

Concessionary Spare Seats – Fact Sheet

Flintshire County Council provides transport for pupils who are entitled to free travel between home and school under the current policy. To do this, coaches, minibuses and taxis are procured especially for school transport and the transport network is designed to run in the most cost-effective way to serve pupils entitled to free transport.

Any spare seats on the transport can be sold to pupils who are not entitled to free travel. These places are called Concessionary Spare Seats.

In some cases, pupils entitled to free travel are given a travel pass for use on local bus services. Concessionary Seats are not available on local bus services, but pupils not entitled to free travel from may travel on these services by paying the appropriate bus fare.

Concessionary seats are not guaranteed. They can be withdrawn (and a refund given) if the seat is later needed for a pupil entitled to a free seat. The transport network is not designed so that spare seats can be created to meet demand and transport services are reviewed regularly and services can be withdrawn if there are not enough numbers of entitled children travelling.

Parents are expected to make their own arrangements for ensuring that their child travels to and from school and need to ensure they have other plans in place if they are not able to obtain a concessionary seat or do not qualify for free school transport.

Concessionary seats on contract vehicles are limited, so if an entitled child needs that seat in the future, a child may have their seat withdrawn at short notice. Details of bus routes and times may be changed if this is necessary to meet travel needs efficiently. Seat allocations are not guaranteed, and the Council reserves the right to move pupils between vehicles or re-route vehicles in order to manage loadings.

If more families want concessionary seats than there are seats available, priority will be given to Flintshire applicants before out of County applicants and within each category, statutory school age children will be considered ahead of post 16 students. Applicants will then be prioritised according to the following criteria, in order:

- Children already in receipt of a concessionary spare seat
- Children with a brother or sister who already travel on the vehicle
- Children for whom there is no other public transport available to travel to school
- Children based on straight-line distance from their home address to the school, with priority being given to those who live furthest from the school

Applications will be considered on a first come first serve basis and when it is not possible to offer a seat on the vehicle, parents will be notified that their child's name is on a waiting list.

Concessionary seats will be sold on the presumption that the child will travel 5 days each week. If there are still spare seats remaining on a vehicle once requests for seats for 5 days a week have been processed, concessionary seats may be considered for partial weeks on a discretionary basis. However, where a concessionary seat is made available for only part of the week, the concessionary seat may be withdrawn if a request is received for another child to travel 5 days a week and the parent of the existing child does not wish to increase their concessionary seat to 5 days.

In being considered for a concessionary seat, either on a 5 day a week or part week basis, parents must commit to at least half a term of travel and ad hoc changes to travel arrangements within that period will not be considered.

Regular network reviews take place that can lead to spare places being removed. When selling concessionary seats, the Council will make it clear to parents that they will be given two weeks' notice if the concession is to be withdrawn.

ALL seats are issued on 2 weeks' notice. The notice period may include weekends, bank and public holidays and school holidays. In some cases, it may not be possible to offer a spare seat until after the term has started and the Council knows the full number of eligible pupils travelling.

Payments are requested in advance and can be made annually or termly. It is intended that payments will be made either by cheque, postal order, telephone, web pay or direct debit.