

REPORT TO: EDUCATION COMMITTEE - 28 NOVEMBER 2011

REPORT ON: CODE OF PRACTICE FOR THE HOME-SCHOOL TRANSPORT OF CHILDREN WITH ADDITIONAL SUPPORT NEEDS

REPORT BY: DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION

REPORT NO: 515 - 2011

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

The purpose of this report is to introduce and outline the new Code of Practice for the Home-School Transport of Children with Additional Support Needs.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Education Committee:

- approves the content of this report.

3.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications arising from this report. The full year expenditure incurred for home-school transport for children with additional support needs amounted to £1,000,479 in the financial year 2010-11.

4.0 MAIN TEXT

4.1 The Code of Practice for Home-School Transport of Children with Additional Support Needs builds on the original 2004 guidelines. At that time, the Code of Practice was shared with school staff but was not issued to partner agencies and/or parents/carers. However, the Code of Practice has now been discussed and agreed by the Senior Management Team and extended Management Team in the Education Department along with representatives from:

- Dundee Educational Psychology Service;
- School Community Support Service;
- Social Work; and
- the Sustainable Transport Team within City Development.

In addition, there has also been liaison and consultation with colleagues from NHS Tayside and the Internal Audit Team.

4.2 The Code of Practice is based on the provision of home to school transport. It does not deal with the organisation of transport for educational trips and outings. These are covered in other policy areas.

4.3 Whilst it is the responsibility of parents or carers to secure their children's education, the Education (Scotland) Act 1980, sections 50, 51 as amended by the Local Government in Scotland Act 2003, require each education authority to make appropriate provision to assist pupils with additional support needs to have access to education. The Act does not stipulate the exact conditions under which transport should be provided but states that the education authority shall make such arrangements as they consider necessary for the provision of home - school transport. The Act also makes provision for a number of special conditions under which the authority may provide free transport. These arrangements are determined by each local authority and Code of Practice describes and establishes the approach taken by Dundee City Council.

4.4 Dundee City Council, in discharging its statutory requirements:

- aims to assist parents and carers in their responsibility of ensuring that a child with additional support needs attends school safely and on time, in line with Council policy on the provision of school policy;
- aims to be responsive to the concerns of parents and carers in the provision of appropriate transport to meet the specific needs of each pupil for whom transport is provided;
- strives to ensure that most effective, safe and economical use of resources by close monitoring of contracts;
- keeps its arrangements for school transport under continuous review; and
- will make provision only for pupils living within the city boundary,

4.5 The Code of Practice has been written to take account of all legislation pertaining to the statutory duty of Dundee City Council to provide home-school transport as it relates to children and young people with additional support needs. It sits within the context of the current Improvement Plan for the Council and all Departments; satisfies National and Local priorities; makes reference to Curriculum for Excellence and the indicators described in Getting It Right for Every Child (GIRFEC); and fits within the scope of the work currently underway with regard to protecting children in the city.

4.6 The Code of Practice will be reviewed on an annual basis. The Code of Practice has the following additional papers:

- A Home-School Transport Leaflet for Parents and Carers
- A Home-School Escort Manual

Copies of the Code of Practice and the additional paper have been passed to the Group Leaders, the Lord Provost and the Depute Lord Provost.

5.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

This report has been screened for any policy implications in respect of sustainability, strategic environmental assessment, anti-poverty, equality impact assessment and risk management. There are no major issues. An Equality Impact Assessment has been carried out and will be available on the Council Web Site at <http://www.dundee.gov.uk/equanddiv/equimpact/>

6.0 CONSULTATIONS

The Chief Executive, Depute Chief Executive (Support Services) and Director of Finance have been consulted in the compilation of this report.

7.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

Equality Impact Assessment

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MW/AS

14 November 2011