

Wiltshire Council Passenger Transport

Spare Seats Scheme Terms and Conditions

Overview

Where spare seats exist on school bus or taxi contracts arranged by Wiltshire Council, they can sometimes be made available at a charge to pupils who would not be entitled to free transport to that school. Any offer of a spare seat is subject to agreement of the following conditions:

No Guarantee Basis

- The allocation of a spare seat **does not** guarantee it will be available for the whole term or year.
- If a spare seat needs to be subsequently re-allocated to a student who is entitled to free or assisted transport through another scheme, the spare seat holder may be required to give up the place, sometimes at short notice, possibly 1 week. In such cases the council will issue a pro-rata refund of any payment made for that term.
- Spare seats may be withdrawn if the bus contracts serving your child's school are re-organised or if the vehicle size is reduced, the vehicle re-routed, or if the contract is converted into a fare paying service or an alternative public bus service becomes available.
- Transport can also cease if those children entitled to free transport on that vehicle no longer use the route or get moved onto another vehicle.
- Parents need to ensure they have an alternative arrangement in place to get their child to and from school until a Spare Seat place is allocated to them and paid for or if one is not made available. No reimbursement will be made for any additional costs incurred for this period.
- Parents must ensure they can get their child to and from an existing pick-up or set down point. Transport cannot be diverted from an existing route for spare seat passengers.

Timing of Allocation

- The timing of allocation of spare seats is at the discretion of the allocating transport officer. This will generally depend on anticipated demand for seats for children entitled to free or assisted transport.
- To allow for any late applications for entitled students, allocation may not take place for up to three weeks **after** the start of the academic year. No reduction in the full term charge will be given where transport is not available until after the start of term.

Priority of Allocation

- In cases where there are not enough spare seats on a vehicle, for the number of applications received, the following priority order will be implemented:
 1. Students resident in Wiltshire who had a spare seat in the previous school term
 2. earliest date received for new requests from Wiltshire residents (including siblings of those already travelling (confirmation of a place at the school must have been received))
 3. new applications for older year groups will get priority over new applications for younger year groups (Wiltshire residents only)
 4. non-Wiltshire residents
 5. students requiring transport am or pm only
 6. students requiring transport for a few am **or** pm journeys per week. Please note, the minimum charge for transport used in this way is 50% of the full seat charge

- In deciding on whether spare seats exist on a particular vehicle, the council will have regard to the number of pupils entitled to free transport who are or may need to be allocated to that vehicle. Although in some cases, a vehicle may travel with empty seats it does not necessarily mean those seats can be allocated as spare seats.
- On any given day there may appear to be spare seats as children may be absent from the bus owing to sickness or other temporary reasons. It may also be necessary to 'hold back' a number of seats on a vehicle, in the knowledge that some students who are entitled to free or assisted transport have not yet made an application.

Payment

- When a spare seat is offered, payment **must** be made in full and a bus pass issued if required, for the agreed period, **before** the student can travel.
- Payments must be made payable to Wiltshire Council by cheque (or by credit/debit card over the phone, quoting student ref no) upon receipt of the 'request for payment' letter. Please write the name of the child and the school attended on the reverse of any cheque submitted.
- Failure to make payment before the period of travel will result in the student being refused access to the vehicle.
- Where payment deadlines are not met over a series of three payment periods, the offer of a spare seat may be withdrawn.

Charges

- The charge for a spare seat applies for each school term, based on three terms per year. It is dependent on whether the child attends a primary school, secondary school or sixth form and the distance from home to school.
- Charges are listed on the Wiltshire Council website www.wiltshire.gov.uk/schools-learning-transport-apply
- A discount can be applied if transport is required morning or afternoon only.

Conditions of Use

- Any bus pass issued is valid only for use on the school bus route printed on the pass. It **cannot** be used to travel on any other routes or local bus services.
- Where issued, a bus pass must be available for inspection at all times of travel. Students unable to show a valid pass will be refused travel.
- The council's transport behaviour code, issued with the bus pass, must be adhered to while using the transport. Misbehaviour may result in the offer of a spare seat being withdrawn.
- Any pass which becomes lost must be replaced immediately. The current charge for this is £12, with cheques made payable to Wiltshire Council.
- No reimbursement will be given in cases where transport is not provided owing to vehicle breakdown, adverse weather or non attendance due to additional holidays, sickness or study leave.

PTU/TT 08.04.20