

North Durham Academy

Concessionary Seat



Guide for Parents 2018–19

This guide provides information about North Durham Academy and Durham County Council's Concessionary Seat scheme. It is intended for parents / carers who already know that their child is NOT entitled to free travel to school or assistance with travelling expenses.

Please read the guidance notes in full as they may have changed from previous versions.

1. What is a Concessionary Seat?

Durham County Council provides transport for pupils who are entitled to free travel between home and school. Any spare seats on buses or taxis hired for school runs can be sold to pupils who are not entitled to free travel. These places are called Concessionary Seats.

North Durham Academy has made a special arrangement with Durham County Council to ensure there will be room for students who wish to buy a pass, and will pay part of the cost of the seats.

2. Where are Concessionary Seats available?

The Academy will provide travel in 2018-2019 for pupils who do not qualify for free travel from Durham County Council but live in the areas formerly served by Greencroft School. Transport will operate from Annfield Plain, Burnhope, Catchgate, Craghead, Harelaw, Lanchester and Pelton.

3. How much does a Concessionary Seat cost?

Year 7

There will be no charge for Year 7 pupils as North Durham Academy will pay the cost of their bus pass.

Years 8-10

The charge for pupils in Years 8-10 is **£142.50** for a full school year, which equals 75p per day. North Durham Academy is covering the remaining cost of the travel.

Year 11

Year 11 pupils will pay **£127.50** for a full school year, as their school year is typically 20 days shorter than for other year groups.

If you apply after the start of the school year, the cost of the seat will be calculated at a rate of 75p per day for the number of days remaining in the school year.

You may make your payments in monthly instalments.

4. How do I apply for a seat?

Simply complete the application form and send it to Transport Services, County Hall, Durham, DH1 5UQ as soon as possible.

You can also apply for Concessionary Seats online at www.durham.gov.uk/concessionaryseats.

You can apply at any time but to be certain of being considered for a seat and receiving a pass for the start of the school year from September 2018, we will need to receive your application by 4th June 2018.

You will need to apply for a Concessionary Seat at the start of each school year.

5. What should I do if I have more than one child travelling?

If you want to apply for Concessionary Seats for more than one child, you will need to fill in an application form for each child. Each application will be treated separately.

6. What happens after I have applied?

If you apply by 4th June 2018, Durham County Council will write back to you to confirm a seat has been allocated, and send you an invoice in July 2018 for the cost of the seat. If the pupil is in Year 7, you will not receive an invoice and a bus pass for the school year will be sent to you in July 2018.

Applications received after 4th June 2018 will be processed as quickly as possible, but may take up to three weeks from your application.

7. How do I pay for a seat?

You do not need to pay if your child is in Year 7.

For other Years, when you apply for a seat, you must state the name of the adult who will pay for any seat that we allocate. If your application is successful, the named adult will receive an invoice from us for the total cost of the seat for the school year. The invoice will include a monthly payment plan.

You should pay the first instalment payment against your invoice immediately. Once we receive it, we will issue a full bus pass for the term.

Your monthly payment plan will show the date you need to make your payment by. This is the latest date to make each payment, and you may wish to arrange your payment in advance of this.

There are several ways to make your payments, including by telephone, cheque, online, at your local Paypoint, by Direct Debit or by standing order. Details will be given on the back of your invoice.

If you have paid for a seat by Direct Debit in the last year, this arrangement will continue and you will not need to set up a new Direct Debit mandate. If you have not, you will be sent a Direct Debit mandate form when your invoice is raised.

You may pay in advance of the monthly instalments if you wish: e.g. in termly or annual amounts.

8. What if I fall behind with my payments?

We will continue to issue bus passes for the later terms in the school year if you keep up to date with your payments. If your payments fall behind the schedule, you will not receive bus passes for future terms. You will receive payment reminders for each outstanding monthly instalment. Eventually your seat will be withdrawn and may be allocated to another pupil. You must keep up to date with your payments to continue to travel.

If you continue to have an outstanding debt for a period of travel, then you may ultimately be referred to our debt collection process.

Debts for transport may be offset between school years, and payments for one year must be completed before bus passes for the next year will be issued (in addition to the appropriate payments for the next year).

We may offset overpayments for Concessionary Seats against any other debts you may have with Durham County Council.

9. Who will you contact?

All correspondence regarding payment for the Concessionary Seat will be sent to the adult named on the application form. If you are not the main Parent / Carer of the pupil, you will be responsible for ensuring that the main Parent / Carer of the pupil is aware of any correspondence we send (for instance, if payments fall behind and a bus pass cannot be issued, we will write to the adult named on the invoice only). If a seat is cancelled due to payment issues, we will write to the named adult.

Bus passes and letters regarding allocation of seats will be sent to the pupil's principal home address. Any correspondence regarding general transport issues or behaviour will also be sent to the pupil's principal home address.

10. Will I get a Concessionary Seat in time for the start of the school term?

If you apply before 4th June 2018, you will receive an invoice in July for you to make your first instalment payment. Once you pay this, you will receive your bus pass. Please bear in mind it may take several days for your payment to reach us, so after you make your payment it may be at least a week before you receive your pass.

11. Can a Concessionary seat be withdrawn?

Your seat will normally be guaranteed if your payments are kept up to date.

Travel on school transport is subject to Durham County Council's Behavioural policy. Any seat may be withdrawn if a pupil does not behave appropriately on the vehicle.

If a seat is withdrawn, you must make your own arrangements for getting your child to school.

12. Will I get a refund if I no longer want my Concessionary Seat?

If you decide that you no longer want your Concessionary Seat, a full refund of any unused portion will be given when you return your bus pass to Durham County Council. The refund will be calculated at a rate of 75p per day. If you have not paid the full amount for the period when the bus pass was in use, you may have an outstanding balance to pay. You must inform Durham County Council if you are no longer using the bus for any reason.

13. What happens if my circumstances change or I move address?

You must get in touch with us if your circumstances change or your move address.

If the pupil still wishes to travel on the same bus, we will need to cancel your existing invoice and send a new invoice for the balance still owed to your new address. This invoice will contain a revised payment schedule. You will need to use the new invoice reference for your payments.

If the pupil wishes to travel on a different bus, we will process this as if it were a new application. If a seat is available, we will cancel your existing invoice and send a new one to your new address. This invoice will contain a revised payment schedule. You will need to use the new invoice reference for your payments.

14. My child only travels on the bus on certain days. Will I get a reduction?

Although your child may only be travelling for part of the week, this still means we are unable to offer the seat to any other pupil who may be interested in travelling. As a result we are unable to make a reduction in the cost for a part-time traveller.

15. The bus did not operate one day due to bad weather or other circumstances. Will I get a refund?

The passes you will receive are termly ones, and we will not normally make adjustments for one-off or unforeseen failures to operate.

16. My child will be absent from school for a period. Will I get a discount?

The passes you will receive are termly ones, and we will not usually make adjustments for one-off absences. However, we may consider applying a discount and keeping your seat available if the absence is a continuing one and there is reasonable evidence to support it (for instance, medical information). We will assess this on a case-by-case basis.

You should inform us on 03000 264444 (option 3) of any special circumstances as soon as possible. Any discount will be calculated on the daily rate of the scheme multiplied by the number of days of absence.

17. What will happen if my child forgets their bus pass?

If a pupil attempts to board the school bus without showing their bus pass, they will usually be taken to school if there are seats available on the bus.

The driver will give the child a 'School Transport – Leaflet for Pupils' slip, which tells the pupil they cannot travel on the bus home from school without a pass. It asks them to take the slip to the school office. The school is able to issue a temporary pass if the pupil is on the list of those authorised to travel.

Pupils who do not have a pass will NOT be allowed to return home on the bus (unless agreed with Durham County Council and the school).

Repeated failures to present a valid bus pass will result in removal of the Concessionary seat.

18. What should I do if I lose my bus pass?

Replacement bus passes cost £5.00. You can apply for a replacement pass and pay by credit or debit card by calling 03000 264444 (option 5).

Alternatively, you can send us a cheque or postal order for £5.00, made payable to 'Durham County Council', to:

Transport Services
Durham County Council
County Hall
Durham
DH1 5UQ

Please include a note of the pupil's name and address.

We will post the replacement pass out, and you should receive this within seven days.

19. How do I find out about alternative local bus services?

If no school buses are available, a fare-paying local bus service may be available instead. You can check with Traveline (www.traveline.info or telephone 0871 200 22 33) for details of local bus services your child could use to make the journey. Often, a weekly or termly pass bought from the bus operator will provide best value.