

Home to School Transport Policy

2021-22



Newport City Council - Education Service

Home to School Transport Policy

Free home to school transport is provided to primary aged pupils who live 2 miles or more from their catchment school or nearest available school, and to secondary aged pupils (up to the end of Year 11) who live 3 miles or more from their catchment school or nearest available school.

This includes Welsh medium and faith schools. In addition, the Learner Travel (Wales) Measure states that a child should be eligible for free home to school transport to an alternative school if this is nearer than the catchment school and provided that the qualifying distance is met.

Each school has a designated catchment area but in accordance with the council's School Admissions Policy, parents can express a preference for any school they want their child to attend. If parents / carers choose to send their child to a school that is not the catchment school, they will be responsible for all transport costs and arrangements.

If an application to a preferred school is unsuccessful, pupils will only be eligible for transport assistance if they attend either the catchment school as an alternative, or the next nearest available school as determined by the council's School Admissions Team, and provided that the distance criterion is met. Should parents elect an alternative school that is neither the catchment school nor the determined nearest available school as determined by the School Admissions Team, parents / carers will be fully responsible for all transport costs and arrangements.

It is for the council to determine the shortest available walking route, using their own specific routing software, and this may not necessarily be the route chosen by the child. The measurement software tool has been approved by the Head of City Services and further tested and approved by the council's Scrutiny Committee. In order to ensure fairness and consistency for all applicants, this is the only measurement tool that is used by the council.

In determining eligibility for free home to school transport applications, distances are measured by the shortest available walking route between the nearest entrance/front gate of the home and the nearest entrance/gate of the school. The council deems that a route is 'available' if a child, accompanied as necessary, can walk to school in reasonable safety. It is for individual parents, not the council, to determine whether the child needs accompanying.



In assessing the availability of a route, the council will look at the risks a child, accompanied as necessary, might encounter along the prescribed route (including for example, canals, rivers, ditches, street lighting, pavements and the speed of traffic along roads etc). The assessments take place at the time of the day and on the days of the week that pupils would be expected to use the route.

In conducting the assessment, the council will follow the guidelines prescribed in the Welsh Government Learner Travel Statutory Provision and Operational Guidance (June 2014). In accordance with this guidance, the council must consider a route to be “safe” and therefore deem it “available”, unless the degree of risk involved would be such that any adult accompanying the child would be at significant risk from traffic.

Sometimes the council will need to arrange pick-up points for children when it is not possible for vehicles to pass close by all homes. The pick-up point should normally be less than one mile away from the home. Free transport may also be provided in exceptional cases where the council determines that there is no suitable available route to school. The degree of risk involved would need to be such that the individual accompanying the child would be at significant risk from the particular traffic situation.

Pupils who are not eligible for free home to school transport are able to access the local bus network as fare-paying passengers. Concessionary seats may also be available for purchase on contracted vehicles, and this is administered by the Head of Streetscene.

Parents / carers are required to make a new application in respect of each child every academic year, and it should not be assumed that a new application will be successful simply because a child is currently in receipt of assistance. A child could cease to be eligible for free home to school transport if there is a change to their school or home address, or if the council identifies a shorter available walking route within the distance criteria limit. If a child moves schools or home during the course of an academic year, parents / carers should advise the council immediately, as this could have an effect on current transport arrangements.

Other information

- Free transport is arranged and administered by the council and parents will not be reimbursed for individual local arrangements where council transport is available;
- Pupils who move home to an address outside the catchment area of their school will not normally continue to be provided with free transport to that school if the move takes place during the first or second year of education. Applications for pupils moving home in the third or subsequent year will be considered only if transport can be provided by existing service within Newport;



- Free transport may be provided, in exceptional circumstances, on medical grounds in respect of pupils who reside within the catchment area of their school. Applications must be supported by a recent medical consultant's report recommending special transport for a specified period;
- Free transport is not provided for pupils attending private schools;
- There is no appeal mechanism against decisions to refuse applications for free home to school transport assistance although the Chief Education Officer can in certain circumstances consider requests for financial assistance outside the agreed policy.

Post-16 Students

The council does not have a statutory obligation to provide transport assistance to post-16 students. However Post-16 travel grants are a discretionary service from the council and are available to those students who are aged between 16 and 18 years old and are undertaking full-time educational courses in a school or college setting. Students are eligible for a grant if they live 3 miles or more from the catchment school, or the nearest college to their home address which provides the chosen course of study.

Grants are not provided to students who will reach the age of 19 during the course of the academic year, unless they are continuing, without a break, a course of study which started in a previous academic year.

Post-16 students are free to use this travel grant in whatever way best suits their needs. If they choose to utilise the local bus service network, they will be able to purchase from a range of tickets directly from the local bus network provider.

Where post-16 students attend a school that is not serviced by the local bus network, parents are able to purchase a seat on a contracted vehicle from the council at the agreed concessionary seat cost for the year. The value of the travel grant is deducted from this amount.

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