

Guide to Provision of Temporary Vacant Seat Passes

Where a vehicle is hired by Staffordshire County Council, has more seats than needed for pupils entitled to free or subsidised transport, spare seats may be made available to purchase for pupils not entitled to free transport on a concessionary basis known as the Temporary Vacant Seat Scheme. The number of seats available under this scheme is limited, and a place cannot be guaranteed.

Allocation of Seats

Please note that if the number of applications received is greater than the seating capacity available, then applications will be dealt with on a 'first come, first served' basis. It is therefore important that you return the Application Form as soon as possible. Priority will be given to existing seat holders for a limited time period with remaining seats being offered to new or remaining existing applicants.

Please note Temporary Vacant Seats for Special Educational Needs Schools will not be allocated to commence until after October half-term each year. This is due to the late notification of entitled Special Educational Needs pupils requirements and will also reduce the possibility of the seat being withdrawn after allocation. The cost of Temporary Vacant Seats allocated on this basis will be charged pro-rata to the annual pass price. Temporary Vacant Seats to Mainstream Schools will be allocated to commence at the beginning of the Autumn Term where available.

Terms and Conditions

Temporary vacant seats will be issued subject to the following Terms & Conditions:

- Mainstream pupils purchasing temporary vacant seats will be issued with appropriate passes and pupils must carry the pass every day that the seat is required. Passes will not be issued for Special Educational Needs (SEN) temporary vacant seats.
- All passes issued under this scheme remain the property of the County Council and a charge of £5.00 will be made to replace any passes that are lost or defaced.
- Should the seat be required at a later date for a pupil entitled to receive free transport or should the service be discontinued or the route altered, the temporary vacant seat will be withdrawn and the pass must be returned to the Authority. Please note that the pass may have to be withdrawn at short notice.
- **Provision of a temporary vacant seat does not imply that the Authority will assume responsibility for transporting the pupil to school in future years.** Your child may become settled in a school to which transport later becomes a difficulty for you. If you are able to find a solution it may be expensive. It is important to have considered alternative arrangements should a vacant seat not be available.

- Where transport is shared by two or more schools, INSET days may vary and transport will not operate solely for temporary vacant seat pass holders.
- A bus/taxi route will not be amended/diverted for vacant seat pass holders. Children will have to board the vehicle at an existing pick-up point. Due to the nature of taxi and bus routes, the nearest pick-up point to your home address may vary during the course of the contract.
- The number of seats available under the scheme may vary from year to year as the number of pupils entitled to transport fluctuates and vehicle sizes may also change when contracts are renewed.
- The charge for vacant seat provision is based on a one-way or return journey basis. The number of days travelled or distance has no bearing on the price for this provision.
- Passes will not be issued until the appropriate payment has been made or a direct debit mandate form has been completed, returned and accepted.
- If payments are defaulted, the County Council reserve the right to terminate transport with immediate effect. This payment method will not be allowed to be used the following year.
- Where a temporary vacant seat is withdrawn after payment has been made, a refund will be made based on unused months remaining on the pass. Where a pupil does not use a vehicle for part of a term (illness, holiday etc.), or the vehicle does not operate (e.g. inclement weather), refunds cannot be made.
- If you withdraw your application after your payment has been received, your pass must be returned for a refund. This may incur a £10.00 administrative charge.
- Existing seat holders must re-apply for their seat each year.

Charges 2018/19

Term	Return Journey	One Way Journey
Annual Pass	£625.00	£312.50
Autumn Term	£225.00	£112.50
Spring Term	£200.00	£100.00
Summer Term	£200.00	£100.00

Term Dates 2018/19

Autumn Term	4 September 2018 – 21 December 2018
Spring Term	7 January 2019 – 12 April 2019
Summer Term	29 April 2019 – 22 July 2019

Payment Methods

Payments can be made annually or termly by debit or credit card payment, or by cheque or postal order using one of the following payment methods:

- Telephone: 24 hour, 7 days a week automated telephone payment system.
- On-line: Through Staffordshire County Council website.
- Post: Cheque or postal order made payable to Staffordshire County Council.
- Direct Debit: Instalment payments are available by direct debit only for payment of annual passes consisting of 8 payments commencing in September 2018. Payments must be made on either 1st or 15th of each month.

Once your application has been processed and you have been allocated a Temporary Vacant Seat, we will email and confirm this allocation enclosing an invoice for payment as applicable to your chosen payment method. Alternatively, if no email address is provided we will write to you and enclose this information. Single payment or termly invoices must be paid within 28 days from the date the invoice is issued.

If you should decide to pay termly, an invoice will automatically be forwarded to you each term unless indicated otherwise.

If you have nominated to pay by instalment a direct debit mandate will be forwarded to you with your invoice for completion and return to Staffordshire County Council.

Please ensure that you have indicated your chosen method of payment on your application form.

Please do not send any payment with your application form. Payment to be made following receipt of invoice.

Please note passes will not be issued until invoices have been paid in full, or a direct debit mandate has been completed, returned and accepted.

If payments are defaulted, the County Council reserves the right to terminate transport with immediate effect. This payment method will then be disallowed the following year.

Transport to faith schools

As agreed in 2010, Staffordshire County Council's subsidy for transport to faith secondary schools will be fully phased out by the end of term in July 2015 and 2017 for faith primary schools. This means that after these dates, transport to your child's school will no longer be funded or subsidised by the council and as a result it is highly unlikely there will be any seats available to purchase under the temporary vacant seat scheme as most routes will no longer be in operation, or will only operate to provide transport for a small number of pupils entitled to transport due to Special Educational Needs, meeting the low income criteria for secondary age children, or it is their nearest school. You will therefore need to make your own alternative transport arrangements after 2015/2017. Our full home to school transport policy can be found at www.staffordshire.gov.uk/hometoschooltransportpolicy .

The Council is also working with your school, transport operators and interested groups to develop other options for students attending faith schools. These include helping schools provide their own services, or negotiating changes to existing public transport routes and stops. Public bus timetables can be found at www.staffordshire.gov.uk/bustimes or for help with journey planning visit Traveline at www.traveline.info or call 0871 200 2233.

Data notice and declarations

Any personal data collected through your application for a temporary vacant seat is handled securely and in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998. We will use this information to process your application for a temporary vacant seat. The County Council uses personal information about children and families to enable it to provide relevant services to them and to carry out specific functions for which it is responsible.

Your Consent

Please be aware that the three areas of consent stated below are mandatory to this application process. Applications cannot be accepted unless consent is given to all three questions. By ticking the box stating that you have read and agree to the terms and conditions of this scheme you are also granting your consent to the usage of your personal data as follows:-

- I agree that the information provided on this application form will be used to ensure that the council's records are correct and may also be shared with other agencies and service providers to ensure that my family receives an appropriate service. The full Data Protection statement can be found at <https://www.staffordshire.gov.uk/health/childrenandfamilycare/yourdata/Yourdata.aspx>.
- I agree that the information I have provided is true to the best of my knowledge, and understand that any false or deliberately misleading information provided on this form and/or supporting papers may render this application invalid and could lead to the withdrawal of any temporary vacant seat offered to my child.
- I agree that that the School Transport Service can contact any relevant agencies in order to validate this application to arrange my child's transport.

Application Form

If you would like to apply for a Temporary Vacant Seat, please complete an application form on-line at www.staffordshire.gov.uk/temporaryvacantseatscheme.

For further information please contact Transport and the Connected County:-

Mainstream applications:-

North Area (Newcastle Borough & Staffordshire Moorlands District areas)

Tel: 01785 278679

East Area (Lichfield District, East Staffs Borough & Tamworth Borough areas)

Tel: 01785 276738

South and West Areas:-

(Stafford Borough Excluding Stone, Cannock Chase District & South Staffs District areas) Tel: 01785 278718

(Stafford Borough - Stone Area) Tel: 01785 854070

Email: student.transport@staffordshire.gov.uk

Fax: 01785 276788

Post to:

Transport and the Connected County
Staffordshire County Council
2 Staffordshire Place
Tipping Street
Stafford ST16 2DH

Special Educational Needs (SEN) application:-

North Area (Newcastle Borough & Staffordshire Moorlands District areas)

Tel: 01785 854118

East Area (Lichfield District, East Staffs Borough & Tamworth Borough areas)

Tel: 01785 278213

South and West Areas (Stafford Borough, Cannock Chase District & South Staffs District areas) Tel: 01785 278678

Or by email at sentransportrequest@staffordshire.gov.uk

Fax: 01785 276788

Post to:

Transport and the Connected County
Staffordshire County Council
2 Staffordshire Place
Tipping Street
Stafford ST16 2DH

Office Hours:

Monday–Thursday 0830–1700 hours

Friday 0830–1630 hours