

END OF SESSION PROCEDURES

Schools should function normally on the last day of each term, but it is recognised there is a need for some flexibility on the last day of the school session. It is accepted that local circumstances will dictate the actual arrangements for the last day of session in each establishment.

Schools should however be aware that a large proportion of school transport is provided by means of registered public services and many buses that transport pupils home from school operate to published timetables. This is particularly the case at secondary schools and larger primary schools. Even if the school journey is not in a published timetable, the bus may be in use on a public service journey at other times in the day.

Some schools that close at lunchtime on the last day of session have an expectation that public service buses will be available to take pupils home at lunchtime, even though they are timetabled otherwise.

Public bus services are legally required to comply with timetables, and operators cannot alter these at short notice. Where Head Teachers intend to close early on the last day of session, they should therefore discuss their transport requirements with their local Transport Officer as early as possible in the session, **and at least 3 months prior to the last day of session.**

However there is no obligation on transport contractors to amend their operating schedules to accommodate early closing by schools at the end of session, and Head Teachers should not assume this will be possible even where the required notice has been provided. Our contract for school transport provision states, “The Contractor shall seek to accommodate any non-emergency variations [to the normal school hours] at no extra cost if reasonable advance notice is given and the vehicle is not committed to other work at the time.” Where operators cannot do so; schools should notify parents, pupils and staff that school transport will operate at normal times on the last day. Head Teachers should ensure that schools are staffed in the expectation that some pupils will remain at school until school transport is available.

There is a necessity to ensure, for registration purposes, that there is a morning and afternoon session for pupils. We would expect that lunches are available for those pupils who require them prior to the opening of the afternoon session. Head teachers should contact their Area Manager if any further advice is needed.

Please also note that the flexibility allowed for the last day of session applies only to that day and not to the last day of any other term. It is not acceptable for schools to close early on the last day before the October, Christmas and Easter holidays.