



**West  
Northamptonshire  
Council**

## Spare Seat Scheme

### **How the scheme works**

If your child is not eligible for free school transport, you may be able to receive discretionary transport assistance through our Spare Seats Scheme.

If there are empty seats on the services we contract for children who are eligible for free travel, we can offer these seats to other children who are not eligible. This is only available on existing transport, where there is a space and we cannot make any special arrangements to routes or times.

Seats can only be offered after the start of the academic year and after children who are eligible for free school transport have been allocated a seat. This may take a number of weeks as we continue to receive applications during September and October for eligible children and therefore, we are not able to offer a seat before the October half term.

We offer this scheme annually, so you must re-apply each year. There is no guarantee that the scheme will always be available and even if you are offered a seat when you apply, it may not be possible to offer a seat to you in subsequent years.

We will only contact you if we are able to offer a seat. If you do not hear from us, then regrettably we have been unable to offer your child a seat and you will need to continue to make your own arrangements.

### **How we prioritise applications**

Spare seats will be limited and applications are prioritised in the following order:

1. Post 16 Applications that are being renewed
2. New Post 16 Applications
3. Non entitled children with special educational needs or disability
4. Looked After Children or former Looked After Children who have been adopted
5. Children of Armed Forces personnel, in line with our duty as part of the West Northamptonshire Armed Forces Covenant
6. Siblings of eligible students travelling on the same route
7. Non entitled mainstream children
8. All others - on a first come first served basis from date of application

### **How much does it cost**

The cost of the scheme for the academic year starting September 2024 is £1,000 and this is reviewed annually and published in May each year.

Parents who are offered a seat will receive an invoice for the full amount between October and December along with instructions on how to arrange monthly instalments or pay in full.

### **How to apply**

If you want to be considered for the scheme, you will need to complete the Spare Seat Scheme application form which is available on our website.

Applications will be open from the 1<sup>st</sup> September and will remain open until the 30<sup>th</sup> September.

### **If you cannot get a spare seat**

The number of spare seats we can offer is limited, so you shouldn't rely on our spare seat scheme to get your child to and from school. It is therefore important to ensure you have alternative means of getting your child to and from school.

### **Right to withdraw passes**

Please note that the Council reserves the right to withdraw a spare seat offered under this scheme where late applications are received for a child who is eligible for free travel assistance. The Council will provide 1 months' notice to allow parents to put in place alternative arrangements.