

Parent's Guide to Home to School Transport

Free home to school transport is provided to pupils who meet the criteria as set out in the Council's Home to School Transport Policy, a copy of which can be found on the Council's website www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/schooltransport a hard copy is available upon request.

A brief overview of the different criteria is described below; however if you do have any questions regarding the eligibility for free home to school transport then please contact the Transport Commissioning and Entitlement Team (TCET) on 0300 300 8339 or at school.transport@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk

1. Pupils attending mainstream schools

For pupils who attend a mainstream school, transport may be provided if they meet one of the following criteria:

- Pupils aged 4 – 8 years old (Reception year to the end of year 3) who live more than the statutory walking distance of 2 miles, by the shortest available walking route to the nearest school or designated catchment school.
- If the pupil is entitled to transport under the above distance criteria whilst under the age of 8 years, they will continue to receive free transport until the end of the academic year in which he/she reaches the age of 8 (Year 3)
- Pupils aged 8 – 16 years old (years 4 – 11) who live more than the statutory walking distance of 3 miles by the shortest available walking route, to the nearest school or the designated catchment school.

The statutory walking distance may not apply where the route which the pupil would be expected to walk to their nearest or designated catchment school (when accompanied by an appropriate adult) is assessed as unsafe. If you have any questions regarding the walking route then please contact us on the number or email at the top of the page.

The pupil may also be entitled to transport in the event that you are not successful when applying for one or all of your school preferences via the School Admissions Team. If the School Admissions Team identify a school, which was not on your list of preferences and you meet any of the above criteria, the pupil may be entitled to transport.

2. Transport for Pupils with Special Educational Needs

Having a current statement of special educational needs or an Education Health Care Plan (EHCP) does not guarantee transport. However transport may be provided if:

- The pupil is attending a mainstream school and meets the criteria stated in section 1
- The pupil is attending the nearest special school with spaces available which is over the statutory walking distance relevant to their age (see section 1) and has been identified by the Council as being able to appropriately meet their needs.
- If the pupil attends their nearest or designated catchment mainstream school or their nearest appropriate special school with places available and they live under the statutory walking distance and there are no road safety concerns, then their needs may be assessed to ascertain whether it would be reasonable or safe for them to walk to school when accompanied by an appropriate adult. A medical needs or special educational needs application form would need to be completed and returned to us for it to be assessed. These forms are available on the Council's website www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/schooltransport

A Passenger Assistant is provided if the Council believes that the health and safety of the pupil, driver or anyone else travelling in the vehicle would be at risk if not provided.

The Council will consider transport to the nearest suitable school. If by parental preference a more distant school is named in the pupil's statement or EHCP but the Authority's view differs, transport will not be provided.

A school designated by the Council as the most appropriate school for a particular pupil will normally be deemed to be the nearest suitable school.

3. Low Income

Pupils from low income families may be entitled to free transport. The pupil will be entitled if they are eligible for free school meals or parents receive the maximum amount of Working Tax Credits. They must also meet one of the criteria below:

- Pupils aged between 8 – 11 who attend the nearest or designated catchment school and the distance between home and school is over 2 miles by the shortest available walking route.
- Pupils aged between 11 – 16 (Years 7-11) who attend 1 of the 3 nearest appropriate schools between 2 – 6 miles from the home address by the shortest

walking route if up to three miles or the shortest motorised route if over three miles.

If you wish to apply for free home to school transport based on low income eligibility, then please complete the Low Income Application form which is on the Council's website www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/schooltransport or by contacting us directly.

4. Children Attending a School on the Grounds of Religion or Belief

Travel assistance will not be provided by the Council to a parent/carer of a pupil attending school on the grounds of religion or belief ('denominational grounds') with the exception of where a pupil is from a low income family (see section 3).

- A pupil aged between 11 – 16 years old (Years 7-11) who attends his/her nearest suitable school preferred by his/her parents on grounds of religion or belief and lives between 2 miles and 15 miles from the school, by the shortest available walking route if up to three miles or the shortest motorised route if over three miles.

5. Pupils with Temporary Medical Problems

Free travel assistance may be considered where a pupil lives within the defined walking distance to school relevant to his or her age (see section 1) and is attending the nearest or designated catchment school with spaces available but is unable to walk to school because of a medical condition.

For pupils who have a current statement of special educational needs or EHCP and have a medical condition which impacts on their ability to walk to school, then transport may be considered to the nearest school which has been assessed by the Council as being able to meet their needs.

To apply for transport on medical grounds please complete and return a medical needs application form which can be found on the Council's website www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/schooltransport or by contacting us.

6. Parents with a Disability

The Council may exercise its discretion to provide transport where a child lives within the walking distance (see section 1) to school but where his/her parents are unable to accompany him/her on the walk to school because of a medical condition or disability.

Please contact us to discuss transport on these grounds and be aware that you will be asked to provide evidence which demonstrates that you are unable to walk the pupil to school due to your disability.

7. Temporary Residential Circumstances

Where a family is forced to re-locate temporarily to alternative accommodation owing to circumstances outside their control the Council may provide transport. Each case is assessed on its merits, and will be subject to assessment against the statutory walking distance. Pupils placed in refuges, whose safety may be at risk may be provided with transport without taking distance in to account.

An application to the Transport Commissioning and Entitlement Team will be required and supporting evidence may be required.

8. When transport is not provided

There are certain circumstances where free home to school transport is not provided by the Council and transport would be parental responsibility. These include:

- if the school attended is not the one which the Council deems to be the nearest suitable school;
- to an address which is not the primary registered address. The primary registered address is where the pupil will spend the majority of their time and will be registered with the school as the primary domiciliary address.
- to enable the pupil to attend extra curricular activities or between institutions within the school day. (For these journeys the organising school or institution will be responsible for transport arrangements);
- to attend dental or hospital appointments, or other non-educational appointments;
- in the event of sickness, where the pupil has to be collected from school (or returned to residential school midweek);
- for parents/carers attending review meetings;
- where the pupil is attending a school which is not the nearest or designated catchment school and the attendance is due to parental preference;
- to attend work experience;
- to attend an induction day at another establishment;

- to accompany a friend home;
- where the journey is to a nursery or pre-school setting;
- following misbehaviour occurring on transport, which threatens the Health and Safety of staff and/or other pupils;
- when the pupil travels at lunchtimes or at any time other than the normal start and end of the school day. Travel between these times will remain a parental responsibility.
- where other parental responsibilities such as other children or work commitments prevent them from being able to walk the pupil to school. It would be parental responsibility to make alternative arrangements.
- respite/Social Care Transport is not arranged by the Transport Commissioning & Entitlement Team. Please continue to contact Social Workers for this transport.

9. Concessions

When there is a Council operated school bus with spare seats available after all the entitled pupils have been offered their seats, the Council may sell these as concessions. They are sold on a first come, first served basis, one term at a time and being accepted for a place for one term does not guarantee a place for the next term.

For further discussions regarding concessionary places, please contact the Mainstream Transport Team on 0300 300 8167 or at mainstream.transport@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk

10. Definitions

Maximum Journey Time

Best practice suggests that the maximum each way length of journey for a pupil of primary school age might be considered to be 45 minutes; whilst a pupil of secondary school age might be expected to travel up to 75 minutes each way (which may not be possible to an out-of-county provision). However, a pupil's special educational needs and/or disability might be such that it implies a shorter maximum journey time.

Catchment Area School

The catchment area school is defined as the school designated by the Council to serve the home address of the pupil at the time of application. Information on school catchment areas is available from www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/admissions

Walking Route - Distance Measurement

The walking distance between home and school, is measured by the shortest route along which a pupil, accompanied as necessary, may walk with reasonable safety. The route measured may include footpaths, bridleways, and other pathways, as well as recognised roads with suitable pedestrian access.

Home Address

The home address is defined as the primary registered address. Pupils who live in a joint home arrangement will be provided with transport only to and from the primary home address registered with their school and the Council. The Council will not provide travel assistance to or from any other address.

EHCP

On 1st September 2014 government legislation has introduced the Education Health Care Plan to replace the Statement of Special Educational Needs for all pupils assessed after that date. The term Statement of Special Educational Needs will continue to be used for a period of 3 years (Aug 2017) for pupils who already have a Statement.