

Concessionary Seats on School Transport - A Guide for Parents

Introduction

This leaflet provides information about the concessionary seat scheme. It is aimed at those parents who already know that their child is NOT entitled to free school transport.

For general advice on school transport or the rules about who can get free transport, please contact **0845 155 1019**

What are Concessionary Seats?

These are spare seats on contract school coaches and taxis that are sold to pupils who are not entitled to free transport.

A seat is "spare" if no one is allocated to that seat. A seat is not spare if on some days a pupil entitled to free travel decides not to use it. Just because a seat is allocated does not mean that it will be occupied on every journey. Students can be absent from school, or can make other arrangements for travel to school. Seats that are allocated to other pupils cannot be given to anyone else. We cannot risk an overload by "overbooking" like some airlines. We have to assume that everyone who is allocated a seat will want to travel to school and the pupil with a free seat has a legal entitlement to use the seat at any time.

Are concessionary seats always available?

No. We do not design the transport network so that spare seats are created to meet demand. It is really just good fortune that a spare seat exists. Our job is to run the most cost-effective network to serve pupils entitled to free transport.

We are not allowed to sell concessionary seats on any contract vehicle where a local public bus service provides a similar journey.

Are concessionary seats guaranteed?

No. Concessionary Seats are withdrawn if we need the seat for someone who is entitled to free transport. Seats may also be withdrawn if we make changes to the transport network. Regular network reviews take place that can lead to spare places being removed. When we sell concessionary seats, we make it clear to parents that they will be given one week's notice when we need to withdraw the concession.

We will also withdraw concessionary seats from pupils who misbehave on school transport and do not normally allow such pupils to return.

What is the period of notice?

Most seats are now issued on a week's notice. The notice period may include weekends, bank and public holidays and school holidays.

So what happens when the seat is withdrawn?

You must make your own arrangements for getting your child to school.

Will you change transport routes to pick up concessionary riders?

No. Routes will not be altered, re-timed or run on extra days to meet the needs of a concessionary passenger.

How much do Concessionary Seats Cost?

Concessionary seats cost £96 per term. Seats can be paid for each half term, or for morning or afternoon journeys only. Refunds are available on a pro rata basis.

Do I get my money back if you withdraw my concession?

Yes. We will calculate how much you are owed and issue a refund

How can payment be made?

Payment can be by cheque, credit card or direct debit.

How can applications be made?

If you want to apply for a concessionary seat, please complete the attached application form and return it to us as soon as possible. Please detach and keep this guidance sheet for reference.

What happens then?

We will check to see if there is a route that links your home area to your child's school. If we find a route in the area, we will check to see if there are spare seats on this route. This might take a little while. We might have to conduct loading checks, check pupil lists with schools or take into account pupils about to start school.

Will I get a concessionary seat in time for the start of the school year in September?

No. The start of the school year is our busiest time and no seats will be released until after the October half term. It takes us a few weeks to be sure about the number of pupils who need transport and to put in place the transport network we need. Even though some seats might be spare at the start of term, we might be making plans to change transport so that the seats are about to disappear. We cannot make exceptions even for younger brothers and sisters of pupils who already have concessionary seats. You should not rely on getting a concessionary seat to get your child to your choice of school.

Can I check the progress of my application?

We prefer you not to telephone during August and September to enquire about the availability of seats as we are busy trying to get the transport network into shape and it will not be possible to give you a decision. At other times we will try to give you a decision as soon as possible.

How will I hear whether my application has been successful?

If we can offer you a concessionary seat, we will write to you enclosing a payment form. You must send us payment for the seat before we can send you a ticket and allow your child to travel. The County Council operates a "No Ticket - No Travel" policy, so please do not try to use transport without a ticket.

What if there is no concessionary seat?

If there is a suitable route but no space, we will add your child's name to a waiting list and contact you if a spare seat becomes available. Our letter will explain how the waiting list works. We will tell you if there is no suitable route. You can also check with the local Traveline which will give you details of any local bus services you could use to make the journey – telephone 0870 608 2 608

School Transport Code of Conduct

We have a Code of Conduct because we want everyone to stay safe and travel in comfort. A Code of Conduct leaflet is enclosed with this application form. Please sign the form with your child.

APPLICATION FOR A TICKET TO OCCUPY A CONCESSIONARY SEAT ON SCHOOL TRANSPORT

Concessionary travel on school transport is allowed subject to capacity being available. However, the place may be withdrawn at any time, but one week's notice will be given, or less if previously agreed with you.

A ticket will be issued for such travel on payment of the fee, currently **£96** per term, providing a space is still available when the completed application form and payment is received. If transport for AM or PM only is required the current fee is **£48** per term. Please note that we do not accept pro-rata payments. **PLEASE DO NOT SEND PAYMENT WITH THIS FORM. PAYMENT WILL BE REQUIRED ONCE A SEAT HAS BEEN AGREED.**

Tickets are required to be shown to the driver or any other authorised person and travel will not be possible on school transport without a valid ticket. **Please note: Children who fail to produce a ticket will be prohibited from travelling without prior notice.**

Term Transport Required: **College/School attended:**

Child/ Student's first name: **Surname:**

Address:

Post code: **Nearest picking up point:**

Date of birth: **Telephone no:**

Please indicate when transport is required: AM only PM only AM & PM

Code of Conduct for pupils who use home to school/college transport

We want all passengers to stay safe and travel in comfort. A Code of Conduct leaflet is enclosed. Please read the leaflet carefully then sign below to say that you agree with the code. **Transport cannot be provided unless the Code of Conduct agreement is signed.**

I have read and agree to abide by the Code of Conduct: Pupil

I (signed) wish to apply for a concessionary seat for my child. I have read the notes for guidance and understand that, if granted, the seat is not guaranteed and may need to be withdrawn after the period of notice agreed at the time a seat is offered. I have noted the advice that it is unwise to rely on concessionary travel to secure school attendance and I am aware that if the concession is withdrawn then I will be responsible for securing school attendance through other means. I understand the sanctions that may be imposed if my child does not abide by the School Transport Code of Conduct.

Name of Parent/Carer:

Signature of Parent/Carer:

NB: The information on this form will be retained in our database whilst your child occupies a concessionary seat.

Please return this form to:

**DEVON COUNTY COUNCIL, TRANSPORT CO-ORDINATION SERVICE,
MATFORD LANE OFFICES, COUNTY HALL, TOPSHAM ROAD, EXETER, EX2 4QW**