

TRAVELLER CHILDREN – PROTOCOL FOR TRANSPORT PROVISION

1. Purpose of Protocol

To determine the parameters for the provision of transport support for traveller children.

2. Reason for Protocol

To recognise the specific needs of traveller children and to aim for greater stability and consistency in the provision of education whilst also having regard to need for efficient use of resources.

3. Associated Protocols

In Year Fair Access – Traveller children are an identified group under this protocol.

Temporary Housing – The Authority will provide transport support to existing schools for families who have been temporarily housed for a maximum period of two terms subject to efficient use of resources.

4. Existing Arrangements

Traveller children are generally subject to the existing guidelines on transport support. If a child is attending his/her local school and lives outside the statutory distance limits transport support is provided. If a family move onto another site outside the existing school's area transport support would normally cease as the Authority would expect the child to attend the (new) local school, or in the event of over-subscription the next nearest school with places available (if the next nearest is the existing school then transport support would continue).

5. Implications

In some cases regular changes of school and a very disruptive education experience.

6. Proposed Arrangements

In the event of eviction from site transport support will be /continue to be provided for two terms or upon voluntary change of schools, whichever comes first.

Upon reaching the end of the two terms deadline the position will be reviewed to establish on a case specific basis whether transport support will continue. In the case of a child attending a school during a testing year it is expected that transport support would continue to the end of the school year if the two terms deadline expires during that year.

7. Implications of Proposed Arrangements

Cost. To be determined if necessary.

Legality of Authority providing transport for the child(ren) of a family moving onto an illegal or tolerated site. However, the following statement from the

Head of Legal & Democratic Services indicates that the Authority's responsibility for providing education takes precedence over other concerns.

"Yes, it is the case that travellers routinely form unauthorised encampments and are trespassers either on privately owned property or on the County Council's own land. However, this is not something that overrides our other duties towards traveller children. Even when encampments are unauthorised on County Council land then Mike Evans and the gypsy and traveller liaison officers still have to undertake a needs assessment before deciding whether or not to evict or to decide upon the timing of an eviction. The education of traveller children will be one of a number of important factors that are balanced against the unauthorised/unlawful nature of the encampment when decision making is gone through on an eviction. All of this leads me to say that the proper approach here is to make transport available for these children for the duration of the encampment."

8. Approved

CSDMT approval obtained 20 November 2007.

9. Implementation Date

January 2008.

Phil Farmer
Children's Services Officer