

Buckinghamshire County Council Home to School Transport Policy

Publication date: February 2019



Contents

Introduction	4
Section 1 - Mainstream and Low Income Transport	5
1.1 Types of Travel Assistance	5
1.2 Personal Transport Budget.....	6
1.3 Mileage allowance	6
1.4 Calculation of distances and available routes	6
1.5 Pupils who live beyond the statutory walking distance	6
1.6 Extended rights for pupils from low income families.....	7
1.7 Children whose route to school is unsafe	7
1.8 Children with SEN, a disability or a mobility difficulty	7
1.9 Pupils living outside of Buckinghamshire	8
1.10 Grounds of Religion or Belief	8
1.11 Home address	8
1.12 Change of address and emergency contact details.....	8
1.13 Inaccurate applications	8
1.14 Transport to schools that are not the nearest	9
1.15 Home to School Transport provision in special circumstances (discretionary assistance)	9
1.16 Transport during the school day	10
1.17 Timing of transport arrangements	10
1.18 Care of vulnerable children	10
1.19 Expected level of behaviour for all pupils	11
Section 2 - Special Educational Needs Transport.....	12
2.1 General.....	12
2.2 Criteria for SEND Home to School Transport	12
2.3 Independent Travel Training	13
2.4 Passenger assistants.....	13
2.5 Residential schools.....	14
Section 3 - Post 16 Transport 16-19 years	15
3.1 Post 16 Transport.....	15
Section 4 - Sustainable Modes of Travel.....	16
4.1 Sustainable Travel	16
Section 5 – Transport for Looked after Children.....	17

5.1 Looked after Children under the care of the Council17

Section 6 - General Information 18

6.1 Application process18

6.2 Review process.....18

6.3 Complaints18

6.4 Appeals.....18

6.5 Disclosure and Barring Service checks (DBS) and identity badges19

6.6 Safety of routes19

6.7 Fare paying seats / Concessionary Travel Permits20

6.8 Identification of new routes.....20

6.9 Journey times20

6.10 Data Protection21

6.11 Transport following the closure of a school21

6.12 Parents/carers not at home21

Appendix A - Glossary of Terms.....23

Introduction

This document describes the policy and criteria applied to determine eligibility for home to school travel assistance.

This policy has been developed in accordance with the legislative framework set out under the Education Act 1996 and current Government guidance. This policy will be reviewed and updated regularly to ensure that arrangements adopted within Buckinghamshire reflect any new legislation and guidance.

It is the responsibility of the parent/carer to ensure that their child attends school; however, in certain circumstances, Buckinghamshire County Council will provide travel assistance, if the criteria are met.

We are committed to fulfilling our statutory duties towards Buckinghamshire pupils and the Home to School travel assistance aims to:

- Support those most in need.
- Promote principles of independence.
- Provide the most cost effective travel assistance.
- Promote and encourage the use of sustainable travel.

As a Council, we expect the service delivered to be of a high standard. All children who travel under this policy can expect that those standards will be monitored and maintained.

The Education Act 1996 provides the following duties and powers on local authorities:

- Duty to promote sustainable modes of travel to meet school travel needs – s.508A;
- Duty to make necessary travel arrangements free of charge to secure suitable home to school travel arrangements for eligible children. Eligibility includes distance to school, disability and safe walking routes – S.508B;
- Power to make necessary school travel arrangements for other children on payment of a charge as appropriate – s.508C;
- Power to provide travel assistance or travel expenses for child attending early years education – s.509A;
- Duty to prepare Post 16 transport policy statement setting out transport provision and financial assistance to facilitate attendance of sixth form students at educational institutions – s.509AA and s.509AB.

Section 1 - Mainstream and Low Income Transport

There are four categories of pupils of compulsory school age living in Buckinghamshire and attending their **nearest suitable school** who are eligible for free travel assistance:

- a) Children who live beyond the **statutory walking distance**.
- b) Children from **low income families** (extended rights apply).
- c) Children whose route to school is unsafe.
- d) Children with Special Educational Needs (SEN), a disability or a mobility difficulty.

Compulsory school age begins with the start of term following a child's fifth birthday and ends on the last Friday in June in the academic year in which s/he turns 16.

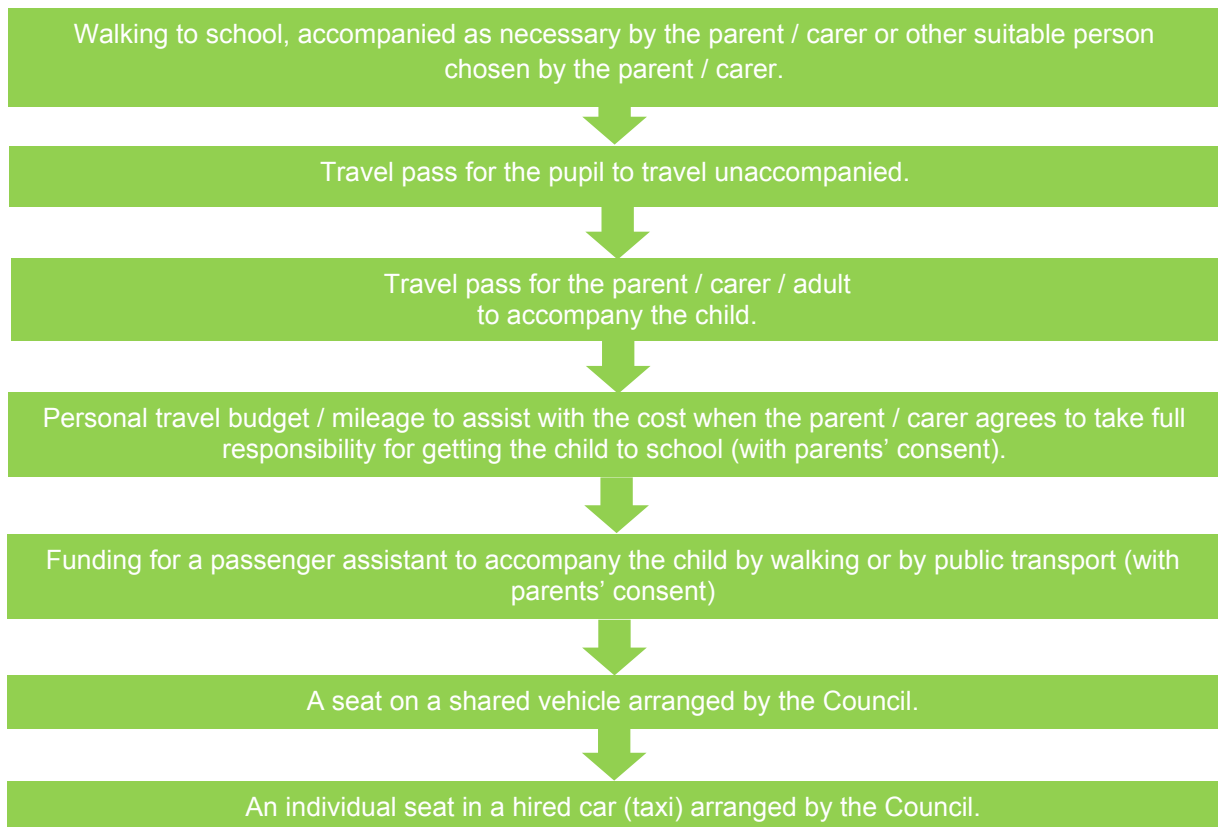
A **qualifying school** is a:

- Maintained school or nursery, or a special school approved under s.342 of the Education Act 1996;
- Pupil referral unit or alternative provision academy; or
- An Academy.

If parents do not apply for a place at their **nearest suitable school** or choose a place at a school which is not the nearest suitable school, the pupil will not be eligible for free travel assistance unless the extended rights apply.

1.1 Types of Travel Assistance

The Council will explore the most cost-effective means of travel assistance and will generally consider travel options in the following order:



1.2 Personal Transport Budget

A **personal transport budget** (PTB) is funding to help you get your child to school or college. It allows you to make flexible travel arrangements rather than travelling on a vehicle contracted by the Council. A PTB is not a short-term alternative while your transport application is being processed.

You may be eligible for a budget if your child has an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP). You also need to meet the criteria for free school transport, which includes an assessment of the most cost-effective suitable travel assistance to be offered.

If eligible, how much you may receive is based on the distance between your home and school, college or learning provider. We measure this as a straight line distance, not the distance as calculated by a route planner.

1.3 Mileage allowance

In addition, a **mileage allowance** could be offered if this is cheaper than other appropriate travel options, but a parent may choose to take a personal travel budget as a contribution towards their own travel arrangements. In this case, the budget will be based on the most cost effective and appropriate travel assistance.

1.4 Calculation of distances and available routes

For eligibility purposes, the statutory walking distances will be calculated with reference to the shortest walking route a child (accompanied as necessary) can walk safely. A route might include footpaths, bridleways and other tracks which are not passable by motorised transport.

For children who fall within the 'Extended Rights' eligibility criteria (see 1.6 for details), the 6 mile and 15 mile upper limits are not walking routes. These routes are those which are passable using a suitable motorised vehicle. In short, the two upper limits will be measured along road routes.

1.5 Pupils who live beyond the statutory walking distance

Travel assistance will be provided free of charge for those pupils of compulsory school age who are travelling over the statutory walking distance to/from the nearest open entrance gate of their nearest suitable school. Pupils may be required to use public transport and in these cases they will be provided with a free bus pass in order for them to use the service.

The statutory walking distances are as follows:

- Beyond 2 miles (if below the age of 8); and
- Beyond 3 miles (if aged between 8 and 16).

1.6 Extended rights for pupils from low income families

A pupil may be eligible under the 'low income' provisions if they are entitled to free school meals, or if their parents or carers receive working tax credit at the maximum rate.

Children aged 8 – 10 from low income families who live more than 2 miles (rather than 3) from their nearest suitable school become eligible for free school transport from the Council. Children under 8 who live more than 2 miles from their nearest suitable school are eligible under the statutory walking distance category above.

Secondary school age children from low income families who attend schools between 2 and 6 miles from their home will be eligible for free school transport even if the school they attend is not their nearest suitable school, providing there are not three or more suitable qualifying schools which are nearer to their home.

Secondary school age children from low income families who attend a school between 2 miles and 15 miles away from home will be entitled to free school transport if their parent has expressed a wish for them to be educated at that particular school based on the parent's religion or belief and, having regard to that wish, there is no nearer suitable school. This applies to parents with a particular religious or philosophical belief, including those with a lack of religion or lack of belief.

1.7 Children whose route to school is unsafe

If the route to school is unsafe, and if the child lives within statutory walking distance of and is registered at the nearest suitable school, the Council will make suitable travel arrangements free of charge.

The Council will assess the route at the times the child would be using it and will take into account:

- The age of the child.
- Whether risks might be less if the child were accompanied by an adult and whether that is practicable.
- The width of the road and the existence of pavements.
- The volume and speed of traffic.
- Different conditions at different times of year.

1.8 Children with a special educational need, a disability or a mobility difficulty

If a child is a registered pupil at their nearest suitable school and has special educational needs (SEN), a disability or mobility problems which means they cannot reasonably be expected to walk to school, then we will provide travel assistance free of charge.

Additional information is set out in Section 2 of this document.

1.9 Pupils living outside of Buckinghamshire

Pupils who live outside of Buckinghamshire attending a school in Buckinghamshire should apply to their own local authority for assistance with transport.

1.10 Grounds of Religion or Belief

There is no eligibility to transport assistance for pupils on the grounds of religion or belief, except as provided above in relation to low income families (see Extended Rights 1.4).

1.11 Home address

Transport assistance is based upon the distance from the home address to school and will be verified using the information supplied by the parent/carer. Home address is defined as being the address at which the parent/carer ordinarily resides and with whom the child normally lives. In situations of joint parental custody, the home address would normally be that at which the parent/carer, in receipt of the child benefit for that pupil, resides. If child benefit is not received then the address at which the child is registered with a GP will be used. If this is not conclusive then we will use the address the child spends the greater proportion of the school week.

1.12 Change of address and emergency contact details

Parents have an obligation to notify the Council when they move house. In the event that they no longer meet the eligibility criteria travel assistance arrangements will cease.

If a pupil moves to an address further away from the school such that their current school is no longer the nearest suitable school, the Council will normally expect the parents to apply for a place at the nearest suitable school and to consider a moving date which takes account of a planned transition to the new school. If parents choose not to apply for a place at the nearest suitable school, the Council will not continue to provide travel assistance unless there are exceptional circumstances.

Parents/carers must provide the Council with emergency contact numbers and email addresses which must be amended and updated as necessary. It is the parent's responsibility to ensure that they provide updated information as and when this changes.

1.13 Inaccurate applications

The Council reserve 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 travel assistance.

There is a checker on the website which can be used to work out which is the nearest qualifying school:

<https://services.buckscc.gov.uk/school-admissions/transport>

1.14 Transport to schools that are not the nearest

If a place cannot be offered at the nearest suitable school, when this has been expressed as a preference, then travel assistance to the next nearest suitable school will be offered. There is an expectation that parents will have applied for and been refused a place at the nearest suitable school (which may be an upper school even if a child is qualified to attend a grammar school). Parents will also have been expected to have continued to apply for a place at the nearest suitable school by going onto the waiting list for a place. Should a place at the nearest suitable school become available, then the transport offer will be withdrawn. However if the place becomes available after the 31 July the transport offer will remain.

1.15 Home to School Transport provision in special circumstances (discretionary assistance)

a) Those living closest to a non-Buckinghamshire School

Where the nearest suitable school is outside of Buckinghamshire, pupils will be offered transport to the nearest Buckinghamshire school, unless there is a Virtual Buckinghamshire School (subject to normal eligibility rules). In four areas there is an existing admissions arrangement (the 4 'Virtual Buckinghamshire Schools') and most parents have chosen to apply to the out of county school, so transport is provided there as it is closer than a Buckinghamshire school. A list of these out-of-county schools will be set out on the website each year in time for the annual admissions process. Currently the list of Virtual Buckinghamshire Schools comprises Tring School in Hertfordshire and Icknield School, Lord Williams's School and Wheatley Park School which are in Oxfordshire.

b) Reception Intake

Children under compulsory school age are not automatically entitled to transport to an early years setting or school. Compulsory school age begins on the first day of the term following the child's fifth birthday.

The Council does not wish to encourage the transport of unaccompanied 4 year-olds on school transport. The Council will consider the application of the transport eligibility rules to these pupils in the term the child becomes 5. This will be subject to a safety assessment so parents should not assume automatic entitlement.

c) Your child will be attending a linked junior school

To ensure consistency of education provision, in addition to transport (subject to the normal rules) to the nearest suitable school, transport will be provided to junior school age pupils attending the junior school described as linked to the infant school attended when the application is made, even where this is not the nearest primary school.

d) Pre-existing primary transport serves your area

At primary age where there is established, pre-existing school transport to a primary school designated as the catchment school for the child's home, then transport will also be provided subject to the normal eligibility rules.

e) Other exceptional circumstances

Parents/carers who do not meet the eligibility criteria above, but feel that their circumstances merit provision of travel assistance should make an application in writing to the Transport Exceptions Panel (TEP). Each application for discretionary assistance will be dealt with on a case-by-case basis and discretionary assistance may be granted for a set period of time. Discretionary award of travel assistance is subject to review more frequently than other circumstances. If discretionary assistance is provided, this may be subject to payment of the whole or a contribution of the cost of the travel assistance.

1.16 Transport during the school day

Transport will not be provided for journeys made during the school day. Where pupils attend for example, medical or dental appointments or off-site provision arranged by the school, then the school or parent, as appropriate, must make arrangements and pay for transport.

1.17 Timing of transport arrangements

Appropriate transport arrangements will be made based on the age and needs of the child. Pick-up and drop-off times cannot be rescheduled to take into account other family commitments. Parents who are unable to be home at the specified pick-up and drop-off times and location will have to make alternative arrangements.

Parents will be responsible for ensuring their child is at the pick-up/setting down point near their home and for accompanying their child to/from this point where required.

1.18 Care of vulnerable children

Parents and carers must ensure a responsible adult is available to hand over/collect their child to/from the driver if this is a requirement of the travel assistance.

If there is not a responsible adult at home to receive a child and the operator or client transport staff are unable to contact the parent/carer, the child will be taken to a safe place, such as the local police station or Adult and Child Social Care Emergency Duty Team. Please note that the transport staff will not hand a child over to anyone outside of the home address, unless previously authorised by the Client Transport Service.

1.19 Expected level of behaviour for all pupils

The consequences of poor behaviour by pupils on buses can be wide ranging. Other passengers may be deterred from using public transport shared with poorly behaved school pupils.

The Council will work in partnership with schools to promote appropriate standards of behaviour by pupils on their journey to and from school through rewarding positive behaviour and using sanctions to address poor behaviour.

Pupils being transported will be expected to follow the same behaviour codes as they do when in school. Unacceptable behaviour will be monitored and appropriate action taken. Parents will be responsible for transporting their own children during any period of exclusion from transport.

Section 2 - Special Educational Needs Transport

2.1 General

This section of the policy provides additional guidance on travel assistance for children of compulsory school age with SEND and takes account of the 'Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice 0 to 25 years'.

Children who have SEND may require assistance with getting to school that are over and above the provision made for all pupils. The Council will provide travel assistance as explained below.

Guidance on Post 16 Transport can be found on Buckinghamshire County Council's website at:

<https://www.buckscc.gov.uk/services/education/school-transport/transport-for-16-19-year-olds>

2.2 Criteria for SEND Home to School Transport

The Council considers the individual needs of children, involving professional advice, and will consult with parents and teachers in arriving at a final decision. Having an EHCP does not automatically mean that a child will be eligible for travel assistance.

Every case will be considered individually on its merits. The Council will take into account any information provided by parents, the school, other professionals who know the child and, when appropriate, the child as well. In addition to the factors set out in Section 1, these are the factors that the Council will take into account:

- Mobility
- Medical
- Behaviour
- Vulnerability including age, young parents and NEET
- Practicality
- Training

The list is for guidance only, and satisfaction of one or more of the criteria does not automatically support entitlement to transport assistance. If the conclusion is that the child is not able to manage the required route safely, accompanied by a parent as appropriate, then the most appropriate type of transport assistance will be provided.

When determining the most appropriate mode of travel assistance for pupils with SEND, the following factors will be considered:

- The age of the child;
- The nature and severity of the pupil's SEND;
- The availability of public transport;
- The length and nature of the journey; and
- The most cost effective mode of transport.

2.3 Independent Travel Training

Some students may benefit from completing the Council's Independent Travel Training Scheme, which is designed to develop students' skills to travel independently to and from education and social activities by providing a personalised travel programme. Independent Travel Training will be discussed, if appropriate, at annual transport reviews.

Independent travel training supports the individual to make a journey between two places on their own safely. This journey could be as simple as walking a short distance or as complicated as using two buses combined with walking between the connections. A training programme tailored to the individual needs will be provided covering road safety, personal safety and transport training as required.

If a place is offered and a parent refuses to consent to their child attending independent travel training, their child's eligibility may be reviewed and future travel arrangements may be offered on the condition that their child attends the training in the future. Continued refusal may lead to withdrawal of travel assistance, although consideration will be given to individual circumstances.

2.4 Passenger assistants

Passenger assistants are responsible for the care and supervision of pupils to and from school. They will oversee the pupil's conduct and safety in such a way that the driver is unhindered in his/her duties.

The role of the passenger assistant includes:

- Prevention of self-harm;
- Prevention of harm to / by others; and
- Assisting the driver in the loading of passengers ensuring transportation in safe and appropriate manner.

Passenger assistants will be provided, when specified, by the Council. There is no minimum and maximum age that determines whether a passenger assistant is required.

The needs of each individual child will be assessed to determine whether they will require the care and supervision by a passenger assistant. The Council employs passenger assistants who have received specialist training in order to understand the needs of pupils placed in their care. All Council passenger assistants are subject to an Enhanced Disclosure and Barring check (DBS).

Every effort will be made to ensure that the same passenger assistant and driver continue to transport a child. We understand disruption can be unsettling and will do our best to minimise changes. However this may not always be possible and changes will often need to be made, for example as a result of staff unavailability / staff turnover / contract renewals. The Council reserves the right to make changes to routes and modes of travel as necessary.

The passenger assistant is not responsible for administration of medical aid, over and above basic first aid. If a pupil has a medical condition which could require the administration of medical aid during the transport journey, the Council may expect the parent to accompany the child or arrange for another suitable adult to accompany the child for this purpose. Alternatively, the parent could choose to accept a mileage allowance or direct payment toward the cost of arranging their own transport.

2.5 Residential schools

Pupils in residential schools for the standard 40 weeks academic year (and who are eligible for transport assistance) will be provided with transport assistance between home and school for the start and end of term period (generally half-terms). This totals 12 single journeys, 4 per term. Transport for pupils in 52-week schools will be determined individually.

Where a student attends a school named in their EHCP which provides a residential setting and is beyond the daily travelling distance, students will be entitled to one journey at the beginning of the academic period, and one return journey at the end. Where a student is unable to make their journey to school due to sickness or family matters and the Council has been informed at least 24 hours before, the journey will be provided at a date agreed between the Transport Officer and the carer. A parent will be expected to make their own further transport arrangements if the Council is notified less than 24 hours before. The total number of journeys provided will be as follows:

- Termly Boarders: 2 journeys each term, 6 journeys per academic year
- Half Termly Boarders: 2 journeys each half term, 12 journeys per academic year
- Fortnightly Boarders: 2 journeys each fortnight, 38* journeys per academic year
- Weekly Boarders: 2 journeys each week, 76* journeys per academic year

** The total number of journeys for fortnightly and weekly boarders will vary depending on the number of weeks in the school calendar, numbers for guidance only*

Section 3 - Post 16 Transport 16-19 years

3.1 Post 16 Transport

Travel assistance for Post 16 students is contained in the Council's Post 16 Transport Policy Statement at:

<https://www.buckscc.gov.uk/services/education/school-transport/transport-for-16-19-year-olds/>.

This provides information about the availability of travel assistance by the Council and other providers.

Section 4 - Sustainable Modes of Travel

4.1 Sustainable Travel

The Council's Sustainable Modes of Travel Strategy can be downloaded from the Council's web site using the following link:

<https://www.buckscc.gov.uk/services/transport-and-roads/transport-plans-and-policies/getting-to-school-strategy-smots/>

School Travel Plans identify and address congestion, safety, health and environmental issues associated with car use on the school journey. Schools may organise campaigns and projects, run initiatives and events and promote activities to reduce single occupancy car use for the journey.

Section 5 – Transport for Looked after Children

5.1 Looked after Children under the care of the Council

The Council is committed to ensuring that all children receive travel assistance who need it to support those most in need, to promote independence and encourage sustainable travel.

It is recognised that looked after children face specific challenges and barriers to achieving their full potential, and as corporate parents we are committed to reducing those barriers through providing travel assistance for looked after children whom are under the care of Buckinghamshire County Council.

For looked after children under the care of Buckinghamshire County Council transport will be provided as follows:

- If a looked after child under the care of the Council is to be educated at a school that is not the nearest suitable school for less than one term, transport will be provided by the Council for this period.
- If a looked after child under the care of the Council is to be educated at school that is not the nearest suitable school for more than one term, transport will be provided by the Council for one term, during which it is expected that an application will be made to the nearest suitable school, unless there are exceptional circumstances as to why the pupil should not move to this school. The view of the virtual school head will be taken into account when considering exceptional circumstances.

Section 6 - General Information

6.1 Application process

Application forms for Home to School Transport are available from the Admissions and Transport Team via the Contact Us form: www.buckscc.gov.uk/contactadmissions

Further information in relation to the application process can be found here: <https://www.buckscc.gov.uk/services/education/school-transport/free-school-transport/>

6.2 Review process

Provision of travel assistance at any one time does not guarantee that this will be an ongoing arrangement and the requirement will be reviewed by the Council on a regular basis.

If during the course of any school year the Council determines that the provision of free home to school transport need no longer be provided, it will cease at the end of the term in which the Panel's decision was made.

All young people who receive free home to school transport will be subject to review:

- At the end of Year 3 in which the pupil attains the age of 8 years.
- At the end of Year 6.
- Following the successful completion of Independent Travel Training.
- If the pupil has an EHCP, at the annual review meeting.
- Following a change in circumstances.

6.3 Complaints

Any pupil, parent or carer wishing to make a formal complaint relating to Home to School Transport should complete the [school transport 'Contact Us Form'](#).

Formal complaints should be made through Buckinghamshire County Council's Feedback & Complaints Procedure:

www.buckscc.gov.uk/services/contact-and-complaints/feedback-and-complaints/

6.4 Appeals

The Council has a 2 stage review process for parents/carers who wish to challenge a decision about:

- The transport arrangements offered.
- Their child/young person's eligibility.
- The distance measurement in relation to statutory walking distances.
- The suitability of the route.

The appeal process is to challenge the above matters. If you have a concern about how the arrangements are being delivered, you should use the complaints process.

Stage 1

Parents/carers have 20 working days to request a review of our decision about home to school transport. Parents should write to us, detailing why the decision should be reviewed, giving details of any personal/family circumstances and including any supporting evidence to be considered. The decision will be reviewed by a senior officer or via the Transport Exceptions Panel (TEP). Within 20 working days of receipt of this letter parents will be advised in writing of the appeal decision.

Stage 2 – Review by an Independent Appeal Panel

Parents/carers have 20 working days from the receipt of our Stage 1 written decision notification to make a written request to escalate the matter to Stage 2. Within 40 working days of receipt of the parents/carers' request, an independent appeal panel will consider written and verbal representations from both the parent/carer and officers involved in the case and will give a detailed written notification of the outcome within 5 working days of the panel meeting. The independent appeal panel is made up of trained volunteers who have experience of transport issues. These volunteers are independent of the Council.

Stage 3 – Complaint to Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman

Parents/carers can complain to the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman only if they consider that:

- there was a failure to comply with the procedural rules or
- if there are any other irregularities in the way the appeal has been handled.

For further information please contact the Admissions Team:

www.buckscc.gov.uk/contactadmissions

6.5 Disclosure and Barring Service checks (DBS) and identity badges

Enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service checks are carried out on all drivers and passenger assistants prior to them being employed on Home to School Transport. Following a satisfactory check and appropriate safeguarding training, an identity badge will be issued to drivers and passenger assistants by the Council which will be worn at all times as proof of approval to undertake the work.

If you have any concerns regarding the behaviour of drivers or passenger assistants, please report this by completing the [school transport 'Contact Us Form'](#).

6.6 Safety of routes

The Council will monitor the routes and vehicles used on the routes to ensure that they are fit for purpose and do not pose a risk to anyone travelling on the vehicle or using the route to travel to school. Any vehicle or route found to be unsafe will be withdrawn and alternative arrangements made until normal service can be resumed. If you are concerned regarding the safety of a route, you can report this by completing the [school transport 'Contact Us Form'](#).

6.7 Fare paying seats / Concessionary Travel Permits

In some cases, spare places may be available on coaches, buses or taxis contracted to convey pupils to school. These places may be made available to pupils who do not qualify for free travel following the purchase of a concessionary fare permit.

Where spare capacity exists on current vehicles that have been contracted to provide home to school transport for entitled pupils, the Client Transport Service will make these seats available for non-entitled pupils. **A Seat Will Only Be Allocated if Public Transport Provision Is Not Available.** All purchased seats will be subject to the seat being withdrawn with **FIVE** working days' notice should the seat be required for an entitled pupil.

Further details can be obtained by completing the [school transport 'Contact Us Form'](#).

The bus pass is the responsibility of the child and, if lost or damaged, replacements will be provided but this will carry an administration charge of £13.00.

6.8 Identification of new routes

The Council reserves the right to review all routes in light of any changes to the Admission Policy or areas of new housing. If such changes mean that a pupil will no longer be entitled to free transport then the notice of withdrawal will be two months from the date of notification to the parent/carer.

Examples of change could include building of new roads, opening of new footpaths, or changes to the safety of a route as determined by the Road Safety Team.

6.9 Journey times

The Council will make every effort to ensure that travelling times to and from school will be as follows:

- A maximum 45 minutes each way at primary school age; and
- 75 minutes at secondary school age.

In some cases, the distances involved mean that some children will have longer journeys. Please note that return journeys are not constrained by specific times at intermediate stops with the result that homeward journeys may be quicker than advertised. Every effort is made to ensure that the waiting time on school premises, before and after school, and at pick up and set down points, does not exceed 20 minutes.

You will receive a schedule, and will be notified if there are any changes.

6.10 Data Protection

The Data Protection Act 2018 and General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) regulates the way we use your personal information. You provide this information when you seek services from, or come in to contact with us. The Act provides a legal framework to the way we handle this data. Data Protection compliance is not an activity that is done once and requires ongoing compliance measures and reviews. To ensure this compliance is managed in a structured way the Council employs a Data Protection Officer and covers the following activities:

<https://www.buckscc.gov.uk/services/council-and-democracy/open-data/data-protection/>

6.11 Transport following the closure of a school

If a school decides it is prudent to close early or not open because of severe weather, every attempt will be made to inform the parents. However, this may not always be possible especially in the case of larger schools. The school will advise parents of their procedures in the event of an emergency closure.

In bad weather conditions, the transport operator is the sole judge of whether to commence or complete a bus journey, giving priority to the safety of the pupils on the vehicle.

Parents must ensure that the pupil is warmly dressed in case the journey to or from school is very slow or even halted in bad weather.

Should the school transport on any route not operate in the morning because of adverse weather conditions, but a parent nevertheless decides to take their child to school, then they will be expected to make their own arrangements to collect the child either at the end of the day or at the time of early closure.

Drivers are required to seek the safest route and may therefore avoid normal routes in order to stay on major roads or to avoid specific hazards. They are instructed that they must only set-down pupils at specific set-down points. Where transport is not able to access the pre-determined set-down point due to poor weather, passengers may be asked to leave the vehicle at an alternative safe location. Where these arrangements are made, they will be announced on

<https://closures.buckscc.gov.uk/TransportTrouble.aspx>

Where a road is too hazardous for school transport in the morning, the transport operator is under no obligation to attempt the afternoon run.

6.12 Parents/carers not at home

There are occasions when it would not be possible to return a child home having been transported from school. The following guidance is intended for drivers and passenger assistants in order to manage such situations.

- If the parent or carer is not at home the driver or passenger assistant must notify Client Transport Services to seek advice.
- Where possible, make a return visit to the family home to check if the parent or carer has returned.
- If the parent or carer has not returned by the end of the route, the driver or passenger assistant must contact Client Transport Services to the inform them of the situation. The Client Transport Service will then inform the Head Teacher and / or the relevant social care team. Drivers and passenger assistants will receive further instructions following the advice given by the Head Teacher and may be required to travel back to school to hand over the child to staff at the school or an appropriate adult. In all cases, a note must be left for the parent containing details of who they should contact and the whereabouts of the child. If an incident happens after 5pm Monday–Thursday and after 4.30pm Friday, contact will be made with the Emergency Duty Team. All incidents will be recorded and considered by the Transport Review Panel.

Appendix A - Glossary of Terms

The table below provides a glossary of the terms used in this policy:

Travel Assistance	Cost effective home to school transport arrangements or assistance provided by the Council using variety of methods, as deemed appropriate in each pupil's case.
Transport/Home to School Transport	Transport provided to enable the child to attend school. It is provided at the start and the end of the school day and operates between the location of the home and school only.
Free Home to School Transport	Travel assistance provided at no cost to the family.
The Council	Buckinghamshire County Council.
EHCP	Education, Health and Care Plan.
Nearest Suitable School	The nearest qualifying school with places available that provides education appropriate to the child's age, ability, aptitude, gender and any special educational needs they may have.
Extended Rights	Extra free transport options for those pupils entitled to free school lunches, or if their parents or carers receive working tax credit at the maximum rate.
Client Transport Staff	A Team of Council Officers who commission transport provision in relation to the Home to School Transport Policy and appropriate contract compliance.
Compulsory school age	This begins with the start of term following a child's fifth birthday and ends on the last Friday in June in the academic year in which s/he turns 16.
Looked After Children	Children and young people who maybe in residential care, in foster care, looked after by a family member other than a parent, or those who are looked after at home.
Virtual Buckinghamshire School	A team of education specialists who are there to ensure that Looked After Children and children who have left care are supported and achieve their full potential at school.