

North Northamptonshire Council
Home to School Travel Assistance Policy

Academic year 2024 – 25

This policy document will apply to all travel assistance and transport arrangements for Home to School for the academic year commencing September 2024.

For in-year changes prior to September 2024 the previous policy will still apply.

Version	Author	Date	Changes
V 01			Previous Policy reviewed. Layout changed. Appeals information updated
V 02			
V 03			

Home to School Travel Assistance Policy

This policy document sets out the policy and process for people living within the area of North Northamptonshire Council in respect of Home to School Travel Assistance for children and young people aged between 5 and 16 years of age (including those who will become 5 during the course of the academic year).

Throughout this document:

North Northamptonshire Council will be referred to as "The Council"

The term "Parents" should be taken as referring to Parents, Carers, and other Guardians with parental responsibility for a child or young person.

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For in-year changes prior to September 2024 the previous policy will still apply.

Transport for Post 16 students is set out in the Council's 'Post-16 Transport Policy Statement' which can be found at [\[LINK\]](#)

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Legal Background

The Council is required to publish an annual Sustainable School Travel Strategy showing:

- An assessment of the travel and transport needs of children and young people in North Northamptonshire
- An audit of the sustainable travel and transport infrastructure within North Northamptonshire that may be used when travelling to and from schools and colleges
- A strategy to develop that infrastructure to better cater for the travel needs of children and young people
- How the Council will promote sustainable travel and transport to from and between schools and other institutions

The Council is also required to provide assistance for travel between Home and School for children and young people residing in the area who meet the eligibility criteria explained in this document.

This document refers to the legislation governing home to school travel for children of **compulsory school age**, in particular:

- section 508A of the Education Act 1996 – local authorities' duty to promote sustainable modes of travel
- section 508B of and Schedule 35B to the Education Act 1996 – travel arrangements for eligible children
- section 508C of the Education Act 1996 – travel arrangements for other children
- section 509AD of the Education Act 1996 – local authorities' duty to have regard to religion or belief
- the School Information (England) Regulations 2008

Section 1 Home to School Travel Assistance

North Northamptonshire Council (the Council) recognises parents'/carers' responsibility for ensuring attendance of their children at school. It also recognises that in some circumstances assistance may be required.

1.1 Who is entitled to Travel Assistance

There is no automatic entitlement to assistance with travel between home and school. Parents requiring home to school transport or other travel assistance will need to make an application as set out in Section 4.

The Council will only enable a child or young person to travel to school for the beginning of the **school day**, and to return **home** at the end of the **school day**.

The Council is not required to make arrangements for travel between institutions during the **school day**, or to enable children or young people to attend extra-curricular activities and other commitments outside school hours. Responsibility for making, and costs of, travel arrangements in these cases will lie with the parents or school, or in exceptional circumstances the Social Care team.

The Council will provide travel assistance or make free travel arrangements either by dedicated vehicle or bus pass for pupils meeting the following criteria:

(i) Pupils between 5 and 8 years of age (including those who will become 5 in the course of the academic year, referred to in this document as Rising 5s) who are attending their nearest suitable* or linked** school and who live more than 2 miles from that school.

(ii) Pupils aged 8 to 16 years who are attending their nearest suitable* or linked** school and who live more than 3 miles from that school

(iii) Pupils aged 5 to 16 years of age, (including Rising 5s) where their nearest suitable school is within the walking distances set out about BUT where the walking route is assessed as unacceptable to walk according to the Council's published criteria, even if accompanied by an adult as necessary.

(vii) Pupils aged 5 to 16 (including Rising 5s) whose parents/carers have a disability. Where the Council relies on a parent/carer accompanying a pupil along a walking route for it to be considered safe, or to accompany a pupil between home and a picking up or setting down point but the parent's or carer's permanent or temporary disability prevents them from doing so, then the Council may provide free transport as a "reasonable adjustment" under the terms of the Equality Act 2010.

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1.2 Faith Schools and Single Sex schools

Pupils aged 5 to 16 years (including Rising 5s) attending Single Sex or Faith (Denominational) Schools will be entitled to assistance with transport in the following circumstances:

- the school concerned is the nearest suitable school **AND EITHER:**

- a. the distance between home and school is greater than the statutory walking distance (2 miles for pupils aged rising 5 to 8 or 3 miles for pupils aged 8 to 16) by the shortest safe walking route; OR
- b. the distance between home and school is less than the statutory walking distance relevant to the child's age but the walking route is assessed as unacceptable to walk according to the Council's published criteria, even if accompanied by an adult as necessary.

1.3 Definitions

"Suitable school" is defined as the school with places available that provides education appropriate to the age, ability and aptitude of the child or young person, and any SEN that the child or young person might have. Suitable school' does not mean the most suitable school for a child or young person, merely one which can meet the majority of the needs of the child or young person concerned.

Where a child's nearest school is oversubscribed and unable to offer them a place, the nearest school with places available is their nearest suitable school for school travel purposes.

Linked school Schools are said to be "linked" if there is a priority given to applicants from a certain school or location. This primarily affects young people transferring from primary to secondary education. Under this policy Linked schools are treated in the same way as the nearest suitable school.

Walking distances Except where otherwise specifically stated, the distance between a child or young person's home and school will be measured by the shortest available safe walking route.

Availability of school places. Where a place is not available at the child or young person's nearest suitable or linked school at the point of starting school, transferring to secondary school, or moving into a new area, free travel assistance will be provided to the next nearest suitable school, subject again to distance and route acceptability criteria.

Parental Preference. The Council supports the right of parents to express preferences for schools. However, in order to be eligible for free home to school transport, (subject to meeting the other eligibility criteria) parents must have included their nearest suitable school amongst their choices. Parents/carers who express all of their preferences for schools that are not their nearest suitable or linked school will take responsibility for the provision and cost of transport to the school at which their child is allocated a place, unless a place is allocated at the nearest suitable or linked school.

Parents/carers who, when expressing a preference, place another school in a higher priority position than their nearest suitable school and, who fail to get a place at either, will be entitled to free transport to the nearest suitable alternative school (unless this school is within the statutory walking distances). If this place is declined in favour of a different school, parents/carers will take responsibility for the provision and cost of transport to that preferred alternative.

Pick up and set down points

Assistance with transport may not be provided from door to door. Young people may be expected to walk to and from a pick up and set down point, accompanied by an adult if necessary. The walking distance will not exceed ½ a mile for children aged between 4 – 8th birthday and 1 mile for children aged between 8 and 16 and will usually be much shorter. Account will be taken of a pupil’s special educational needs and/or disability and parents/carers’ disability when allocating suitable pickup and set down points.

1.4 Extended Rights for those on Low Income

A child or young person will qualify for travel assistance under the low income criteria if they are attending their nearest appropriate school and are entitled to receive free school meals on financial grounds or their parents are in receipt of Universal Credit or the Maximum level of Working Tax Credit.

Children, who attend a primary school and who are aged 8 years but less than 11 years, must also:

- attend their nearest appropriate school for transport purposes **and**;
- live between 2-6 miles from the school.

Children attending a secondary school and therefore aged 11 years and over, must also:

- attend one of their three nearest appropriate schools for transport purposes **and**;
- live between 2-6 miles from the school.

Primary and Secondary aged children, who are attending a faith school must in addition to receiving the benefits above;

- Be attending a faith school as expressly requested by their parents at time of admission, where that school is the nearest appropriate faith school based upon their beliefs and
- live between 2 and 15 miles from the school.

If eligibility for free school meals or Universal Credit or maximum level Working Tax Credit ceases, then free transport will be withdrawn at the end of the academic year.

A full list of the low-income qualifying criteria is available in Appendix A3 attached to this policy.

1.5 Inaccurate Applications

The Council reserves the right to reclaim the cost of any transport provided, if it is found that any incorrect information has been provided to the Council in order to gain admission or transport to a school that would otherwise be outside of the eligibility criteria.

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1.6 Travel arrangements for non-entitled pupils/students of statutory school age (Fare paying pupils)

Where a young person does not meet the criteria for free home to school transport or travel assistance, and where there is spare capacity on a contracted vehicle, parents may wish to purchase a paying ticket for the service

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Passes for these spare seats will be offered on a first come first served basis at a cost to be determined annually.

In 2024/5 this fare will be **to be entered following the outcome of the consultation**

Additional vehicles will not be contracted to cater for concessionary fares and a minimum of five seats will be held unsold to cater for entitled pupils who may become eligible for transport during the school year.

Parents/carers are advised that the facility could be withdrawn at reasonable notice – not less than one month, if the space should be required for children or young people who are entitled to free travel assistance. If this is the case, parents will be refunded for the remainder of the fare period.

Spare seat tickets for non-entitled pupils aged 5 to 16 (including Rising 5s) will only be available

- on receipt of payment of the fare and
- where there is spare capacity on a contracted vehicle.

Where parents have chosen and have accepted a place at a school that is not their nearest suitable school, they also accept the responsibility for, and cost of, the transport of the child to and from school.

The Council reserves the right to decline to sell passes for spare seats on transport provided for pupils with Special Educational Needs

Section 2 Travel arrangements for pupils with SEN or a Disability

2.1 Transport can be an important factor in the support for children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities.

Not all children or young people with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) will receive home to school transport. All children and young people will be assessed in accordance with The Council's Travel Assistance Policy, regardless of whether they hold an EHCP or not.

All children and young people, including those with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) up to the age of 25, are subject to general Local Authority Transport criteria as described in Section 1 for primary and secondary mainstream children and young people.

Please note that where a pupil with SEN or a disability lives further than the statutory distance from school, i.e. over 2 miles from home address if under 8 OR over 3 miles from home address for those between 8 and 16 AND the school is their nearest mainstream school, or the nearest suitable special provision, then travel assistance will be provided on the grounds of distance, taking into account any additional needs that they may have.

Travel assistance will additionally be provided for children and young people who cannot reasonably be expected to walk to school because of their mobility problems or because of associated health and safety issues related to their special educational needs (SEN) or disability. Eligibility, for such children will be assessed on an individual basis.

It is the responsibility of all parents with children of compulsory school age to ensure their child or young person's regular attendance at school, regardless of any SEN or disability.

For pupils with special educational needs each case is considered individually, guided by the criteria that follow:

Travel assistance will be agreed for pupils with SEN or a disability where:

1 The pupil is attending the nearest suitable school as determined by the LEA and as named in their EHCP if they have one.

and

2 The pupil has a condition where they cannot reasonably be expected to walk to and from school, and there is detailed written advice from appropriate medical personnel to corroborate this.

In determining whether a pupil cannot reasonably be expected to walk due to their special educational needs or disability, the local authority will consider whether the pupil could reasonably be expected to walk if accompanied and if so, whether their parent or carer can reasonably be expected to accompany them.

The general expectation is that a pupil will be accompanied by a parent where necessary. Where a parent or carer may be working at the time their child is travelling to or from school, or they have other children attending different schools, they will normally be expected to put in place suitable alternative arrangements.

The Council will consider each case on its own merits and take account of the individual family circumstances when determining whether travel assistance is required.

Travel arrangements will not be made where the pupil is not attending their nearest mainstream school, or the nearest suitable special provision, and the school is one of parental preference.

2.2 General points for SEN travel

- The ongoing provision of travel arrangements will be reviewed as part of the child or young person's annual review of the EHC plan, or other relevant information regarding a child's SEN or disability. The provision of existing travel arrangements will also be reconsidered if the child moves school or home address or if there is any other significant change to the child or young person's needs.
- The development of independence skills is a key part of Preparation for Adulthood.
- Where the child or young person uses a wheelchair on a vehicle, the chair used must be approved for that use and must have appropriate tie-down points. This

can be confirmed by the wheelchair manufacturer and will be checked by the Council before authorising transportation.

- Where a wheelchair is found to be not suitable for use in a vehicle, the passenger will be expected to be able to self-transfer to a vehicle seat.
- The Council or their contractors will provide standard Wheelchair tie downs and Occupant restraint systems. (WTORS) and other standard passenger harness. Any non-standard passenger and wheelchair harnesses and restraints must be supplied by the parents/carers and will need to be confirmed as compatible with the vehicle in which they are being used before travel commences.

2.3 Transport of Children and Young People with Medical Needs

Some young people have medical needs which may cause them difficulty when travelling. When we are notified of medical needs we carry out a risk assessment to identify how those needs might affect the child during their home to school journey. We will then endeavour to put in place proportionate arrangements to manage those needs.

The matters we will need to consider are likely to include:

- the health condition, its triggers and symptoms
- the likelihood of the condition affecting the child on the journey to and from school, and the consequences for the child if it does happen
- the action that may need to be taken to manage the condition, for example whether the child may require medication and, if so, what dose is required, how it should be administered, and by whom.

In order to obtain the necessary information to make this assessment and determine what arrangements that should be put in place, we may need to seek further information from parents, the school and any health professionals involved in the care of the child, for example the school nurse, health visitor, GP and any designated clinical officer/ designated medical officer or consultant.

A medically qualified Passenger Assistant will only be appointed in the most exceptional cases. It would be more normal to train one or more Passenger Assistants in how to deal with the child's needs and condition. This may require arranging for specialist training and support from the School Nurse or other professional involved with the child.

Where it is felt that it would be unsafe to transport the child on Home to School Transport, parents may be requested to transport the child themselves in exchange for a mileage payment.

2.4 Exceptional circumstances:

The Council will consider applications for travel assistance due to exceptional circumstances on a case by case basis.

By its very nature an exceptional circumstance is difficult to define, however, some examples of where the Council may exercise its discretion to provide free home to school travel arrangements are as follows:

- Where a pupil faces a temporary medical problem which affects their mobility, so that they are unable to access school without support and school has considered and put in place reasonable adjustments.

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- Where a family has to move suddenly to temporary accommodation, for example, because of a house fire or domestic violence.
- Where a child's **parent** is unable to take their child to school because they are suffering from serious illness and they are unable to make alternative arrangements themselves, e.g. no friends or family in the area..

In each case, consideration will be given to family circumstances and to any medical advice which may be available.

Section 3

3.1 What travel assistance will be provided

The Council has a duty under Section 508A of the Education Act 1996 to promote the use of sustainable travel and transport. This duty applies to all children and young people of compulsory school age (5 to 16) who travel to receive education or training in a local authority's area

The Council must also ensure that the travel arrangements they make take account of the needs of the child concerned. Those arrangements should enable the child to travel in reasonable safety and comfort, and without undue stress, strain or difficulty, so that they arrive at school ready to learn.

Please note that all school transport will normally only pick up and set down at a safe place near the pupil's home address as shown on the school roll and Council records. Consideration will be given to requests to pick up and set down at other locations e.g. childminders or other family members, provided this is notified in writing and does not involve any further expenditure for the Council.

The legislation permits local authorities to meet their duty in a range of alternative ways.

Parents may be asked to support their child with home to school travel, for example mileage rates or accompaniment on public transport, however this can only be implemented with parental consent.

Travel options which may be considered:

- Walking (alone or accompanied by parent)
- Walking bus (walking with other children and adult supervisors)
- Cycling or Scooting
- Bus/Train Pass for public transport
- Discounted travel schemes
- Parental mileage payments
- Personal budget
- Independent Travel Training
- Dedicated school bus routes
 - With passenger assistant if required

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- Minibus or shared MPV from pick up points
 - With passenger assistant if required
- Minibus or shared MPV from door to door
 - With passenger assistant if required
- Shared Taxis
 - With passenger assistant if required
- Solo taxi
 - With passenger assistant if required

3.2 Length of journey

As a general guide, the maximum length of time for a child of primary school age to journey to school is 45 minutes, and 75 minutes for a child of secondary school age. There will, however, be circumstances in which this is not possible, for example in rural areas where children live in remote locations.

Travel arrangements for children with special educational needs, disability or mobility problems can be particularly complex to make. Whilst shorter journeys may be desirable, some children may need to travel a long way to the school that is able to meet their needs and one vehicle may need to collect several children.

Where long journeys are unavoidable, we will look to minimise negative impacts for the children, for example if a child becomes distressed on long journeys the parent or school may be able to offer advice on effective ways of keeping them calm or engaging with them to minimise distress.

3.3 Home Collection and drop off

Some young people with SEND may find it difficult to access collection and drop off points near to their home. These young people may be allocated a Home collection. Parents/carers of children with a home collection/drop-off are required to ensure their child is ready in good time for when the vehicle arrives at the normal home address. The vehicle will park as close to the home as possible. Parents are asked to keep an eye out for the arrival of the vehicle. The driver or Passenger Assistant will NOT come to the house door, especially if there are other children on board the vehicle.

Parents/carers are also required to ensure they or an authorised adult are available to meet the child at the normal home address at the end of the school day.

3.4 Passenger assistants

Passenger Assistants will not be provided on all routes.

Passenger assistants will only be provided where –

- It is necessary in the interests of safety, taking into account the special needs of the pupil or pupils being transported.
- Pupils are of pre – school age;
- A specially adapted vehicle that requires additional assistance is used;

The provision of a passenger assistant may be agreed on the basis of the pupil's special educational need and/or disability. The passenger assistant may be shared between several passengers or provided for one specific passenger on a shared vehicle.

All Passenger assistants are given PATS (Passenger Assistant Training Scheme) training. This is a nationally recognised standard for passenger assistants. Where necessary the Passenger Assistant may also receive additional training to deal with the specific needs of one or more passengers.

Where a child is travelling as the sole occupant of a vehicle, parents or carers may if they wish, volunteer to accompany their child / children rather than appoint a Passenger Assistant to travel with the passenger. Any such arrangement will need to be agreed with the Transport Team. Parents will not be permitted to travel with their child where there are other passengers on the vehicle.

3.5 Transport to and from residential schools.

It is anticipated that parents/carers will want to transport their children to Residential Placements themselves. This provides an opportunity for regular personal discussion between parent/carers and the staff at the residential provision. This arrangement must be agreed in advance with the Transport team at North Northamptonshire Council and mileage can be claimed at the agreed rate on a termly basis.

Where parent/carer transport is not possible, children on termly placements (i.e. 3 terms a year) will be provided with transport at the start and end of each term and half term holiday. In addition, a mileage allowance at the agreed rate may be claimed for one visit to the school each half term.

For weekly placements, transport will be provided at the beginning and end of each week, usually on a Monday morning and Friday afternoon.

3.6 Short Break Service and Respite Care

The Home to School Transport service has no responsibility to provide home to school travel arrangements for children to and from respite care facilities. Except in exceptional circumstances, where transport is agreed, it will only be provided to and from the normal home address. However, if there is the capacity to assist with respite care arrangements, then the Transport team at North Northamptonshire Council will assist by making alternative arrangements as long as there is no additional cost to the Council.

For arrangements outside these criteria parents should contact [\[contact details for CHILDRENS TRUST to be inserted\]](#) to agree funding for transport to Respite and Short Break establishments.

Section 4 Applying for travel Assistance

4.1 How do I apply for travel assistance

The application for Mainstream schools can be found here [LINK to be inserted]

The application for SEN schools can be found here [LINK to be inserted]

Please ensure that you use the appropriate link

4.2 When should I apply

You should apply as soon as possible after your child or young person's placement at school is confirmed.

For transport or other travel assistance to start at the beginning of the September Term, applications should be made to the Council by **the 3rd Friday in May** at the latest. Although every effort will be made to deal with applications received after this date, late applications are potentially subject to delay, and it may not be possible to put a service in place for the start of term.

For Applications for transport to start at any other time of the year, please allow up to 6 weeks for the application to be processed and transport commissioned. Wherever possible the Council will process the application and put transport in place more swiftly than this, but we ask for the additional time to allow for the procurement process should a new service or route be required.

Until travel assistance is in place, it will be the parent's responsibility to make the necessary arrangements for their child to attend school.

4.3 How often do I need to reapply?

Once awarded travel assistance will remain in place until the next trigger stage unless otherwise notified at the time of awarding travel assistance.

Please be aware that you will need to reapply:

- At the end of Year 3 in which the child or young person attains the age of 8 years if your school is less than 3 miles from home
- At the end of Year 6 in preparation for transfer to Secondary education
- At the end of Year 11, even if they are remaining at the same school for Sixth Form studies.
- If you change your home address
- If your child or young person changes school
- If the needs of your child or young person change

4.4 Change of Address

Parents/carers of pupils who move home address during their schooling to an area where another school is the nearest suitable or linked school may either:

- apply to move their child to the nearest suitable or linked school for their new address and if successful the policy stated above will apply **Or**:

- retain the child's place at their current school but they will become responsible for the child's transport provision and costs

The council will not normally provide transport or travel assistance to the current school where the family have moved home. However, if the pupil is in Year 11 and following examination courses at the point of moving, some assistance may be available, based upon exceptional circumstances.

Help is not usually available for pupils in other year groups, even if they are following examination courses.

Some help may be available in other exceptional circumstances, where, for example, the pupil concerned would otherwise be at risk of harm.

If there are no places available at schools nearer to the new home address than the current school, the Council will provide free travel arrangements to the current school.

When you move house, you will have to apply for a change to your transport. Where there is a nearer school to your new home, your application may be rejected, and you may be asked to apply for a place at that nearer school. If you are subsequently informed that there are no places at the nearer school you should file an appeal against the refusal to provide transport, based upon the lack of places in the nearer school. Please note that a review of the earlier application will not take place until an appeal has been filed.

Each case will be considered on its own merits by a senior Transport Officer.

4.5 Change of School

If the child or young person changes school, parents will be expected to re-apply for travel assistance, and eligibility will be assessed as set out above.

If parents/carers elect to move a pupil to a school that is not the nearest suitable or linked school to their home address then they will become responsible for the child's transport provision and costs, except in very exceptional cases, for example where the pupil concerned would be at serious risk of significant harm.

Bullying, poor educational achievement, and similar factors will not normally be considered as exceptional circumstances.

Section 5.

Quality Standards and Responsibilities

5.1 Safety

A child's safety and welfare is always the main priority.

- Where appropriate all vehicles used or contracted by the Council are fitted with the standard seat belts, child seats and equipment to secure wheelchairs. Specialised equipment must be supplied by the parents.

- Trained passenger assistants will be made available where necessary.
- All children will be independently seated, one seat per child. The Council does not permit 3 passengers to a double seat.
- All passenger assistants will be approved by North Northamptonshire Council. Passenger assistants will carry an ID badge at all times.
- Vehicles contracted by the Council are expected to be licensed appropriately; this is a condition of the contract and will be periodically checked.
- All drivers must be licensed appropriately and should carry an identification badge at all times.
- All drivers and passenger assistants employed by the Council will be checked as appropriate in accordance with the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS). Drivers and Passenger Assistants employed on contracted vehicles are subject to DBS checks by their employer.
- All vehicles, drivers and passenger assistants will be subject to random checks by Council inspectors.

Wherever possible you will have a regular driver and/or Passenger Assistant. Please be aware that this can sometimes change at short notice, for example due to staff sickness, so we are unable to guarantee that the same driver and/or Passenger Assistant will always be on your child's route.

Parents/carers of pupils who have an EHC plan will receive a letter before the term commences in September detailing their child's travel arrangements. Timings given at this point are approximate and may change throughout the year. Every effort will be taken to ensure that any disruption will be kept to a minimum, but we cannot guarantee that the timings will remain the same throughout the year.

5.2 Behaviour and parental responsibilities

Pupils have a right to safe and trouble-free travel. Pupils are expected to behave in a safe and appropriate manner as set out in the Transport Service Agreement supplied to parents/carers.

Parents/carers have a key role to play regarding the conduct of their children on transport and are responsible for ensuring that their children are aware of the necessity to behave in a reasonable and responsible manner. Parent/carers need to ensure their children are aware that failure to behave in a reasonable manner may have consequences, including:

- cost to parents/carers for damage to the vehicle or to property caused by misbehaviour of their children;
- Temporary or permanent withdrawal of free transport with no recompense and no right of appeal.

Unacceptable behaviour may include, but is not limited to, being rude, pushing and kicking, bullying, distracting the driver, refusing to wear a seatbelt, or refusing to remain seated. This includes the use of hate speech and abusive language, as well as physical behaviours which may endanger the safety and wellbeing of other people on the transport.

If a pupil misbehaves persistently, transport provision may be temporarily or permanently withdrawn.

Children and young people with SEND are not exempt from the requirement to behave appropriately on transport.

The Council and its staff are aware that a child's challenging behaviour may be part of their special educational needs, disability or mobility problem and they may use it as a way to communicate their needs, for example a child who exhibits challenging behaviour may be trying to communicate discomfort or distress.

Parents should advise the passenger assistant, if there is a particular difficulty with their child on a given day, or if there is reason to believe that the child or young person may be more prone to becoming distressed or uncomfortable that day.

We aim to work with transport operators, schools and parents to find positive ways to manage challenging behaviour wherever possible.

Transport may be withdrawn from an eligible child as a last resort and where there is an immediate and serious safety concern if the child remains on transport.

5.3 Bus Passes

Applications for bus passes can be obtained from schools or from the Transport team at North Northamptonshire Council. Requests will be responded to within 10 days.

Pupils who qualify for assistance in the form of a bus pass can expect to receive the bus pass within 4 weeks of the application being received by North Northamptonshire Council.

5.4 Lost or stolen Bus Pass

Pupils who have had their bus pass stolen/lost can expect to receive a replacement within 7 days of the loss being reported to North Northamptonshire Council. Reasonable requests for travel expenses will be considered by the Council, if the above deadlines are not met.

Section 6 Appeals and Complaints

What is the difference between an appeal and a complaint?

There is a difference between an Appeal against a decision and a complaint because you feel that you have been mistreated or the service you have been offered is not good enough.

6.1 Complaints arise when you are unhappy with the service provided by the Council and/or its transport providers, for example, this might include consistent late running of a vehicle, a member of staff or a contractor being unhelpful or that there has been an unacceptable delay in resolving an issue.

If you are unhappy about something, then you are invited to make a formal complaint. Information on how to make a formal complaint is available using the link below:
<https://www.northnorthants.gov.uk/complaints>

6.2 An Appeal is for when you feel that the wrong decision has been made and you would like it re-examined.

If you are unhappy with a decision which has been taken, for example your application for transport has been declined, and you think that decision was incorrect, you may submit an appeal.

You may challenge a decision on any or all of the following grounds:

- Eligibility – you believe that we have failed to take into account some significant factor in assessing whether your child is eligible for travel assistance
- distance measurement between home and school
- safety of the walking route between home and school
- transport arrangements offered are not suitable for the child or young person's needs

Please be aware that there is no right to challenge a decision where a young person's entitlement to transport assistance has been removed on the grounds of unacceptable behaviour.

The appeals process

Stage 1 - Review of decision

You have 20 working days from the receipt of the transport decision to make a request for a review of the original decision.

The request should detail why the decision should be reviewed and give personal and/or family circumstances, which should be considered during the appeal process. You might like to include other documents to support your case.

These may include

- a recent medical report stating how the young person's medical condition or disability negatively impacts on their ability to travel. This must be from a relevant consultant or specialist working with the family.
- Map evidence to show how you have calculated the walking distance,
- An independent report showing why you believe the route to be unsafe or
- any other third party evidence you wish us to consider as part of the review.

A Senior Officer from the Transport team will review the original decision and will send you a letter detailing the outcome of the review within 20 working days of receipt of the written request.

This will set out the following information:

- the decision reached
- how the review was conducted
- information about other departments and/or agencies consulted as part of the process
- what factors were considered
- the rationale for the decision reached
- information about escalation to Stage 2, if appropriate

Stage 2 - Appeal

If you are still not happy with the decision, you will have 20 working days from receipt of the Stage 1 decision, to make a request to escalate the matter to a formal appeal.

An independent appeal panel, made up of 3 members of the council, will be convened to consider the appeal within 40 working days of receipt of your request.

No member of the appeal panel will have been involved in the original decision to decline transport assistance. The independent appeal panel may consist of a combination of

- a councillor
- an assistant director or their representative
- a senior transport officer
- Another senior officer from outside the Transport team

An officer from democratic services may be asked to act as clerk to record the appeal decision.

This panel will consider verbal and written representations from both the parent and officers involved in the case.

You will be invited to attend the hearing to present your case. If you do not wish to attend or are unable to attend, the panel will make its decision based upon your written representations. As in Stage 1, you may present further recent evidence to support your case if you wish. The evidence from the original application and the Stage 1 review will be re-examined together with any new evidence that you have presented.

The Senior Officer from the Transport Team involved in the review of the decision at Stage 1 may also be invited to attend.

Within 5 working days of the hearing you will receive a letter or email, detailing the outcome of the appeal hearing, which will set out:

- the nature of the decision reached
- the rationale for the decision reached
- how the review was conducted
- information about other departments and/or agencies that were consulted as part of the process
- what factors were considered
- information about escalation to the Local Government Ombudsman if appropriate

To request a review or an appeal, email transportappeals.nnc@northnorthants.gov.uk.

Local Government Ombudsman

There is a right of complaint to the Local Government Ombudsman on the grounds that there was a failure to comply with the procedural rules or there was an irregularity in the way the appeal was handled.

Contact the [Local Government Ombudsman](#).

APPENDICES

Appendix A1

North Northamptonshire Council School Transport

Safety of Walking Routes (Built-up areas inc. in villages)

When determining whether the Council should provide transport to schools on safety grounds, a number of criteria have to be considered in order to determine a route's acceptability for pupils to walk. The criteria assume that pupils aged 4-11 will be accompanied by a responsible adult, and that pupils aged 11 or over may travel independently. The law expects that all pupils will be accompanied "as appropriate". Pupils are expected to travel by the shortest available route. However, where that route is judged to be unacceptable longer alternatives may be considered provided that they are still within the agreed walking distance.

The following are the criteria that must all be met for a route to be acceptable for use by child pedestrians in an urban or village environment.

1 Can the route be walked without walking on a classified¹ road?

If yes, the route may be acceptable.

If no, the route is unacceptable.

2 Is the 85th percentile speed² more than the guidelines for enforcement³?

If yes, the route is unacceptable.

If no, the route may be acceptable.

3 Are there formal crossing facilities⁴ available on A class roads as required?

If no, the route is unacceptable.

If yes, the route may be acceptable.

In measuring the speed of vehicles to apply criterion 2, only the data collected on schooldays between 0700hrs and 0900hrs and between 1500hrs and 1700hrs will be taken into account.

The route will be considered acceptable if the average speed of 85% of traffic over the week during the stated times is below the enforcement guidelines. If a route appears to meet all of the criteria, it will be deemed to be acceptable. Should a decision be challenged, a site visit would be made to verify that no exceptional circumstances exist.

1 Class A, B or C.

2 The speed which 85% of vehicles does not exceed.

3 As determined by the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO).

4 School Crossing Patrols, pedestrian refuges, zebra, pelican or other light-controlled crossings.

Appendix A2

North Northamptonshire Council School Transport

Safety of Walking Routes (Village to Village Routes)

When determining whether the Council should provide transport to schools on safety grounds, a number of criteria have to be considered in order to determine a route's acceptability for pupils to walk. The criteria assume that pupils aged 4-11 will be accompanied by a responsible adult, and that pupils aged 11 or over may travel independently. The law expects that all pupils will be accompanied "as appropriate". Pupils are expected to travel by the shortest available route. However, where that route is judged to be unacceptable longer alternatives may be considered provided that they are still within the agreed walking distance.

The following are the criteria that must all be met for a route to be acceptable for use by child pedestrians.

1 Is the route classified as Red or Amber¹ by the Highway Authority?

If yes, the route is unacceptable.

If no, the route may be acceptable.

2 Can the route be walked without walking on a classified² road?

If yes, the route may be acceptable.

If no, the route is unacceptable.

3 Is the traffic flow over 1,000 vehicles in the peak hour?

If yes, the route is unacceptable.

If no, the route may be acceptable.

4 Is the 85th percentile speed³ more than the guidelines for enforcement⁴?

If yes, the route is unacceptable.

If no, the route may be acceptable.

5 Are there formal crossing facilities⁵ available on A class roads as required?

If no, the route is unacceptable.

If yes, the route may be acceptable.

In measuring the speed of vehicles to apply criterion 4, only the data collected on schooldays between 0700hrs and 0900hrs and between 1500hrs and 1700hrs will be taken into account.

The route will be considered acceptable if the average speed of 85% of traffic over the week during the stated times is below the enforcement guidelines. If a route appears to meet all of the criteria it will be deemed to be acceptable. Should a decision be challenged, a site visit would be made to verify that no exceptional circumstances exist.

1 Under the Casualty Reduction Strategy, all roads in the county are classified Red, Amber or Green on the basis of their overall accident record.

2 Class A, B or C.

3 The speed which 85% of vehicles do not exceed.

4 As determined by the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO).

5 School Crossing Patrols, pedestrian refuges, zebra, pelican or other light-controlled crossings.

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Appendix A3

North Northamptonshire Council

Low Income Criteria for Extended Rights Home to School Transport

If you are in receipt of any of the following, your child may be eligible for free Home to School Transport under the extended right legislation. You also need to meet the other qualifying criteria set out in section 1 of the Home to School Transport Policy.

Below is the Low Income qualifying criteria which is the same as for free school meals for children in year 3 or above:

- Income Support
- Income based Job Seekers Allowance
- Income related Employment and Support Allowance
- Support under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- Child Tax Credit, with no element of Working Tax Credit, and a household income below £16,190 (as assessed by HM Revenue and Customs)
- Guarantee Element of State Pension Credit
- Universal Credit

A child must reside with the applicant to receive free school meals.

Useful Contacts.

[to be collated and inserted]

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