GUIDELINES FOR THE PROVISION OF SCHOOL SERVICES
Effective from September 2019

As local authorities responsible for education in their areas, the five councils in West Yorkshire have powers and responsibilities under the Education Acts to provide transport for pupils.

As Local Transport Authority for West Yorkshire, the Combined Authority uses its powers under the Transport Acts to provide socially necessary bus services. The Combined Authority provide bus services which link communities with local schools where the journey could not be made by walking, cycling or established public transport links. The Combined Authority assists the local Councils providing a co-ordinated school transport service.

The following guidelines set out the principles and standards that the Combined Authority will use in providing school buses under its Transport Act powers.

Services for Secondary Schools

A service may be provided or an existing service continued to a secondary school where children are in Years 7 to 11, are attending a school within West Yorkshire, live within a four mile radius of the school (*see Note 1*), the public transport network is considered unsuitable and the school is not within a reasonable walking distance of their home address. This will be determined by reference to the following criteria:

- The walking distance is greater than 2.4 km (1.5 miles / 30 minute walk) by a safe walking route (In urban areas this should be paved, lit with suitable pedestrian crossing facilities – addresses in rural and semi-rural areas to be considered on a case by case basis with reference to Road Safety GB guidelines as necessary);

- The bus journey is greater than 1 hour 15 minutes in total (including changing buses);

- More than one interchange is required;

- Interchange is not at a suitable location (bus stations / town centres and other populated areas are considered suitable);

- In urban areas, the distance between the home address and the bus stop/rail station is greater than 600m (up to 10 minute walk) – addresses in semi-rural and rural areas to be considered on a case by case basis;

- The distance between school and the bus stop/rail station is greater than 600m (up to 10 minute walk);

- The pupil would arrive at the school gate earlier than 30 minutes before registration;

- The pupil would depart from the school gate more than 30 minutes after school closes;

- The boarding point outside of the school is unsafe taking into account the number of children waiting for public transport (as evidenced by a risk assessment).

Note 1 – Discretion will be applied if the school is located in a rural or a semi-rural area and/or if the school serves rural or semi-rural communities.

A value for money criteria will also be applied:

- Services will be considered for withdrawal or lower cost alternatives put in place where the average subsidy per passenger trip exceeds £1.50, based on data for a minimum of 40 days operation (typically, the number of passengers required to achieve this would be:

  Double deck (75 to 90 capacity) 50+
  Single deck (25 to 57 capacity) 40+
  Midibus (16 to 24 capacity) 20+
  Minibus (up to 16 capacity) 10+

New Services

The Combined Authority will not normally fund a new service:

- Where the statutory responsibility to provide transport lies with the council or another body. The Combined Authority will however assist in organising such services where funding is available from the local council or another body, subject to payment of a management fee.

- Where this is due to a reorganisation of school sites, changes in opening times or where school holidays differ from the local council's adopted holidays. The Combined Authority will however assist in organising such services where funding is available from the council or another body, subject to payment of a management fee.

- Where this is due to the withdrawal of funding by the local council or another body. The Combined Authority will however assist in organising such services where funding is available from the local council or another body, subject to payment of a management fee.

- Where parents have chosen a school which does not already have a school bus service or public transport links from the area in which they live. The Combined Authority will however assist in organising such services where funding is available from the local council or another body, subject to payment of a management fee.

- Where the school is a fee paying school or the school's admissions criteria is based on academic selection.

- Where the subsidy would exceed £1.50 per passenger trip.

- Where this would operate to a school outside of West Yorkshire.

Primary School Services

The Combined Authority provides a limited number of primary school services. These services were introduced to encourage people to travel by bus instead of car. A small number are co-funded by the local councils because they were first introduced under previous council policy. It is not intended to introduce any new services of this type in future without external funding.

Local council funded services will be withdrawn if the funding is no longer available. Other services will be considered for withdrawal or a lower cost alternatives implemented where the subsidy per passenger trip exceeds £1.50, based on data for a minimum of 40 days operation.

Post-16 students

Transport will not normally be provided for young people in Years 12 and 13 even if journeys to and from school meet the criteria for service provision or retention as outlined for children in Years 7 to 11.

Post 16 student curriculum timetables are frequently inconsistent with home-to-school bus timetables meaning that the Combined Authority is meeting the cost of retaining 'empty seats' on many services.

Pupil allocation Criteria

Where the number of applications for a place on a school bus exceeds the number of available places, the following criteria will apply:

<u>Local council funded services (assuming application or renewal received by published closing date) – See also *Note 2*</u>

1. Children eligible for free travel or assistance with travel expenses under local council policy.
2. Children with additional needs/requirements who may not be eligible for assistance (evidence will be required).
3. Children who are not eligible for assistance but for whom there is no 'reasonable' (as defined in the Combined Authority's guidelines) public transport alternative.
4. Children living along the line of the route (within 1km) by age (exact date of birth).Priority will be given to the youngest children.
5. Other children by age (exact date of birth). Priority will be given to the youngest children.
6. Late applications by the above criteria.

Note 2 – These are subject to local council policy changes. In some cases, school specific or service specific guidelines may apply, which may differ from the general guidelines outlined above.

<u>Combined Authority-funded services (assuming application or renewal received by published closing date)</u>

1. Children with additional needs/requirements (evidence will be required).
2. Children for whom there is no 'reasonable' (as defined in the Combined Authority's guidelines) public transport alternative.
3. Children living along the line of the route (within 1km) by age (exact date of birth). Priority will be given to the youngest children.
4. Other children by age (exact date of birth).Priority will be given to the youngest children.
5. Late applications by the above criteria.

Primary (assuming application or renewal received by published closing date)

1. Children eligible for free travel or assistance with travel expenses under local council policy (if service funded by local council).
2. Existing users.
3. New Applications.
4. Late applications/renewals by the above criteria.

Fares

Flat fares (same fare regardless of distance travelled) will be charged on all contracted services that are included in the West Yorkshire Concessionary Travel Scheme. The fare will be based on comparable fares charged on the commercial public transport network.

Seatbelts

Seatbelts will be provided on all contracted primary school services.
Seatbelts will not be a requirement on contracted secondary school services. This is to ensure consistency with the public transport network.

Passenger Assistants

Passenger Assistants will be provided on all primary school services that regularly carry 30 or more passengers. (This is currently under review).

Standing passengers

Standing passengers are permitted on buses used on local authority contracted secondary school services up to the maximum specified on the vehicle. This is to ensure consistency with the public transport network.

Commercial services

Combined Authority-funded services will be considered for withdrawal where operators register or make available competing commercial services. This includes services that fall outside of the West Yorkshire Concessionary Travel Scheme and, therefore, might charge higher fares or offer alternative payment methods. Subject to agreement with the relevant the local council, this may include council funded services.