



From mountain to sea

The safe transport of children and young people

Guidance for Schools and Children's Escorts

January 2024



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Date	Version	Reason for update
2013	1.0	Original document
June 2017	2.0	Update and refresh
Jan 19 th 2018	2.1	Update and check with other versions of guidance
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Aug 2022	2.7	Update regarding Transport to Special Schools and reference to Principal Educational Psychologist/ Service Manager Inclusion, Equity and Wellbeing. Update regarding training of Escorts and Health and Safety Advisors
January 2024	2.8	Training of Escorts and requirements for the use of Bucklesafe and harnesses updated

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Introduction

Aberdeenshire Council is committed to offering an excellent service to pupils, their parents / carers, schools and contractors. The following information is intended to ensure the safety and wellbeing of all those involved in the movement of pupils between home and school on organised transport.

Parameters for the Application for Free Transport for Pupils

The Council provides free transport to all children who live over two miles walking distance from school in the case of primary school children, and three miles for secondary school pupils, as long as they are in zone for the current school. These parameters also apply to pupils who attend special schools.

Free school transport may be provided for children with additional support needs at the discretion of the Quality Improvement Officer (QIO) or Principal Educational Psychologist/ Service Manager Inclusion, Equity and Wellbeing and relates directly to pupil needs. Transport is not automatically provided for any pupil attending a special school. An application for transport should only be made on the basis of assessed need, regardless of whether or not the pupil lives within the school catchment area.

School transport routes are determined by the pick-up locations required for pupils who are entitled to free school transport.

Free transport can be provided in a number of different ways.

- Some children will be given season tickets to use on public buses.
- Some children will be reimbursed for the purchase of season tickets to be used on train services.
- Other children will be transported on buses / taxis operated by or contracted in by Aberdeenshire Council.
- In some circumstances payments will be made to parents to transport their children to school (see Parental Reimbursements).

The Council does not guarantee "door to door" transport. The child may have to walk to a safe pick up / drop off point nearby.

Head teachers may use their discretion to apply to the QIO (school) or Principal Educational Psychologist/ Service Manager Inclusion, Equity and Wellbeing for free transport to pupils with additional support needs in the following instances (when pupils live within the normal catchment distances):

- The pupil is non-ambulant (wheelchair or buggy user)
- The pupil has medical reasons for requiring transport which would make walking to school very difficult or likely to exacerbate their condition.

- A pupil has a severe form of Autism Spectrum disorder and cannot manage to walk to school due to traffic noise / other sensory issues.

This list is not exhaustive and consideration will be given on an individual basis.

Duties and Responsibilities

Escorts on Authority Transport

An escort's duty is to accompany a child who has additional support needs, to travel to and from school and other settings, on and off transport as required, provide adequate supervision and ensure that a high degree of health and safety is maintained at all times.

Escorts should

- Be uplifted by the vehicle and will board before collection of the first pupil.
- Greet each pupil and ensure they are securely seated with the seat-belt/harness fastened before transport moves.
- Ensure the safety, security, dignity and comfort of all pupils being carried in the vehicle, demonstrating sensitivity when communicating with pupils.
- Ensure the vehicle has stopped completely for pupils to board safely at each appointed pick-up point.
- Assist pupils to board or leave the vehicle safely with their bags / equipment. Some pupils may require an assisted transfer e.g. a transfer of pupils from seat to wheelchair or vice versa. Escorts may only do this when they have undertaken a moving and handling training course. Schools should contact the Inclusion, Equity and Wellbeing Team to arrange Moving and Handling Training. No moving and handling of pupils is to be undertaken by an escort without prior training by Aberdeenshire Council.
- Ensure that the children leave the vehicle safely at their destination with their belongings, and are handed over to an appropriate adult.
- Must not leave the vehicle until all pupils have been discharged. If required, assistance should be sought from school staff to accompany pupils into the school building.
- Should ensure good conduct from all pupils so that the driver is not distracted.

Please note

- Escorts supporting pupils' health requirements where training is required is done on a voluntary basis; and in order to meet the specific needs of pupils this may involve a reorganisation of Escorts
- It is the driver's responsibility for securing a wheelchair inside a vehicle with appropriate restraints.

- Food or drinks must not be offered to pupils, as this might be contrary to dietary requirements, unless authorised by parent / school for medical reasons.
- In the event of the driver being distracted or a pupil becoming ill or displaying challenging behaviour the driver should pull in at the first appropriate safe place. A period of cooling down may be necessary. The school/home should be contacted to alert to a possible late arrival.

Escorts on Public Transport

An escort's duty in this instance is to accompany a child who has additional support needs, on and off public transport, providing adequate care and supervision and ensuring that a high degree of health and safety is maintained at all times.

Escorts in this instance should

- Board the public transport with the pupil.
- Ensure each pupil is securely seated before transport moves.
- Ensure that pupils board or leave the vehicle safely with their bags/ equipment at the correct stop.
- Ensure good conduct from pupils whilst travelling.

Please note; food or drinks must not be offered to pupils, as this might be contrary to dietary requirements, unless authorised by parent / school for medical reasons.

Escorts Walking to School (& other settings) with Pupils

An escort may be employed in this instance to encourage independence. An escort's duty in these instances is to accompany a child who has additional support needs to walk safely to school, providing adequate care and supervision and ensuring that a high degree of health and safety is maintained at all times.

Escorts in this instance should

- Meet and greet the pupil at the door to their home, or meet pupil inside the front entrance to their school.
- Walk next to the pupil, on their outside (traffic side), ensuring their safety when crossing roads.
- Ensure pupils awareness and compliance with road safety for pedestrians (walking on the pavement, using recognised crossing points when available, stranger danger etc.)

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- Discharge the pupil into the care of a responsible adult at the door (home / school) or in the playground as appropriate.
- Ensure good conduct from all pupils whilst walking to school or home.
- A travel risk assessment should be completed prior to the journey taking place and reviewed as necessary.

It is the responsibility of the school to produce a written risk assessment when required for a pupil on school transport. In the case of a pupil requiring a 'walking escort', a risk assessment must be written prior to the journey starting. An escort may be employed in this instance to encourage independence. An escort's duty in these instances is to accompany a child who has additional support needs to walk safely to school, providing adequate care and supervision and ensuring that a high degree of health and safety is maintained at all times.

An escort who is employed to support pupils in a taxi journey cannot be required to act as a "walking escort". If a "walking escort" is required to support a pupil, then the escort must be discussed with the school prior to starting work.

Please note; no food or drinks must be offered to pupils, as this might be contrary to dietary requirements.

General Guidelines and Procedures

Escorts should:

- Sit amongst the pupils in order to exercise reasonable care and control. There may be situations when this is not appropriate but will be detailed in the relevant risk assessment.
- Carry contact details for Aberdeenshire Passenger Transport Unit, School and Parents /Carers of each pupil. Contact numbers for parents / carers will be provided. ([Appendix 3](#)). This information should be either handed to the Escort, or in the case of Out of Authority Escorts, collected from Woodhill House or posted out.
- Not take their own children on the transport (unless they are escorting their own child and with permission)

Please note

- Smoking is not permitted in any vehicle, and escorts / drivers may not get out of a vehicle to smoke whilst on a transport run.
- Parents/carers are not permitted to travel on the transport, unless acting as the escort. Parents/Carers can only act as escort for their own child.

Pick up and drop off arrangements

- Pupils must be collected from and handed over to a responsible adult at the beginning and end of the school day.
- No pupil should be discharged from a vehicle or permitted to leave at an unauthorised stop.
- Escorts stay on-board the vehicle at collection and drop off points – it is the parents' / carer's responsibility to see the child onto and off the transport. Escorts do not enter the pupil's home, unless as agreed with Aberdeenshire Council as part of travel arrangements.

If the vehicle transports children who can walk and other(s) who are wheelchair users, the walkers should be escorted from the vehicle to the school premises first. Wheelchair users must not be left unattended out with the vehicle.

Communication

Communication with escorts

- The head teacher is the line manager for the escorts, and is responsible for their induction and training needs. For out-of-authority placements, the line management responsibility lies with the Principal Educational Psychologist/ Service Manager Inclusion, Equity and Wellbeing who may delegate this to an Education Support Officer (ESO), however day to day communication will be via the head teacher.
- School is responsible for all communication with the escorts to keep them updated of school activities and ensure that they are made to feel a valued part of the team.
- Schools are advised to provide a risk assessment for the transport of any pupil who requires one. This should be shared with escorts, included relief escorts and the Passenger Transport Unit. Advice must be given for strategies to use for individual pupils.
- Schools are responsible for sourcing relief escorts from the database, and ensuring that temporary staff are sufficiently well-briefed for them to carry out their duties safely. Care should be taken to ensure that escorts are booked off the database.
- It is the responsibility of the school to inform the escort / driver and Aberdeenshire Passenger Transport Unit if a pupil has left school early and will not be travelling home on transport. School should also inform an escort if a child is arriving late due to an appointment to ensure that the escort returns in the afternoon to collect the child for the home run.
- Escorts may be asked to deliver items such as letters to school or to a parent / carer. Items must be clearly marked with the child's name, and the name of the person to whom they are to be delivered. Escorts may be advised by parent/carer that a child has a small amount of money in his/her bag e.g.; for snack/fund raising activity. Escorts may be told by the Parent / Carer or school staff there is medication in a pupil's school bag they must pass this information on to the receiving and relevant adult on arrival at the school.
- Escorts should be aware of data protection and not send a text or email from a personal phone/email address containing any information that can identify a pupil. This also applies to social media. Staff should refer to Aberdeenshire's Social media: Guidelines for employees and elected members.
- In the event of a child requiring a reduction or termination of school transport or variation of contract, it is the responsibility of the head teacher to notify HR and Aberdeenshire Passenger Transport Unit at least 1 month in advance or where a sudden change occurs e.g., exclusion/absence, as much notice should be given as possible. Escorts **may be** entitled to redeployment or redundancy, and unnecessary costs incurred by the Authority may be passed on to the school as a result of giving insufficient notice.

Appearance

Escorts should

- Wear Aberdeenshire Council identity badge when on duty.

Escort Absence

Escorts should contact the head teacher as soon as possible if ill /unable to do an escort run. Out of Authority School escorts should contact the contact the Administrative Team as soon as possible.

Please refer to Relief escorts section.

If an Out of authority school escorts is unable to complete run at short notice e.g. an unplanned illness then the following process should be followed:

If the escort is ill and unable to do a morning run and as some school runs start before the office is open then:

- Contact Parents/ Carers.
- Contact the Transport firm e.g. taxi.
- Contact the Administrator by email /phone to advise of illness.

If this occurs during the day then the escort should:

- Contact the school
- Contact the Administrative Team by email /phone to advise of illness.

The Administrator will:

- Arrange for a relief children's escort as soon as possible.
- Advise Aberdeenshire Passenger Transport Unit.
- Advise the Head Teacher or Education Support Officer who will advise the parent/carer by email/ phone call of the change of arrangements

Health and Safety

When a pupil is unsettled during the school day and demonstrating inappropriate behaviours that may escalate, it is the school's responsibility to decide whether or not to permit the pupil to travel on transport.

If the pupil is unsettled and demonstrating inappropriate behaviour prior to the morning pick up from home, while it is the responsibility of parents to decide whether or not to permit the pupil to travel on transport; the escort may make the decision that it is not safe for the transport to go ahead. In these circumstances, the escort should advise the Parent/Carer and then contact the school or Education Support Officer to advise. It is recognised that this will only occur in exceptional circumstances. The Head Teacher or Education Support Officer (ESO) will then contact parent/carer.

The safety of all children and their escorts / drivers is paramount.

In exceptional circumstances, when a decision is taken to prevent a child from travelling on the child's designated transport, the school must inform the parent / carer and the child will remain supervised on school premises until collected.

All accidents or incidents involving escorts or pupils must be reported to / and recorded by the School (including physical injuries such as bites, scratches, damage to property etc.). Incident forms must be readily available in all schools. For out-of-authority placements, incidents and accidents must be reported to the Principal Educational Psychologist/ Service Manager Inclusion, Equity and Wellbeing via the ESO. Any incident of challenging behaviour on transport will be reported to the Parent/Carer.

In the event of the driver being distracted and/or a pupil becoming ill or displaying challenging behaviour the escort must ask the driver to pull in at the first appropriate safe place, or continue to school/home if only a short distance away. The school should be contacted, or Education Support Officer for out-of-authority placements. For out of authority placements, this should be included in the risk assessment; in general terms; the procedure would be

- Contact school
- Parent/ carer
- Education Support Officer

Escorts should not place themselves at risk. Escort should remain in vehicle but may have to move to a safer position.

Escorts MUST NOT use physical intervention with children. They should liaise with the school and follow guidance within school and Authority policies in the management of behaviour. If an escort has any concerns about safety, they should make these known to school, or Education Support Officer for out-of-authority placements.

Escorts and drivers must be familiar with the vehicle's emergency evacuation procedure and the location and fire extinguishers.

Carriage of Oxygen Cylinders on Home to School Transport

Please contact Aberdeenshire Passenger Transport Unit ASN Transport to ensure that you have the most up to date advice regarding carriage of Oxygen Cylinders on Home to School Transport, as this advice may be subject to change.

The carriage of oxygen cylinders by private individuals is not covered by ADR (International Carriage of Dangerous Goods) and is not prohibited on public transport. Where Oxygen for use by a school pupil is required, the cylinder is likely to form part of a "ready to use" set. As such it is regarded as exempt from ADR by virtue of paragraph 1.1.3.1(b). There is only one condition of carriage:

"...measures have been taken to prevent any leakage of contents in normal conditions of carriage"

This means ensuring that the cylinder valve is properly closed and that the equipment is carried securely in the vehicle. Usually the equipment is carried in purpose-made bags or cases and this would be regarded as satisfactory.

In addition to this, the following precautions should be observed.

- Do not smoke whilst carrying cylinders;
- Check cylinders for obvious signs of leakage, for example hissing sounds;
- Keep cylinders out of direct sunlight;
- Do not expose cylinders to high temperatures;

In general, there are no problems with transporting Oxygen as long as it is 'personal sized'.

The pupil would need to be accompanied by an escort trained to support the needs of the pupil.

Note – we can also reimburse parents at 45p per mile should they be able to transport the pupil themselves. This can be arranged by contacting the Aberdeenshire Passenger Transport Unit

This is the list of initial questions that **must** be considered by schools and included when drawing up the Travel risk assessment plan.

1. The dimensions of the oxygen cylinder.
2. How it is transported (eg strapped to a wheelchair, carried in a briefcase style bag)
3. Will the pupil be attached to the oxygen while travelling (eg needs a continuous flow) or is the oxygen for emergency purposes only.
4. Who will be accompanying the pupil? Please bear in mind it needs to be someone who is trained in the use of delivering the oxygen or is capable of resolving any issues should they arise.
5. How much space would be needed around the child should the escort need to provide assistance (this will determine the vehicle size and type)
6. The pupil would need to travel alone (without peers). Carriage of oxygen, whilst made safer in recent years and is legal on public transport is still a safety concern that needs close monitoring without distractions and there is the possibility of other children touching or fiddling with parts of the equipment.
7. At least 3-4 weeks' notice is required to allow for procurement of a contract ie. The authorised form must be with Aberdeenshire Passenger Transport Unit, ASN Transport approximately a month before the contract is due to start.

It is the driver's / transport provider's responsibility to check that appropriate insurance is in place for the transport of an oxygen cylinder and that the driver is familiar with the guidance for safe transport of oxygen.

Wheelchair Users

Wheelchair users must have their wheelchairs positioned and secured in transport by the taxi driver who is trained to ensure that this is done correctly.

For further advice on a particular aspect of health and safety please contact the H&S Advisor– please see appendix 3 . If there are complex medical issues involved, it may be useful to discuss these with the Parents/ Carers and appropriate health professional.

Medical

The Head Teacher and Parents / Carers are responsible for ensuring that the escorts have all necessary information about the medical requirements of the children being transported (see [Appendix 4](#)). For out-of-authority placements the Parents/carers and ESO is responsible for this.

Clear instructions must be in place regarding what to do in the event of an emergency.

In the case of a medical concern, the escort should advise the driver to stop the vehicle safely, and the escort will take appropriate action e.g. contact the school or parent/carer.

- Should it be assessed in collaboration with specialist NHS Grampian staff that medical intervention is likely to be required to support the pupil, appropriate training will be given to the escort
- If a child has a seizure, the escort should reassure the child and try to prevent injury. It is important to note the time the seizure began, how it presents and how long it lasts. The escort / driver must phone 999 to obtain urgent medical attention for the child. On this call it must be stated that the child is having a suspected seizure and describe how it presents.
- In the event of a medical emergency (unless alternative emergency arrangements have been recommended by specialist NHS Grampian staff) the driver/ escort should phone 999 -then contact the school for further notifications and possible arrangements to be made
- A child with diabetes may on occasion require food and / or drink during transportation in order to raise blood sugar levels, and this is only permissible under the guidance / direction of NHS Grampian staff, school staff and/or parents/ carers.
- If a child begins to choke whilst on transport, the escort/driver must phone 999.

Adverse Weather Conditions

In the event of severe weather conditions:

- The Head Teacher is responsible for deciding whether the school is open to pupils, and must make this information available to pupils, parents, carers and others on the school weather line / Aberdeenshire website/ school website. It is parent/carers responsibility to check this website for information. For out-of-authority placements, the Head Teacher must contact the Passenger Transport Unit and ESO to advise that transport is not required.
- The contractor will contact the school to notify them of any decision to suspend transport on that day.
- Head teachers may decide to close a school during session. They are then responsible for contacting the contractors to request transport for pupils, and contacting escorts to request their availability to accompany children home. Head teachers must also telephone parents/ carers or a pupil's emergency contacts to ensure that a responsible adult is available to meet the child.

Regarding payments for escorts / relief staff whose employment is affected by adverse weather conditions please refer to Arcadia Lite:

<http://arcadialite.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2011/11/SLAdverseWeatherGuidance.pdf>

Changes to Journeys

Journeys may be changed due to the following:

- Additional children joining the vehicle or leaving the route for that vehicle.
- Moving escorts to other journeys due to meeting children's needs or the creation of more efficient routing for transport.
- Absence of an escort due to illness.

(This list is not exhaustive).

A child may be temporarily removed from transport due to them displaying challenging behaviour which render transportation of the pupil unsafe. This should be an interim measure until meetings, risk assessment and protocol determine a solution. The school in collaboration with other parties will make the decision if a pupil's transport must become the responsibility of the parents / carer. This is not a decision for the escort or contractor. For out-of-authority placements, the decision to remove a child from transport rests with the Principal Educational Psychologist /Service Manager Inclusion, Equity and Wellbeing.

- A change to a pupil's health needs may also mean that transport is temporarily suspended until all necessary information is available and a risk assessment (if appropriate) is completed.

Transport is provided between the pupil's home and school, variation of this journey is not permissible without authorisation from Aberdeenshire Passenger Transport Unit.

Any changes to journeys for pupils in placements out with the Authority (e.g. Linn Moor, Camphill, Orchard Brae Schools) are referred to EC&S for agreement. This is particularly important where changes may be required by Social Work, who must liaise with EC&S as contract variance is a legal procedure (contracts are tendered under European Law for specific journeys).

When schools are notified of the change of an escort for the end of the school day, staff must ensure to prepare the pupil for this. The head teacher or nominated person should ensure that the relief escort is given necessary details about pupils before the start of the afternoon run.

Accident, Breakdown, Failure of Transport to Arrive or Cancellation of Transport

If the pupil is not at the pick-up point at the appointed time, the vehicle should wait 5-10 minutes then must proceed on its journey without any further undue delay.

The vehicle will not be sent back in the event the pupil is not at the pick-up point at the appointed time and it is then the parent's responsibility to transport their child to school.

- If there is not an appropriate adult available to receive the pupil at their drop off point, then the pupil must remain on the vehicle for the remainder of the journey, and the school contacted. If an appropriate adult is not available by the end of the school run, the driver and escort must deliver the child into the care of police at the nearest manned police station, or for out of authority placements, return to school with the pupil.

In some circumstances alternative arrangements may be recorded in the risk assessment.

Changes in appropriate adult should be agreed at a multi-agency action meeting and reviewed as necessary.

- In the event of an accident or breakdown, the escort/driver will advise the school who will contact parents / carers to reassure them and give an estimated time of arrival of the school transport, or update to information. The escort must remain on board with pupils. Pupils may not leave the transport until a relief vehicle arrives, then the escort must ensure a safe transfer. When it is safe to do so the driver must contact the transport company.

All taxis have phone or radio that can be used to contact school/parents/carers etc.

If school transport fails to arrive, please contact Aberdeenshire Passenger Transport Unit on 01467 533 335, option 1.

If transport is not required due to a pupil's appointment / illness, the escort may be redeployed to other duties for their normal working hours.

Transport Commencement

Please refer to the flow charts at the end of this section, for employing an escort in an authority establishment, in an 'Out-of Authority' placement and in a relief capacity, and the User Guide to the Relief Staff Finder on Arcadia:

The Aberdeenshire Passenger Transport Unit requires at least 10 working days, following receipt of an authorised form, to organise and set up a contract for the transport of a pupil between home and school. HR should be informed immediately in order to start processing forms and pass information to payroll, as this may encounter delays at peak times. It may be useful to use relief until escort is in place

All information about future requirements for pupils should be communicated to the Aberdeenshire Passenger Transport Unit by Easter for mainstream contracts and June for ASN, for contracts commencing at the start of the next academic session (August). With the exception of a very few pupils whose needs change, or who move into area during the interim, this will allow the Passenger Transport Unit to make provision for the majority well in advance of the start of the school year.

Risk Assessments

In order to correctly meet the needs of some pupils a Transport Risk Assessment may be required. For pupils attending an Aberdeenshire school this is the responsibility of school staff. For pupils attending Out of Authority placements this is the responsibility of the ESO. The Risk Assessment should be shared with all adults supporting the pupil to ensure it meets the pupil's specific needs.

Any use of harnesses or Bucklesafe should be included within the Risk Assessment and there must be a minuted discussion or signed consent form to evidence consent from the Parents/Carers to use such devices. Any child using a harness or Bucklesafe must be accompanied by an escort to facilitate the release of the harness or Bucklesafe.

Pupils with **significant** health care needs which may include diabetes, epilepsy, a requirement for suctioning that may require specific monitoring or assistance to be given by the escort (beyond generalised supervision), require a risk assessment to be written. This should detail the potential risks and the control measures in place to mitigate. This risk assessment should be shared with the Parents/ Carers and relevant health professional (s).

Any required medical interventions to be carried out by the escort would mean that training on the procedures, to support the conditions of e.g diabetes, epilepsy and respiratory conditions should be arranged by the Head Teacher.

Communication with Aberdeenshire Council Teams

Schools are responsible for notifying the Passenger Transport Unit and the Human Resources Team about any changes in escort's hours, and must contact the Teams in advance of pupils leaving the school.

Failure to do so is costly as in certain circumstances escorts may be entitled to paid notice, redeployment or redundancy (dependent on number of hours reduced, type of Contract, length of Service etc. - see terms and conditions for employment under HR).

If requirement for the transport ceases, contact HR in first instance. For out-of-authority placements, it is the responsibility of the head teacher to inform the Principal Educational Psychologist/Service Manager Inclusion Equity and Wellbeing via the Education Support Officer in advance of a child's transport being discontinued.

Escorts

Training of Escorts

Induction is provided via the school prior to commencement of employment;

In the case of out-of-authority placements, the induction is provided via the Principal Educational Psychologist/ Service Manager Inclusion, Equity and Wellbeing or ESO. This includes completing:

- ✓ General Data Protection Regulation training.
 - ✓ Respecting Diversity and Equalities module.
 - ✓ All escorts should have access to the annual Child Protection briefing that is presented to staff at the start of each session.
 - ✓ Reading the Escort Guidance.
 - ✓ Briefing on needs of children/ young people.
-
- Escorts must work pro rata for In-service days, and with the agreement of the Head Teacher this would be a suitable occasion for training to be obtained.
 - Sensory Support Services can deliver awareness raising sessions with the escorts prior to the first day of their contract, when transport is arranged for pupils with a sensory impairment. They may also contribute to risk assessment, in discussion with parents, pupil and appropriate agencies.
 - Should medical intervention be recommended by specialist NHS Grampian staff to support the pupil, appropriate training will be given
 - Further training is available through school and details of further training is available in Appendix 3.
 - For out-of-authority placements training requirements are met via the Principal Educational Psychologist/ Service Manager Inclusion, Equity and Wellbeing or ESO.
 - Escorts are entitled to claim for mileage (if using a car) or other reasonable travel costs in line with Council Policy, to attend training under their Terms and conditions. Arcadia: Reimbursement of Travel and Subsistence Expenses: <http://arcadialite.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2011/07/TandSProcedure.pdf>

Use of Pupil Support Assistants / other school staff as Escorts / Escort Absence, Change of Personnel

- Pupil Support Assistants (PSA) or other school staff (e.g. clerical, catering etc.) may apply to be employed as escorts on school transport on a permanent or temporary basis, provided that this does not impinge on their other duties. They may be used to cover the absence of another escort if required but must first be employed as a relief escort

and registered on the relief escort database, and may only be paid the relief escort rate for these duties.

- In the event of late arrival of transport, the PSA / other staff member may only claim for one of their duties for that period of time.
- Where PSA / other staff duties and escort duties follow on directly, the PSA / other staff member must obtain the agreement of their head teacher to act as an escort, as on occasion (due to delays) this may result in their late arrival at school.
- In exceptional circumstances, such as lack of an escort at very short notice that would lead to cancellation of transport, a head teacher may employ a PSA / other staff member who is not on the relief register, in order to protect the transport run. In this instance the head teacher would first have checked the relief register and ascertained that no escort was available.

School Information

School notice boards / staffroom boards (check with your school) should be kept updated with information for escorts and all other staff. Every school should have information about unions: Unison, GMB or Unite available to read, and updated regularly.

Aberdeenshire Council Policies are available through their [website](#)

School Policies must be available to be consulted in the school or supplied on request by the head teacher.

Escorts should be included in mailing lists for information such as school newsletters and other correspondence, in order to keep them updated and ensure their inclusion as part of the staff complement.

Personal Performance Plan (PPP)

The Head teacher of the school is the line manager for the escorts (unless another member of staff is designated to this role).

Out-of-authority escorts are line-managed by the Principal Educational Psychologist/ Service Manager Inclusion, Equity and Wellbeing.

- Escorts should receive a review meeting during the course of the academic year with the head teacher / teacher responsible. This may be a joint meeting for escorts. The necessary documentation should be issued prior to the meeting and each escort given the opportunity to identify any training needs. Time for a review meeting is paid by the school. Escorts attend In-service days pro rata, and this may provide a convenient time for reviews / training to be delivered. Attendance of escorts for In-service is determined by the pattern of the school terms.
- For out-of-authority placements the Principal Educational Psychologist/ Service Manager Inclusion, Equity and Wellbeing /ESO meets with small groups of escorts to review and discuss training needs.

Attendance

Escorts should be informed about the [Attendance Policy](#) and the [Special Leave Policy](#)

- Escorts are responsible for informing the head teacher (or other designated staff) if they are unable to work due to illness.
- For out-of-authority placements, escorts must inform the administrator of their absence so that cover can be arranged. Appointments should take place out with working hours. Paid leave is given to attend an emergency appointment. A minimum of 7 days' notice should be given by an escort for a hospital appointment during working hours.

Escorts should be informed about the Human Resources Policies and Procedures Quick Guide on Arcadia Lite.

If further assistance or information is required in regards to this any member of the HR&OD Team would be able to provide guidance.

Relief Escorts

- If a relief escort is not available, the transport run cannot go ahead. Schools would need to notify parents in this instance.
- A PSA who is not on the relief database may only be used in extreme situations as an alternative to cancellation of a transport run.
- It is school's responsibility to source a relief escort when required through the database, and clearly mark the fact that the escort has been booked. The head teacher must advertise the post for a fixed term contract when a relief escort is required for a longer term (than that to cover an absence). Relief escorts can only be employed as a relief escort for 12 weeks, after this it should be a fixed term contract.
- In the event of a relief escort being required to start work on an afternoon run, it is the school's responsibility to communicate to the escort any information required about the pupils being transported, including medical needs.
- Relief escorts are not required to work on In-service days – please refer to their Terms and Conditions from HR.
- A relief Escort required to cover for an absent out-of-authority escort will be sourced by the admin assistant with responsibility for out-of-authority escorts.
- If a child requires specific medical intervention and the training has been provided to the Escort there will not be a relief escort with this specific training and the school will need to make alternative arrangements to cover this absence.

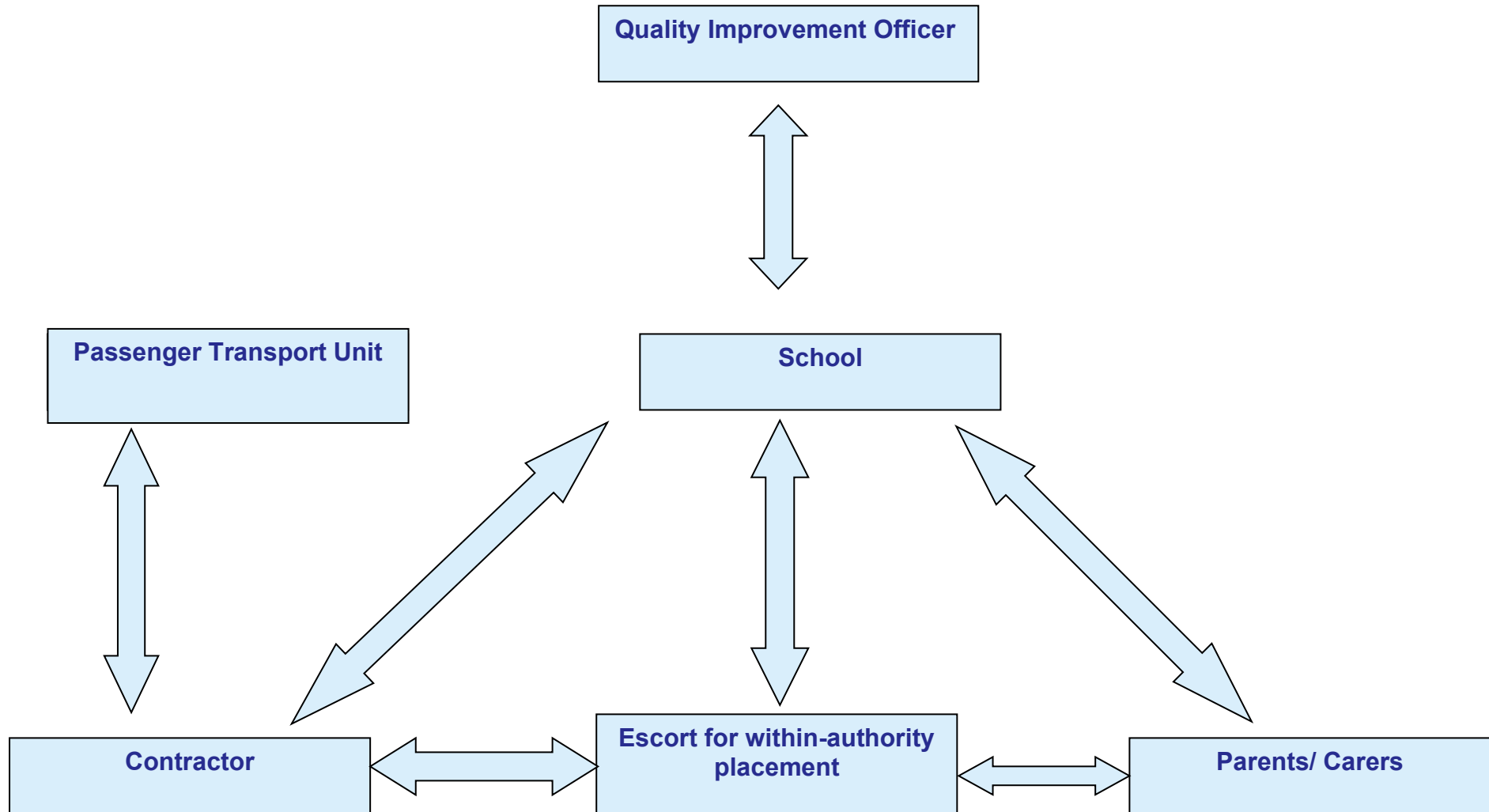
Transport Safety Aids/ Equipment

- Head teachers should ask for the advice of the Passenger Transport Unit (ASN Transport) regarding transporting pupils in car seats and wheelchairs. Parents/ Carers and in some instances the appropriate health professional should meet to discuss any pertinent transport related issues.
- Funding for car seats and booster cushions etc. is available from the Passenger Transport Unit at Woodhill House (secured from the Additional Support Needs budget). Details must be listed on PTU 500.
- Specialist equipment is provided by the Aberdeenshire Passenger Transport Unit through collaboration between the school, Parents/Carers and appropriate health representative (if appropriate) identifying what is required.
- Head teachers should notify the Passenger Transport Unit when a car seat / booster cushion etc. is no longer required, as provided it is in good condition (not been involved in an accident) it may be relocated for another pupil's use. Any seat which has suffered damage due to an accident should be discarded and replaced immediately.

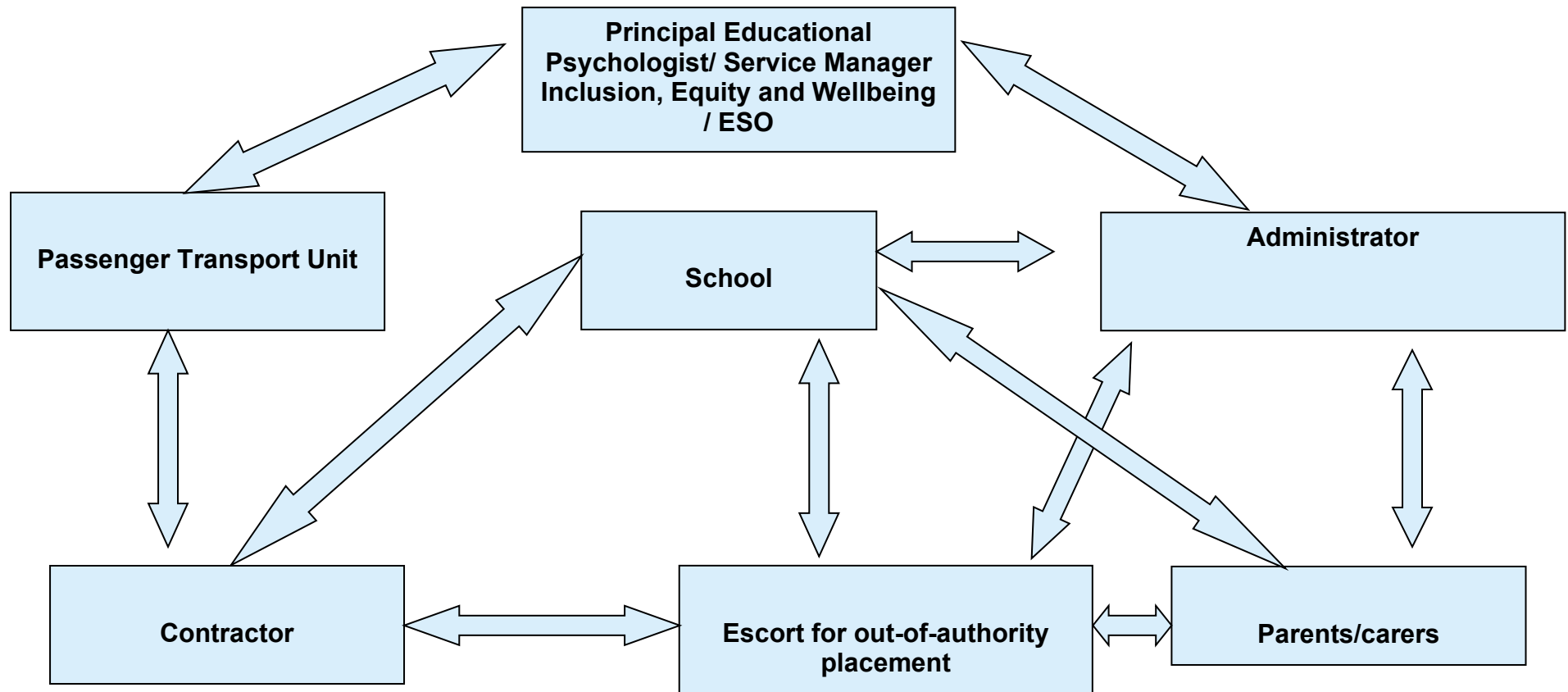
Any seats required for pupil transport are the property of Aberdeenshire Council and may not be removed from the taxi.

Further information and advice can be found in Appendix 4.

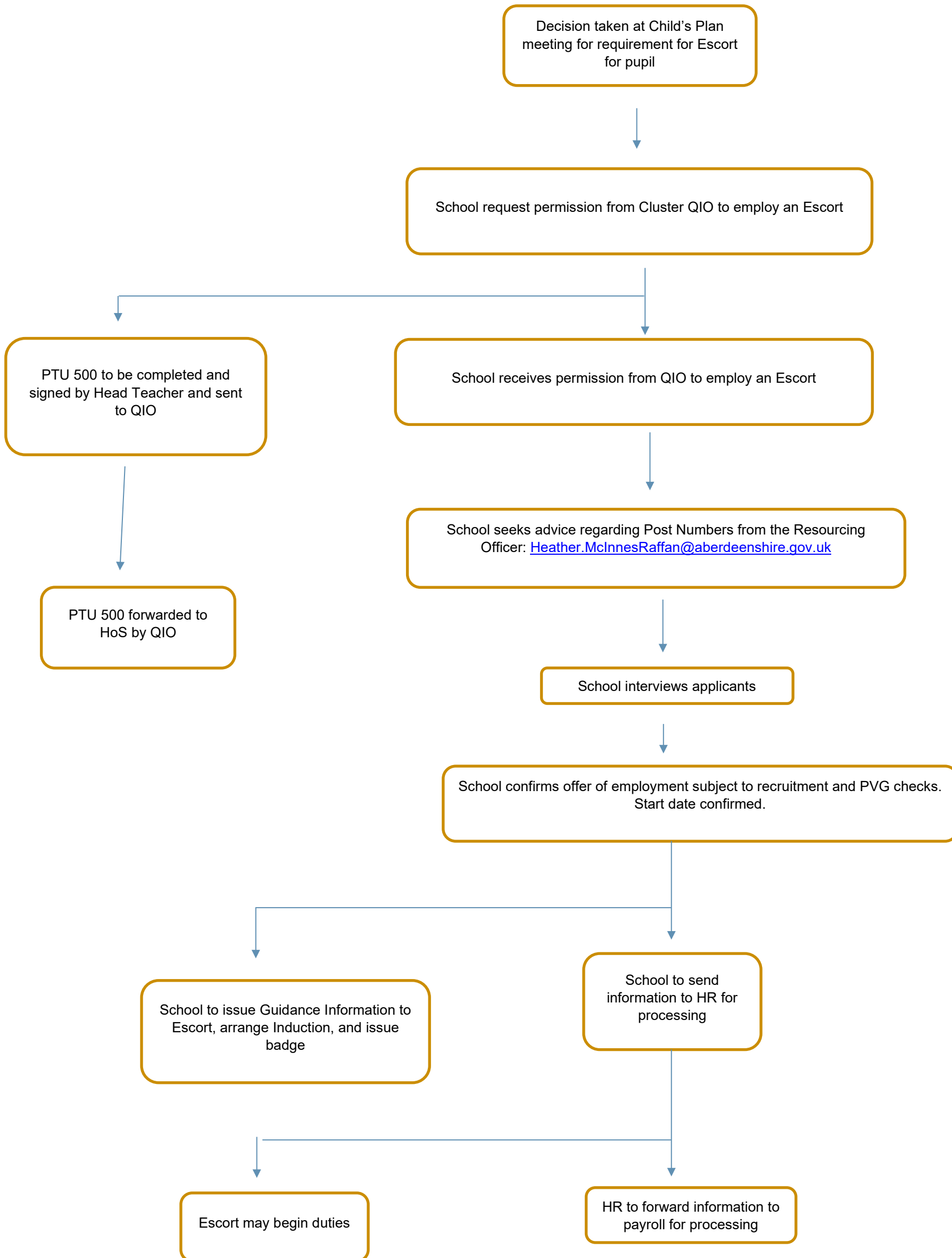
Flow Chart of Communication for Within Authority Placement



Flow Chart of Communication for Out-of-Authority Placement

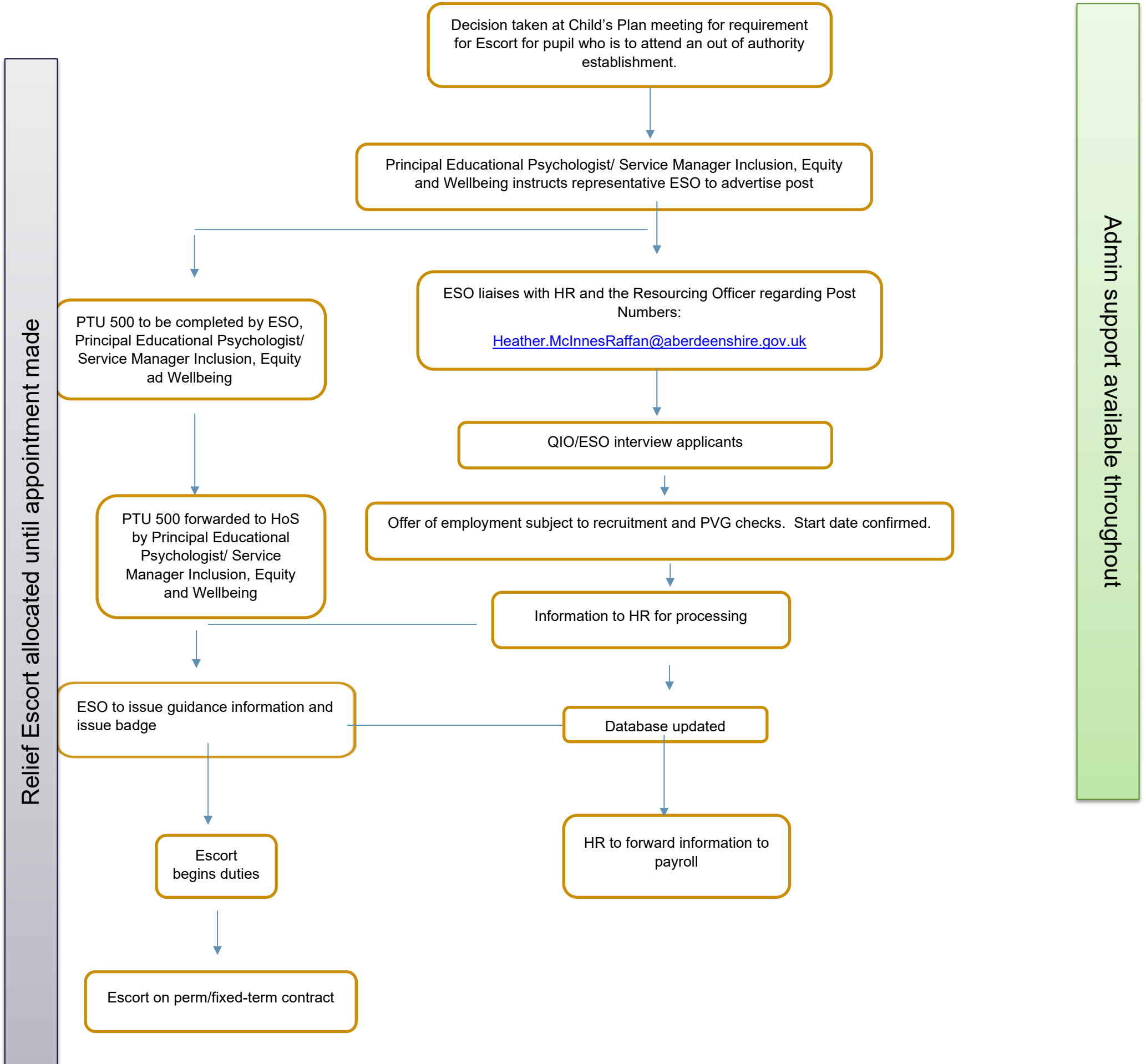


Flow Chart for Employing an Escort for a 'Within Authority Placement'

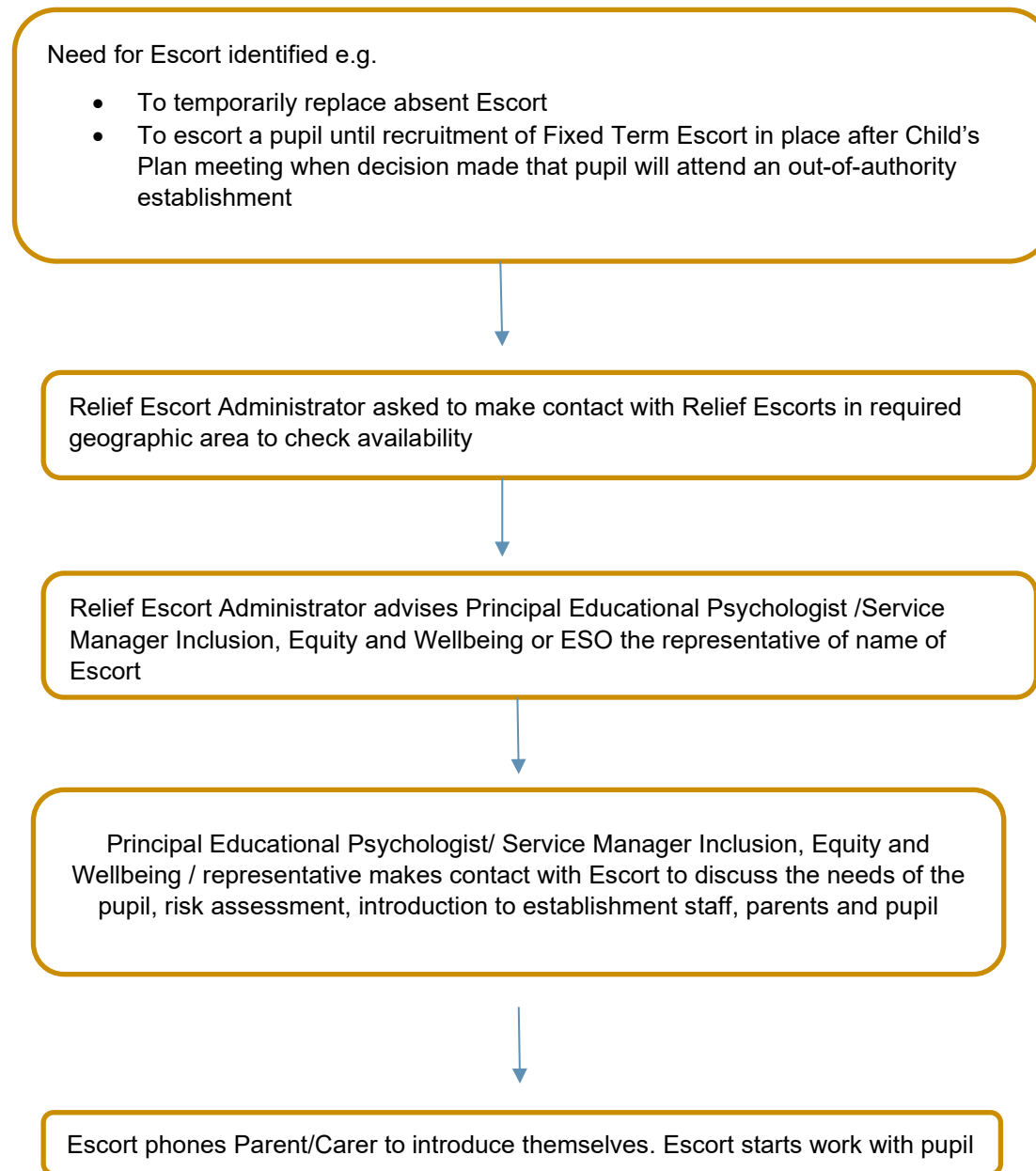


Relief Escort allocated until appointment made

Flowchart for Employing an 'Out of Authority' Escort



Flowchart for Deployment of a Relief Escort



Appendix 1

Glossary of Additional Support Needs

It is good practice to discuss each child's individual needs and behaviours with their parents / carers and agree appropriate strategies for assistance.

The following gives some general guidelines for the purpose of raising awareness, but it should not be used as a generalisation to be applied to each child.

Arthritis

Damage or disease to joints, resulting in inflammation and pain. Particular care may be required to ensure comfort during travel, and assistance with boarding / leaving the vehicle

Asthma

Narrowing of the airways in the lungs due to inflammation / spasm. A number of triggers may precipitate an attack including stress, temperature changes, exercise and allergens. Children usually carry inhalers which can be self-administered (or may require some assistance). Severe attacks may be life threatening.

Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder

Very impulsive behaviours (difficulty in controlling actions) and lack of attention. Instructions need to be short and specific, and preferably accompanied by visual images to assist with processing. Need to be proactive in order to reduce opportunity for negative responses. Some children are prescribed stimulant medication to help them to control their behaviour better, but this takes time to be effective after administration.

Distraction / de-escalation techniques may be used if necessary.

Autism Spectrum Disorders

A developmental disorder with impairment of social and emotional skills, communication and imagination. Pupils insist on routines and may display obsessive behaviours. Verbal communication often requires reinforcement with visual clues. Regular and dependable routines offer support, and very consistent responses to behaviour. Children with **Asperger Syndrome** display similar difficulties but have greater language skills and understanding.

Short clear instructions should be given, and distraction / de-escalation techniques used.

Cerebral Palsy

A condition that affects muscle control and movement. It is usually caused by an injury to the brain before, during or after birth. Children with cerebral palsy have difficulties in controlling muscles and movements as they grow and develop. The degree of impairment varies from slight clumsiness, to severe spasticity, athetosis (involuntary movements), and ataxia (balance, gait, limb, eye and speech affected).

Cystic Fibrosis

It is caused by a faulty gene that controls the movement of salt and water in and out of the cells within the body. Cystic Fibrosis affects the internal organs, especially the lungs and digestive system, by clogging them with thick sticky mucus. This makes it hard to breathe and digest food.

Diabetes Mellitus

Develops when the body's immune system attacks and destroys the cells that produce insulin. As a result the body is unable to produce insulin and this leads to increased blood glucose levels, which in turn can cause serious damage to all organ systems in the body. Diabetes Mellitus is treated with daily injections of insulin and a controlled diet to ensure blood sugar is maintained at the correct level. A diabetic pupil may have a 'hypo' in which the blood sugar level falls to the point at which the pupil becomes unresponsive. Diabetic pupils usually carry sachets or tablets of glucose to be taken when the blood sugar level drops. Alternatively, sugary drinks may be administered.

Down Syndrome

In most cases, Down syndrome occurs when there is an extra copy of chromosome 21. This form of Down syndrome is called Trisomy 21. The extra chromosome causes problems with the way the body and brain develop.

Physical development is often slower than normal. Most children with Down syndrome never reach their average adult height. Children may also have delayed mental and social development. Instructions should be short and clear, and accompanied by visual materials to enhance understanding. Behaviour problems may be reduced by distraction / de-escalation. Children are often reassured by a regular routine. Some children need assistance to learn appropriate behaviours towards adults and peers (should be discouraged from hugging or kissing others) and incidents reported to School.

Epilepsy

Epilepsy is a tendency to have recurrent seizures (sometimes called fits). A seizure is caused by a sudden burst of excess electrical activity in the brain, causing a temporary disruption in the normal message passing between brain cells. This disruption results in the brain's messages becoming halted or mixed up. Epilepsy is

usually treated with anti-epileptic drugs (AEDs). They act on the brain, trying to reduce seizures or stop seizures from happening.

A child with Epilepsy will have a protocol if there is a regular occurrence of seizures.

Fragile X

Fragile X Syndrome is the most common known cause of inherited learning disability (mental handicap). It occurs in boys and girls and is associated with varying degrees of learning difficulty. Pupils with Fragile X often have difficulties with speech and language development, sequencing, spatial abilities, and short term memory and sometimes develop epilepsy. Some pupils exhibit autism-type behaviours, and require adherence to established routines. Instructions should be short and clear, and accompanied by visual materials to enhance understanding. Behaviour problems may be reduced by distraction / de-escalation.

Head Injuries

Acquired brain injuries may result from trauma (accident), shaking or tumours. The severity of the injury and the stage of development of the child when this occurs will influence its effect. Children often experience learning difficulties, and social / emotional difficulties. Due to the nature of head injuries, the effect on each child is unique, and therefore liaison with parents / carers is essential to ensure safe transportation.

Hearing Impairment

There is a wide variety of hearing impairments from mild (such as high frequency deafness) to severe (no natural hearing, may have cochlear implants). Escorts need to be aware that pupils with hearing impairments require face to face communication to facilitate lip reading. Escorts should speak at a normal rate without over emphasizing their articulation, but use of hand signs and body language may assist with conveying information.

Children who have a severe hearing impairment find it very tiring to listen, and may wish to have a quiet journey home. Competition from other noises such as the engine, traffic and other children talking also make conversation difficult. Training may be provided through the Sensory Support Services

Muscular Dystrophy

There are many different types of muscular dystrophy, and each affects different muscles. The severity of conditions and how they affect individuals varies greatly from person to person. Most conditions are progressive, causing the muscles gradually to weaken over time, and can either be inherited or occur out of the blue where there is no family history.

Liaison with parents / carers and school staff is essential in order to ensure safe and comfortable transportation.

Multiple Sclerosis

MS is the most common disease of the central nervous system affecting young adults. The symptoms experienced depend on the position and extent of the scarring or lesions within the central nervous system and on how much damage has occurred, so no two people with MS will have exactly the same set of symptoms. The common symptoms at the time of diagnosis are: fatigue, loss of vision in one eye, blurred or double vision, dragging a foot, weakness of limbs, reduced coordination, balance problems, numbness, pins and needles, burning sensations.

Liaison with parents / carers and school staff is essential in order to ensure safe and comfortable transportation.

Severe allergic reaction

Reaction to food, chemical, stings or other product causes inflammation of the skin (may exhibit hives or red colouration) and may cause difficulty in breathing due to inflammation of the airways. Pupil may carry anti-histamine or EpiPen for self-administration. Urgent treatment required, as very severe reaction may be life threatening.

Tourette Syndrome

TS is an inherited neurological condition. The key feature is tics, involuntary and uncontrollable sounds and movements. Children may mimic phrases and gestures (echolalia).

In most cases TS is also linked to other behaviours, such as Obsessive Compulsive Disorder, Attention Deficit Disorder, Autism Spectrum Disorder, Dyspraxia, Dyslexia.

Liaison with parents / carers and school staff is essential in order to ensure safe transportation.

Turner Syndrome

Turner syndrome (TS) is a chromosome abnormality affecting only females, caused by the complete or partial deletion of the X chromosome. Girls with TS may have only a few or several of the features associated with TS, but short stature and infertility are present, there may also be evidence of sleeping, feeding and learning difficulties.

Liaison with parents / carers and school staff is essential in order to ensure safe transportation

Visual Impairment

Visual impairment is due to a dysfunction of either eye, the optic nerves or the visual cortex of the brain. It may be partial or total, acquired or congenital.

Liaison with parents / carers and school staff is essential in order to ensure safe transportation. Training may be provided through the Sensory Support Services.

Appendix 2 – Training

Child Protection

Further training is available and this can be accessed via the [Aberdeenshire ASN website](#), [GIRFEC website](#) or [ALDO](#).

The child protection training course raises awareness of everyone's responsibilities to protect children. The course will cover:

- possible indicators of child abuse
- responsibilities to alert, and
- how to deal with children in these circumstances

This course supports staff in all aspects of safeguarding children in line with local guidance.

Moving and handling

This workshop is provided to people who have to move or handle children / young people with physical disabilities. Information will be given on safe practice, and the workshop includes practical 'hands on' training.

Head Teachers should contact the Aberdeenshire Inclusion, Equity and Wellbeing to arrange training, if required.

Epilepsy Awareness Training

Provided by the Epilepsy nurse from Royal Aberdeen Children's Hospital. Training is provided for the awareness of the types and signs of epileptic seizures can assist in early identification and pursuit of assistance for the child and administration of medication.

Diabetes Awareness Training

Provided by the Diabetes nurse from Royal Aberdeen Children's Hospital. Children with diabetes have to monitor their blood sugar levels carefully to avoid episodes of low (hypo) or high (hyper) glycaemia which can result in loss of consciousness and in extreme cases in death. Information is given regarding administration of glucose solutions / other preparations (sugary drinks) during a hypoglycaemic episode.

Autism Awareness and Information about Specific Pupils Needs

Provided by Additional Support for Learning Teachers / Class teachers to assist escorts to understand and work with youngsters on the Autism Spectrum. This information gives insight into the kind of triggers that can disturb youngsters, and how to de-escalate anxiety.

Safe Transport and Use of Oxygen

This [link](#) is a user guide to the transportation of oxygen

This is a [link](#) to the main legislation

H&S Advisors

Steven Thompson 01467 532932

Maxine Hanson 01467 538112

Appendix 3 – Contact details

INFORMATION FOR ESCORT

Education Establishment to attend				
Pupil's Name		D.O.B.		
Parent/Carer's Name				
Address				
Post Code		Tel No.		
Date Transport to Commence				
Days Transport Required	School starting time	School finishing time		
Sunday				
Monday				
Tuesday				
Wednesday				
Thursday				
Friday				
Saturday				

INFORMATION FOR ESCORT continued

Pupil Name:

SPECIALIST EQUIPMENT REQUIRED FOR PUPIL**BUGGY/WHEELCHAIRS**

Delete where necessary

Is the pupil a buggy or wheelchair user?	Yes/No (<i>delete one</i>)
Please provide make & model of buggy/wheelchair:	
Will the pupil travel in their buggy/wheelchair?	Yes/No (<i>delete one</i>)
If no, will the pupil require assistance to their seat?	Yes/No (<i>delete one</i>)

CAR SAFETY SEATS

Is a car seat or booster cushion required?	Yes/No (<i>delete one</i>)
Make & model of car seat (not booster) if required?	

HARNESSES etc.

Does the pupil require special harnesses etc.?	Yes/No (<i>delete one</i>)
Please provide details of harnesses required	

Specialist equipment provided by the school / child's occupational therapist, Passenger Transport Unit or other qualified person. For out-of-authority placements equipment is provided through the Principal Educational Psychologist/ Service Manager Inclusion, Equity and Wellbeing or their representative (ESO) in consultation with the Passenger Transport Unit

OTHER SPECIAL / MEDICAL REQUIREMENTS

Other specialist requirements/equipment (please specify)	
Is the pupil visually impaired?	Yes/No (<i>delete one</i>)
Does the pupil have a hearing implant?	Yes/No (<i>delete one</i>)
Does the pupil have a medical condition / allergy	Yes/No (<i>delete one</i>)
Please give details of any medical condition / emergency medication	
Can the pupil self-administer medication?	Yes/No (<i>delete one</i>)

- Should it be assessed in collaboration with specialist NHS Grampian staff that medical intervention is likely to be required to support the pupil, appropriate training will be given to the Escort.

INFORMATION FOR PARENT / CARER

Passenger Assistant's name	
Address	
Passenger Assistant's Tel no.	

Appendix 4 – Transport Safety Aids/ Equipment

Car Seats and Booster Seats

The link given below details to current Car Seat legislation in the UK.

<https://www.gov.uk/child-car-seats-the-rules>

The law does allow for exemptions such as making a short necessary journey or on a minibus, however, unless an emergency situation arises it is best practice for car seats to be used at all times on ASN School Transport Contracts.

Further advice can be sought from the Client Transport Team by emailing asn.transport@aberdeenshire.gov.uk

Note – under no circumstances should a pupil ever be seated on an escort's knee and then have the seat belt worn around both passengers.

Best Practice – Children travelling in front seats.

Where possible all children should travel in the rear of a vehicle but if the vehicle is fitted with the appropriate car seat/restraints then a pupil can legally travel in the front seat of the vehicle.

Crelling Harness

Crelling Harnesses are a low risk medical device used to offer postural support or in the case of learning difficulties and challenging behaviour, a certain degree of restraint.

Note – Crelling Harnesses are not safety harnesses, the vehicle seat belt must be working in conjunction with the harness unless a certificate of Medical Exemption from Compulsory Seat Belt Wearing has been issued by a GP and is forwarded to the ASN Transport Team.

The use of a Crelling harness should be discussed and minuted with the appropriate people involved in the pupil's care plan e.g. Parent/Carer, Occupational Therapist, Social Worker. It should be included within the Pupil's Behaviour Support Plan and Risk Assessment. Note – harnesses can only be used on transport where there is an escort to un-do it. Once agreed it is required it can then be ordered via the ASN Transport Team.

Note – if a pupil is already on authorised transport, the additional cost of the harness must be authorised by the QIO before it can be ordered. Please contact the ASN Transport Team for current harness costs.

Further information on Crelling Harnesses can be found here >
<http://www.crelling.com/>

Bucklesafe™

Bucklesafe™ is a small device made out of tough red plastic that is designed to stop the accidental or deliberate undoing of a seatbelt. It can be provided by the ASN Transport Team on request.

Note – these devices can only be used on transport where there is an escort to un-do the Bucklesafe™. The driver of the vehicle is not able to un-do these unless in an emergency. **The Bucklesafe™ cannot be used with seatbelts with sunken belt buckles.** If the transport that the pupil is on has these, then a change of vehicle and/or provider may be required. Please contact the ASN Transport Team for further information.

Further general information can be found here > <http://www.bucklesafe.co.uk>

Any use of Bucklesafe should be included within the Pupil's Behaviour Support Plan and Risk Assessment and there should be a minuted discussion stating the consent of the Parents/ Carers to use the device

For more information please go to the following [link](#): Seat belts: the law

Appendix 5 – Glossary

Admin E&CS team	Administrator for the Additional Support Needs team responsible for arranging transport for out-of-authority placements
ASAP	As soon as possible
CLPL	Continuous Lifelong Professional Learning
Contractor	Driver or Manager of company employed to provide transport
E&CS	Education and Children’s Services
EMIS	Employment Management Information Service
ESO	Education Support Officer
HR	Human Resources
HR&OD Team	Human Resources and Organisational Development
i-GRasp	Information system on Arcadia / Arcadia Lite
Journey	Pathway connecting two destinations e.g. home and school
MARS	Movement and Rehabilitation Service (based at Woodend Hospital)
Non-ambulant	Not able to walk
Out-of-authority	Out-with the zone for any school in the Aberdeenshire local authority catchment
Physical Intervention	Use of physical force to change behaviour
PPP	Personal Performance Plan: meeting to discuss training requirements and reflect on working practice
PSA	Pupil Support Assistant
PTU 500	Pupil Transport Unit form
PVG	Protection of Vulnerable Groups
QIO	Quality Improvement Officer
Redeployment	Move to another post with the same conditions of service
Redundancy	Termination of contract due to post no longer being required. Some paid notice may be included depending on conditions of service
Seizure	Illness caused by Epilepsy or other trigger resulting in temporary loss of ability to respond, may be accompanied by jerky limb movements and/or other physical signs

Social Stories	Photo or symbol supported stories to assist a child's understanding of acceptable behaviours in a particular situation e.g. travel in a taxi
Transport	To include contracted taxi, minibus, bus, or public transport, or method of conveying child in a vehicle to/from school
Violent incident	Any incident when the child / young person has employed physical force inappropriately with a peer or adult
Visual prompts	Objects of reference, photos or symbols which assist the child's understanding / to follow instructions

