

12 December 2022

Dear Colleague

### **School transport for children with special educational needs (SEN)**

I'm writing to let you know about the council's SEN school transport policy and how families can apply for transport for the 2023/24 academic year, starting in August/September 2023.

I would really appreciate if you could help disseminate this information to your parents as early as possible.

I wanted to write to you early, as we are making some adjustments to the closing date for applications, with the overall aim of improving the service we deliver.

The Council provides SEN transport assistance to around 2600 children. Each year, the Council reorganises transport according to all children who either move schools, move school site, move home, start school for the first time or indeed leave school. The volume of applications for these groups was over 1800 during the summer period ending 2022. As a result, this task requires as much time as possible to assess eligibility, complete transport risk assessments and plan efficient transport arrangements, in order to confirm these in time for the start of the school year.

Next year, the closing date for applications will be brought forward to allow more time for processing applications and arranging transport. Closing dates for each age group are detailed below.

It is really important that parents apply for transport assistance as early as possible. We will endeavour to arrange transport for the start of the new academic year for all applications received by the respective closing dates with the following exceptions:

- Incomplete applications that require clarification from parents
- Applications that require further information from parents in order to determine eligibility to transport
- Applications where school places are yet to be confirmed

#### **Please note:**

**Applications received after the closing date will be processed in date received order but there is no guarantee that transport will be available for the start of the school year.**

**It remains impossible to plan and arrange transport if school places have not been confirmed to us.**

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Below is a summary of the transport we provide, by age group:

### **Students aged 16-18 (deadline 31 March 2023)**

- All students in this group will need to apply for transport assistance
- Students in this group who are eligible for transport assistance will be offered a Personal Transport Budget (PTB) as standard. Families will need to appeal the offer of a PTB so that we can consider individual and exceptional circumstances.
- Families who have previously been granted Council organised transport on appeal and where their circumstances remain the same, will be able to apply for Council organised transport again without the need to appeal.
- In both cases there is a charge for transport assistance of £660 per year (or £330 for low income families). This can be paid by debit or credit card in one lump sum or in up to eight monthly instalments. For those with a PTB the charge is deducted from their monthly payments.
- Families of 16-18 year old students **must** re-apply every year. This year's deadline is 31 March 2023.

### **Students aged 19+ (deadline 31 March 2023)**

- The legislation that applies to this group is slightly different to that of students aged 16-18 and for that reason, families of this group will continue to be able to choose between Council organised transport and a PTB.
- Families of 19+ students **must** re-apply every year. This year's deadline is 31 March 2023.

### **Nursery children (deadline 31 May 2023)**

- The council still provides discretionary transport for children under age 5 attending specialist nurseries.
- Families must apply every year for transport assistance and can choose between a PTB and Council organised transport.
- In both cases there is a charge for this of £660 per year (or £330 for low income families).
- Parents who have Council organised transport can pay by debit or credit card in one lump sum or in up to eight monthly instalments. For those with a PTB, the charge is deducted from their payments.
- Families of nursery children **must** re-apply every year. This year's deadline is 31 May 2023.

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## **Compulsory school age children: 5-16 year olds (closing date 31 May 2023)**

- There is no charge for children in this age group and they do not need to apply for transport assistance, unless one of the following applies:
  - *They are applying for transport for the first time*
  - *They move address*
  - *They change school or school campus/site*
  - *Their child's needs change and this might affect their risk assessment or transport arrangements*
- Families of children aged 5-16 in any of the circumstances listed above **must** apply by the deadline of 31 May 2023.
- Otherwise they will 'roll forward' using existing details (but transport arrangements can still change).

### **More information**

- We will write to you again when application forms for 2023/24 have been launched on our website (early February)
- We will write to families in relevant age groups directly when application forms for 2023/24 are launched on our website (early February)
- I would be grateful if you can tell families that transport does need to be reapplied for **every year for Nursery and Post 16 students.**

The transport policies for mainstream and SEN, along with a set of Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs), are available on our website at:

[School Transport policy documents and contact details | Leicestershire County Council](#)

Many thanks for your continued assistance in getting these important messages out to families.

Yours sincerely

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