stage.

Stage 2

If the appellant is still not happy they can request that the complaint is referred to an independent review panel. All 2nd stage appeals must be submitted by completing the Request for Review of Transport Entitlement Decision form available to download from the Council's website at this [link](#). The Panel will be convened within 40 working days of the request. You will have the option to attend the panel hearing

in person to present your case, or for the panel to review your case based on written evidence.

The Panel sends a decision letter within 5 working days, including detail of how to escalate to (Local Government Ombudsman) LGO.

Complaints with the way applications or appeals are handled should be made through the Authority's [complaints procedure](#).

Appendix 1 - Health & safety and behaviour advice for Pupils & Parents

Pupils

- Be Punctual and arrive at the stop before your bus is due.
- Queue away from the carriageway in a sensible manner having respect for nearby residents and property.
- Don't panic if your bus is late or does not arrive, if you have a mobile phone use it to contact home, school or another rider if you know they should be on the bus.
- You should discuss with your parents a plan of action in case you are refused travel or if due to exceptional circumstances e.g. road diversions or deteriorating weather the bus is not able to follow the normal route to your usual stop. In such circumstances you must contact your parents.
- Always ensure that you have your bus pass with you and present it to the driver/ company official upon boarding each time you travel and whenever requested. Allow the driver time to examine this properly.
- Lost or damaged bus passes must be replaced. There is normally a charge for this.
- In the event of an accident we would need to know all the children who are travelling on the bus. Do not take your friends home on the bus unless they have a bus pass for the same bus as you. If you want friends to travel home with you, you will need to make alternative travel arrangements.
- If you are using Public Transport have consideration for other passengers.
- Do NOT board a vehicle whilst wearing dirty sports kit or other soiled clothing or footwear.
- Do NOT push OR rush towards the vehicle when it arrives as you may push someone into the path of the moving vehicle. Only move to board the vehicle when it has stopped and the door has been opened. NEVER try to force any door unless informed to do so by the driver or in an EMERGENCY.
- If you cannot show your valid bus pass you may be refused entry onto the vehicle. NB When you are transported by bus into school you will be allowed travel on the afternoon journey home.
- Board the bus in an orderly manner sitting down quietly and quickly, and fastening your seat belt (where fitted).
- Show respect to the bus driver, following his instructions at all times and treat the vehicle with respect. Additionally, show respect to all other riders and their belongings.
- Place belongings in a safe place where they do not obstruct the gangway or use up valuable seat space.
- Smoking and the consumption of food or drink on the vehicle are not allowed. Do NOT drop litter or throw anything around the vehicle
- Always remain seated when the vehicle is moving and wear the seatbelts provided at all times.
- Do NOT stand, climb or kneel on seats and have respect for the vehicle and other people's property.
- Do NOT lean against any bus windows or throw items out of open windows.

- Only speak to the driver when he or she is not driving or in an emergency or when requesting a stop. Remember that excessive noise can distract the driver and could lead to an accident.
- Please request your stop in good time and wait until the vehicle has stopped before standing and moving along the vehicle aisle.
- Make sure you have your belongings with you when you leave the vehicle (but be prepared to leave your belongings behind in an emergency).
- If you have forgotten something, take care if you return to the vehicle as the driver may be pulling away and may not have seen you return. In that case wait until the next journey to retrieve your belongings, telling your teacher what has happened.
- If you have to cross the road after getting off the bus always allow the bus to move off, unless the driver instructs you otherwise. Always use the Green Cross Code to cross the road.
- If the vehicle breaks down or is involved in an accident follow any instructions given to you by the driver. You should not leave the vehicle unless instructed to do so by the driver or in an emergency. Be aware of the location of the emergency Exit on the vehicle. In these circumstances, all riders should remain together in a safe spot in the vicinity of the vehicle.
- If you do leave the vehicle, do not continue your journey unaccompanied or without informing the driver of your name, where you are heading and the route you plan to take.
- Behave sensibly and safely at all times and if you see any incidents taking place act responsibly. You can report incidents to your school or the transport office in confidence.
- Many school buses are equipped with CCTV and anyone identified who is not complying with the advice in this section may be banned from school transport

Parents

- Be Punctual. Remember it is your responsibility to ensure your child gets to and from the bus in safety. Make sure that your child knows what to do if the bus is late or does not arrive.
- If your child has a mobile phone with them please ask them to let you know if they have any major delays or problems with their transport.
- Ensure that your child always carries his or her bus pass. If lost or damaged, travel may be refused if riders cannot produce a valid bus pass. Replacement bus passes are available for a small fee on request.
- Please discuss with your child what they should do if they are refused entry onto a vehicle, the bus is late or the bus does not arrive.
- Transport is provided from set pick up points near your home address to school and return only. Please do not ask the driver to pick up or drop off your child at different places.
- In exceptional circumstances it is the Driver's/Operator who must decide upon whether a route is passable when faced with deteriorating weather conditions or chance road diversions.
- Only children listed as riders on each bus are allowed to travel on the bus. If your children want friends to travel home with them who do not have the relevant bus pass, alternative travel arrangements will have to be made. In

the event of an accident, we would need to know the names of the children who are travelling on the bus.

- Wait with your child at a safe stop preferably on the side of the road where the bus collects them.
- If waiting for school transport with your own vehicle please have respect for any near neighbours of the bus stopping point.
- Encourage your child to show respect to other passengers and their belongings
- Buses are NO SMOKING areas and drivers and passengers must comply
- No food or drink is to be consumed aboard the school bus.
- Advise your child that when vehicles are fitted with seat belts it is a legal requirement that these must be worn and secured by themselves especially on the return journey home and if they transfer vehicles en route.
- Encourage your child to request their bus stop in good time
- Ensure that young children are met when the bus returns from school. Once riders alight from the bus they are no longer the Bus Driver's responsibility.
- Teach your child how to cross the road from the bus stop. Make sure your child knows and understands the Green Cross Code.
- Many larger school contract vehicles are fitted with CCTV. This is for the safety of all school transport riders and may be used to investigate any incidents including misbehaviour or criminal damage.
- You should consider providing your child with reflective hi-visibility clothing for walking to and from the bus stop.
- If you have any concerns regarding school transport please contact the school transport office.
- Please ensure your child is aware of the consequences arising from vandalism. Whilst this problem is only caused by a small minority, parents should be aware that they will be held responsible for any damage caused by their children and any such children may:
 - receive a temporary or permanent travel ban from all school transport
 - be required to pay for any damage caused
 - be prosecuted by the police

Appendix 2 – School transport in adverse weather

During periods of adverse weather some or all home-to-school transport services may not operate, or alternatively operate a curtailed service depending upon local road conditions.

Decisions to cancel or amend school transport services are taken in the interests of the safety and welfare of pupils, school transport drivers and other road users. These decisions are taken in consultation with the Council's road network contractor Balfour Beatty, Emergency Services, and Local Government departments.

Depending on the level of disruption expected, decisions on whether to operate a school transport service may be delegated to individual transport operators and schools as they will be the parties most aware of local weather and road conditions.

Assessment of Disruption

Herefordshire Council Passenger Transport will assess and set an expected disruption level for school transport by 16:00 on the day preceding the expected disruption. In setting a disruption level the following will be taken in to consideration:

- National and local weather forecasts provided by the Met Office.
- Reports of local road conditions
- Planned winter maintenance schedules
- Advice from Emergency services
- Notification of any school closures already received
- Notification of any cancelled bus routes already received

Once agreed, disruption levels will be valid for both AM and PM return journey's unless updated.

Disruption Level	Situation	Communication Method
Severe	The Council will cancel, or curtail school transport services due to expected severe disruption	Herefordshire Council to notify, affected services to schools, operators and public
Partial	Transport operators and schools will cancel, or curtail services based on local road condition assessments	Transport operators and schools are to notify Herefordshire Council and parents
Elevated	Some disruption is expected but no cancellation, or curtailment of services is expected	Local road conditions updates to be published via Council's alert system
Low	No disruption is expected or previous disruption is expected to no longer affect services	None

Cancellation of Services – Severe Disruption (Herefordshire Council)

If the event the Council takes the decision not to operate some, or all school transport routes notification will be issued as follows:

- Email notification's will be sent to transport operators and schools
- The Council's Emergency Planning Duty Officer (EPDO) will be informed
- An alert will be posted on the council's school closure web pages

Cancellation of Services – Partial Disruption (Operator & School)

Any decision to cancel or amend the operation of some or all school transport services to an education establishment, will be made by the operator following consultation with the head teacher or his/her deputy and will have regard to the prevailing and forecast weather and road conditions along with any advice from Police and/or any other appropriate agency.

In the event of cancellations being notified by the operator or school the Passenger Transport Team will take the following action:

- The Council's Emergency Planning Duty Officer (EPDO) will be informed
- An alert will be posted on the council's school closure web pages

Return Transport

In the event of the journey to school being cancelled on the grounds of adverse weather conditions, the operator or Council will not be responsible for conveying pupils home in the afternoon. In such circumstances, parents of pupils who normally travel on school transport are asked not to bring their children to school themselves.

Should parents ignore this advice and, at their own risk, choose to bring their children to school the parents then become responsible for conveying their children home again at the end of the school day, or earlier, if it becomes necessary to send all pupils home and close the school due to worsening weather conditions.

Early closure of schools

Should weather conditions deteriorate significantly during the course of the school day, the head teacher or their deputy may decide to close the school to all pupils or to those who travel by school transport. In such circumstances it is the schools responsibility to contact transport operators. Operators are required to provide the necessary vehicles to transport the pupils home at the earliest opportunity.

Information and Communication

Information will normally be posted on the council's school closure web pages before 7am in the morning. However, it is not always possible to alert parents of service cancellations or route variations within this timescale, depending upon developing

localised weather conditions. As such pupils should wait no longer than 20 minutes at the designated pick-up point, and, if no school transport vehicle arrives, then return home or follow the instructions given by their parent or carer regarding the situation.

It is clearly important that parents/guardians retain a means of communication with their children should the school transport service not operate, and it must be stressed that the responsibility for the safety and welfare of children prior to boarding the school transport service remains with the parent or carer.

There may also be relevant announcements on local radio.

Appendix 3 – Legislation & statutory guidance considered

In producing the Herefordshire home to school transport policy the following legislation and statutory guidance has been considered.

- 1. The Equality Act 2010**
- 2. The European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR)**
- 3. Home to School Travel and Transport Statutory Guidance 2014**
- 4. Education Act 1996**
 - a. Section 7 - Duty of parents to secure education of children of compulsory school age
 - b. Section 19 (1) Provision of education in pupil referral units
 - c. Section 444 (3)48 Offence: failure to secure regular attendance at school of registered pupil
 - d. Section 508A49 Duty to promote sustainable modes of travel
 - e. Section 508B50 - Travel arrangements for eligible children
 - f. Section 508C51 - Travel arrangements for other children
 - g. Section 508D - Guidance in relations to sections 508B and 508C
 - h. Section 509AD52 - Duty to have regard to religion or belief in exercise of travel functions
 - i. Schedule 35B53 - Meaning of “eligible child”
- 5. School Information (England) Regulations 2008**
- 6. Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act 1970 (CSDPA)**