

Home to School Transport Policy (0 to 25 Year Olds)

1. Introduction

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

It is the responsibility of the parent/carer to ensure that their child attends school and they must take all action necessary to enable their child to attend school. For most parents/carers this includes making arrangements for their child to travel to and from school. However, we will **provide offer** travel assistance if the school transport eligibility criteria are met.

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 and young people who travel under this Policy can expect that those standards will be monitored and maintained.

In this policy we have referred to children of **statutory compulsory** school age (5-16 years) as “pupils”, and those over **statutory compulsory** school age as “students”.

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 age, distance to school, special educational needs, a disability (SEND) or mobility problems 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 children attending early years education, subject to eligibility criteria - s.509A
- duty to prepare a Post-16 transport policy statement setting out transport provision and financial assistance (where applicable) to facilitate attendance of sixth form students at educational institutions - s.509AA and s.509AB

The Policy has been developed in accordance with the legislative framework set out under the Education Act 1996 and [current government Home-to-school-travel guidance](#). It is reviewed and updated regularly to ensure that arrangements adopted within Buckinghamshire reflect any new legislation and guidance.

This Home to School Transport Policy has been informed by national home to school transport research and the Council’s financial and demand forecasts.

2. Under **Compulsory Statutory** school age (0 to 4 years) Eligibility for Travel Assistance

Under the law, the council does not have a duty to provide travel assistance to children who are under compulsory school age. Children under statutory school age are not automatically entitled to transport to an early years setting or school. Travel to an early years setting is the responsibility of a child's parent/carer. Compulsory Statutory school age begins on the first day of the term following the child's 5th birthday.

In **exceptional circumstances** the Council will consider providing travel assistance for any child who will turn 5 within the term that the application is made, subject to them meeting the transport eligibility criteria and the Council completing a travel needs assessment. Each case is considered individually therefore parents should not assume automatic **eligibility entitlement**.

The eligibility criteria are outlined in section 3. These are considered in accordance with the following additional guidance.

Children without an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) attending **nursery early years provision aged 0 to 4**

Parents/carers are responsible for making and paying for their own travel arrangements for transporting their child to and from **nursery early years** provision.

Children with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) attending mainstream **nursery early years provision aged 0 to 4**

If a child has an EHCP and is attending a mainstream **nursery early years setting** then ~~a case~~ **these cases** can be brought to the Transport Exceptions Panel to be considered for travel assistance, as long as the placement is the nearest suitable setting. If travel assistance is **offered agreed**, the Council will offer the **most cost-effective form of travel assistance**. This is likely to be in the form of a Personal Transport Budget, ~~subject to a consideration of a family's ability~~ **which must be used** to make suitable transport arrangements for ~~the their~~ child's journey to **nursery** their setting.

Children with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) attending specialist **nursery early years provision aged 0 to 4**

If a child's needs are such that an EHCP prescribes attendance at a specialist **nursery early years setting** then these cases can be brought to the Transport Exceptions Panel to be considered for travel assistance, as long as the placement is the nearest suitable setting. If travel assistance is **offered agreed**, the Council will offer the **most cost-effective form of travel assistance**. This is likely to be in the form of a Personal Transport Budget, ~~subject to a consideration of a family's ability~~ **which must be used** to make suitable transport arrangements for ~~the their~~ child's journey to **nursery** their setting.

Children without an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) attending a reception class in a school in the **year term before they turn 5**

If it is determined by the Admissions and Transport Team that once the child is 5 they will meet the eligibility criteria for **Council funded** home to school transport, then they may be transported during the term that they are due to turn 5, providing there is existing transport running from the child's home area to the educational setting. This is subject to the Council completing a travel needs assessment.

The family would not usually be offered a Personal Transport Budget, unless this was agreed by the Council as the most cost-effective form of travel assistance.

Children with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) attending a reception class in a school in the year before they turn 5

If it is determined by the [Integrated SEND Team Service](#) that a child with an EHCP attending a reception class would be eligible to receive Council funded home to school travel assistance once they turn 5, then we would consider providing travel assistance if the child needs [it between the age of 4 and 5. before the age of 5](#). These cases [can must](#) be brought to the Transport Exceptions Panel for consideration.

If travel assistance is [offered](#) agreed, the Council will offer the most cost-effective form of travel assistance. This is likely to be in the form of a Personal Transport Budget, [subject to a consideration of a family's ability](#) which must be used to make suitable transport arrangements for their child's journey to school.

3. Eligibility for compulsory [Statutory](#) school age (5 to 16 years) pupils - with and without Education, Health and Care Plans ~~Mainstream and SEND~~

[Compulsory Statutory school age](#) begins with the start of term following a child's 5th birthday and ends on the last Friday in June in the academic year in which they turn 16.

Children of [compulsory statutory](#) school age need to attend a school or educational setting on a full-time basis; this is defined as 190 days (or 380 sessions) each academic year.

There are 4 categories of [compulsory statutory](#) school age [students pupils](#) living in Buckinghamshire and attending their nearest suitable school who are eligible for Council funded travel assistance:

1. children who live beyond the statutory walking distance
2. children from low-income families (where extended rights apply – see section 3.5)
3. children whose walking route to school is unsafe
4. children with Special Educational Needs (SEN), a disability or a mobility difficulty

The nearest suitable school is defined [in the statutory guidance](#) as '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'. A 'qualifying' school is:

- a maintained school or nursery, or a special school approved under s.342 of the Education Act 1996
- a pupil referral unit or alternative provision academy
- an academy

'Places available' does not apply to admissions to Special Schools or Additionally Resourced Provision.

For pupils with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP)

Where a child has an EHCP, the school named in the EHCP will normally be considered [as to be](#) their nearest suitable school, [however there are exceptions](#). For exceptions see section 10.2.

For pupils without an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP)

The nearest suitable school used for the transport eligibility assessment may not be the same as the catchment school or nearest school for admissions purposes. The parent/carer can work out which mainstream secondary school is their [nearest suitable school online](#).

The transport eligibility online checker referred to above returns results for Buckinghamshire mainstream secondary schools and the equivalent schools as set out in 3.8a. However, when school applications are processed, where a preference is expressed for, and a place is offered at, the nearest suitable school, and this school is out of county, then this is considered in the school transport eligibility assessment.

When determining the nearest suitable school for transport purposes, the assessment does not take into account whether a child is qualified for grammar school. Therefore the nearest suitable school may be an upper/all-ability school. In these instances, if a child chooses to attend a grammar school further away, Council funded **transport travel assistance** will not be provided to that school.

Parents/carers should always express a preference for their nearest suitable school on their application. The Admissions and Transport team will determine places available and therefore families do not need to be concerned about whether their child is likely to secure a place at the nearest suitable school.

Parents/**carers** are not required to name the nearest suitable school as their first preference when they make their school application, but it must be listed as one of their preferences to ensure that if they cannot be offered a place at the nearest suitable school, then **transport travel assistance** could be provided to the next nearest school.

If parents/carers do not express their nearest suitable school as one of their preferences, and choose a place at a school which is not the nearest suitable school, the pupil will not be eligible for Council funded travel assistance, unless the extended rights apply (please see section 3.5).

Also see section 3.8 a) on those living closest to a non-Buckinghamshire School.

3.1 Types of travel assistance

The Council will usually offer travel assistance in the following order: ~~offered by the Council may take the form of~~

- a public bus, **school bus service** or train travel pass
- a Council arranged coach/bus service
- a Personal Transport Budget
- a Council arranged minibus
- a Council arranged shared taxi
- Passenger assistant support, based on a travel needs assessment undertaken by the Council
- a Council arranged solo taxi, based on a travel needs assessment undertaken by the Council

The council will arrange transport that is suitable for the pupil/student's travel needs and the route they are travelling. School transport will be shared unless that would not be suitable with the pupil/student's travel needs, or there are no other pupils/students travelling on a similar route. All solo taxi arrangements are reviewed at least annually.

The Council plan routes to and from school and pick-up and drop-off times to be as efficient as possible for all the pupils/students travelling in the vehicle. The Council don't usually accommodate individual preferences.

In order to determine the most appropriate travel option for pupils/students and the most cost-effective means of travel assistance, the Council will consider various factors, including whether there is existing transport running in the area. use a range of criteria. These

The Council may offer a Personal Transport Budget as an alternative to Council arranged transport. More information on Personal Transport Budgets is available on the [Local Offer](#).

The school transport eligibility criteria are described in the following sections.

3.2 Statutory Walking Distances

The statutory walking distances are used to determine whether a pupil is eligible for Council funded travel assistance.

The statutory walking distances are as follows:

- up to 2 miles (if below the age of 8)
- up to 3 miles (if aged between 8 and 16)

If the distance between home and the nearest suitable school is more than these limits, as measured by the Council, the pupil is eligible for Council funded travel assistance.

Where a pupil lives within the statutory walking distance of their nearest suitable school and is not eligible for Council funded travel assistance on any of the other grounds set out in this policy, the parent/carer is responsible for making and paying for suitable arrangements for their child's travel to school.

3.3 Calculation of distances and available routes

For eligibility purposes, the statutory walking distances are measured using the shortest walking route a pupil, accompanied as necessary, can walk in reasonable safety. This is not necessarily the shortest distance by road. The route might include footpaths, bridleways, and other tracks and may access alternative pedestrian entrances to school which are not passable by motorised transport.

For pupils who fall within the 'Extended Rights' eligibility criteria, the 6 mile and 15 mile upper limits are not walking routes (see section 3.5). These routes are those which are passable using a suitable motorised vehicle. In short, the two upper limits will be measured along road routes.

3.4 Pupils who live beyond the statutory walking distance

Travel assistance will be provided free of charge (i.e. funded by the Council) for those pupils of compulsory statutory school age who are travelling further than the statutory walking distance from their home to/from the nearest open entrance gate allowing pedestrian access of their nearest suitable school. When calculating the walking distance, where two schools are closely co-located, we will use all entrance gates which are used by pedestrians for both schools in our measurements.

Pupils who live beyond the statutory walking distance may be required to use public transport and in these cases the Council will provide a bus or train travel pass for them to use the relevant public transport service.

3.5 Extended rights for pupils from low income families

A pupil may be eligible for extended rights under the 'low income' provisions. The Council defines eligible low income families as those where a child receives free school meals because their parents or carers receive at least one of the benefits listed below:

- Income Support
- Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance
- Income-related Employment and Support Allowance
- Child Tax Credit – provided their parents/carers are not also entitled to Working Tax Credit and have an annual gross income of no more than £16,190
- Universal Credit - if they apply on or after 1 April 2018 provided they have an annual net earned their household income must be of no more than £7,400 a year (after tax and not including any benefits they get as assessed by earnings from up to three of their most recent assessment periods
- The guaranteed element of Pension Credit
- Support under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- Working Tax Credit run-on – paid for four weeks after they stop qualifying for Working Tax Credit

If the pupil is not entitled to free school meals, another benefit that is accepted is entitlement to the maximum level of Working Tax Credits. This means that there is no reduction due to income in the Working Tax Credits elements section of their HM Revenue & Customs award notice for the current tax year and their annual income is no more than £16,190.

From September 2026, the government is extending free school meals to all children from households that receive Universal Credit. This does not change the way home to school travel assistance eligibility for extended rights is determined. Pupils who meet the new, higher threshold for free school meals will not be eligible for extended rights.

Where extended rights apply, pupils aged 8 to 10 from low income families who live more than 2 miles (rather than 3) from their nearest suitable school become eligible for Council funded home to school travel assistance.

Secondary school age pupils from low income families who attend schools between 2 and 6 miles from their home will be eligible for Council funded home to school travel assistance even if the school they attend is not their nearest suitable school, providing it is one of the three nearest schools which the pupil is qualified to attend (e.g. a mainstream pupil is not qualified to attend a special school even if it is one of the three nearest schools and therefore it would be discounted).

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

When assessing whether a child lives within the 6 or 15 mile upper limits, the Council will measure road routes only.

3.6 Pupils whose route to school is unsafe

A pupil is eligible for Council funded travel assistance if they attend their nearest suitable school, and

- it is within the statutory walking distance of their home, and
- the nature of the route means they could not be expected to walk there in reasonable safety, even if accompanied by their parent/carer, and
- there is no alternative route within the statutory walking distance that they would be able to walk in reasonable safety, even if accompanied by their parent/carer.

All walking routes are assessed by the Council in accordance with the Road Safety GB and RoSPA (Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents) guidelines. The Council will assess the route at the times the pupil would be using it and will consider:

- the age of the pupil
- whether risks might be less if the pupil were accompanied by their parent/carer
- the width of the road and the existence of pavements
- the volume and speed of traffic
- the conditions at different times of the year

Where a route previously assessed as unsafe is reassessed and determined to be safe (for example by reviewing the route, through route improvements, upgrades or maintenance, the building of new footpaths or installing pedestrian crossings, etc.) the transport eligibility for all pupils who are using the previously assessed unsafe walking route will be reviewed. Pupils who are no longer eligible once the route is reassessed as safe will be given one **half term's month's** notice before Council funded travel assistance is withdrawn. It will then be the parent/carer's responsibility to make suitable travel arrangements for their child.

3.7 Transport to schools that are not the nearest **for pupils without an EHCP**

If a place cannot be offered at the nearest suitable school when this has been expressed as one of the preferences, then travel assistance to the next nearest suitable school will be offered. Where the Council allocates a school place which is not a preference, we will only consider providing Council funded travel assistance if the nearest suitable school was expressed as one of the preferences.

View the [Admissions Policies for Buckinghamshire schools](#).

3.8 Home to school transport provision in specific circumstances

There may be specific circumstances where Council funded travel assistance could be provided. These are provided at the Council's discretion and are outlined below:

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 an out of county school that can be treated as if it were a Buckinghamshire School for transport purposes (subject to the normal school transport eligibility criteria). We call these schools "Equivalent Schools." An Equivalent School is the nearest out of county school where most parents/carers in a specific area have in the previous year chosen to apply to and have been allocated a place. Transport is provided there as it is closer than a Buckinghamshire school. A list of these out-of-county Equivalent Schools will be published on the Buckinghamshire Council website each year in time for the annual admissions process. Currently the out of county Equivalent Schools are Icknield School, Lord Williams School and Wheatley Park School, all of which are in Oxfordshire.

b) Reception intake (outlined in section 2: Under statutory school age 0-4 years)

c) The pupil will be attending a linked junior/combined school

A linked junior/combined school is a school that has an existing arrangement with an infant school within the catchment area. The school gives priority in their admissions to pupils applying from the linked infant school. If a catchment resident pupil is attending an infant school, and they make an application to the linked junior/combined school, then transport will be provided even when this is not the nearest school, subject to the normal school transport eligibility criteria. Transport would also be provided to the nearest suitable school (subject to the normal school transport eligibility criteria).

d) pre-existing primary transport serves the pupil's local area

At primary school age, where there is established school transport to the catchment primary school, travel assistance will be provided to that school, subject to the normal school transport eligibility criteria. The catchment school that transport is provided to may not be the nearest school to the pupil's home, but it will be the nearest catchment school if there is more than one.

e) Other exceptional circumstances

Parents/carers of pupils who do not meet the eligibility criteria above, may have reasons why they think their child should be provided with travel assistance, other than a), b), c) or d) above, which they want the Council to consider. The Council has a 2 stage appeal process for parent/carers to challenge decisions about transport eligibility. See **10.22 How to challenge a decision**.

Each appeal must be made in writing. The appeal will be considered **by the Transport Exceptions Panel** and **transport travel assistance** may be provided at the discretion of the Council.

Discretionary **travel** assistance will be:

- dealt with on a case-by-case basis
- granted for a set period of time **and will end after that time**
- is subject to review more frequently than other circumstances
- may cover the whole cost of transport provision or be a contribution to the cost of the travel assistance

3.9 Criteria for home to school transport for pupils with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) or mobility issues

Pupils who have SEND or mobility issues may require assistance with getting to school or to another educational setting. This may be over and above the provision made for other pupils. Pupils with SEND who attend their nearest suitable school/setting and satisfy the distance, unsafe walking route or low income assessment criteria set out above are eligible for Council funded travel assistance.

Having an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) does not automatically mean that a child will be eligible for travel assistance.

A pupil with an EHCP will not usually be provided with Council funded travel assistance unless they meet the statutory eligibility criteria, or they live within the statutory walking distance limits and the pupil has a special educational need, disability or mobility issue which prevents them from walking to school in reasonable safety, even if accompanied.

The Council considers the individual needs of pupils, including professional advice, and will consult with parents/carers and teachers about travel needs and assistance. Where appropriate the pupil will also be consulted.

The Council will take the following into account when determining eligibility for transport assistance for pupils with SEND:

- distance to nearest suitable school
- medical needs
- behaviour that challenges, impacting on reasonable safety
- mobility issues
- whether the pupil is able to walk to school in reasonable safety if accompanied by their parent/carer
- vulnerability (including age, young parents and those at risk of disengaging from employment, education or training)
- low income family criteria
- practicality

This list is for guidance only, and satisfying one or more of these factors does not automatically support eligibility for entitlement to Council funded travel assistance.

When determining the most appropriate type of travel assistance for pupils with SEND, the Council will consider the following:

- age of the pupil
- nature and severity of the pupil's SEND
- availability of public transport
- length and nature of the journey
- most cost-effective mode of transport
- safety of handover arrangements
- travel training readiness
- pupil's ability to use public transport independently

3.10 Elective Home Education

Where parents/carers decide to provide Home Education for their children instead of sending them to a school, this is called [Elective Home Education \(EHE\)](#). In the case of EHE, no assistance will be available from the Council in connection with any transport need arising.

3.11 Education other than in school (EOTIS)

Education other than in school (EOTIS) must be agreed by the Council. While these pupils/students will not be eligible for Council funded travel assistance under school transport legislation, these cases can be brought forward by exception to be considered for travel assistance. If travel assistance is agreed, the Council will offer the most cost-effective form of travel assistance. This is likely to be in the form of a Personal Transport Budget.

Where the Council arranges for a pupil/student to have education other than in a school, the Council will provide transport subject to the normal eligibility criteria as detailed in section 3.9 of this Home to School Transport Policy.

4. Non-compulsory statutory school age (16 to 19 years) - Mainstream and SEND

Under national legislation, students are required to be in education, employment, or training until their 18th birthday. This could involve staying in full-time education in school/college, starting an apprenticeship or traineeship, or spending 20 hours or more a week working or volunteering while in part-time education or training. There has not, however, been any change to compulsory statutory school age which ends at the end of the academic year in which the student turns 16.

Under the current law, there is no automatic entitlement to Council funded transport from home to school or to another educational setting once a student is 16 and over. However, the Council is required to facilitate the attendance of all those of sixth form age i.e. those students over compulsory school age who started their programme of learning before their 19th birthday. This may involve travel assistance, but the Council does not need to provide this assistance free of charge. Responsibility for attendance lies with the student and their parents/carers.

Where a student with SEND starts a new course at aged 19 or older and is assessed by the integrated SEND team-service as eligible for Council-funded travel assistance, any transport travel assistance which is necessary to facilitate attendance must be free of charge i.e. fully Council funded, as they are Adult Learners. More information is provided in our [Post-16 Transport Policy Statement](#).

5. Post-16 Transport Policy Statement

The Council has a duty to prepare and publish an annual Transport Policy Statement. This statement specifies the arrangements for transport that the Council considers it necessary to make in order to facilitate the attendance of sixth form students receiving education or training.

The [Post-16 Transport Policy Statement](#) includes information on:

- fares, passes and travel cards
- travel assistance for mainstream-students without an EHCP including the Spare Seats Scheme
- travel assistance for students with SEND
- financial hardship
- bursaries
- independent travel training

This Post-16 Transport Policy Statement takes account of the [Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice 0 to 25 years](#).

6. Support for students with SEND 19-25 years

The Council outlines the support available to students aged 19 to 25 with SEND in the Post-16 Transport Policy Statement described above.

7. Personal Transport Budgets and mileage claims for pupils/students with SEND

7.1 Personal Transport Budgets

Families of pupils/students of all ages with SEND who are eligible for transport can apply for a Personal Transport Budget. This is awarded at the Council's discretion to support the pupil or student to travel from home to their school or educational setting.

A Personal Transport Budget is paid on the assumption that a pupil of statutory school age attends their school/educational setting 190 days a year (as determined by the government definition of a school year); or for students who are over 16 years old, that they attend a full-time programme of learning that is at least 540 guided learning (planned and funded) hours per year.

If a pupil or student receives a Personal Transport Budget part way through the school year, or attends school or learning on a part-time basis, the total payment ~~is on a pro-rata basis~~ is adjusted to account for the reduced amount of time that a parent/carer ~~would be~~ is responsible for transport arrangements.

What is a Personal Transport Budget?

A Personal Transport Budget allows families to have the freedom and flexibility to make their own travel arrangements rather than travelling on Council organised transport. A Personal Transport Budget is awarded at the discretion of the Council. It is a sum of money to support the pupil or student to travel from home to their school or educational setting. It is not a short-term alternative while a transport application is being processed.

A Personal Transport Budget could be used in many ways, including:

- to pay for fuel and/or running costs on a family vehicle that is used to transport a pupil or student to school/educational setting
- lease a vehicle to use if the family don't have one
- paying for a shared taxi with other pupils or students
- paying for another person to take a sibling to school to free a parent/carer up to transport the pupil or student with SEND
- buying travel passes for other children in the family so that they can travel to and from school, allowing the parent/carer to transport the pupil or student with SEND
- paying for childcare for another child to allow a parent/carer to take the pupil or student with SEND to school/educational setting
- working with the school to join up transport options with other parents (e.g. car share), encouraging a sense of community

~~The above list is not exhaustive and~~ Personal Transport Budgets can be used for any non-Council provided transport service. This means for, example, a public transport bus pass, commercially provided closed school bus pass or rail pass. A Personal Transport Budget cannot be used for Council organised transport services, for example ~~the Council's Spare Seats scheme or~~ to pay for Council arranged transport for an annual fee.

All eligible pupils/students for whom a Personal Transport Budget request is made will have their application assessed. We will take into consideration any cost to the Council of arranging the transport and will make a best value assessment based on the cost of council arranged transport as well as the specific needs of the pupil/student.

In exceptional circumstances, considered on a case by case basis, ~~where it is a cost-effective solution the Council will offer a~~ Personal Transport Budget ~~may be offered~~ to the parent/carer ~~of mainstream (non-~~

~~SEND~~) a pupil without an EHCP who is eligible for Council funded travel assistance. The Personal Transport Budget is offered as an alternative to Council ~~organised~~ arranged transport. ~~Please also see section 7.1 on Personal Transport Budgets.~~

Conditions of use for Personal Transport Budgets

If a parent/carer uses the Personal Transport Budget to employ someone (e.g. for childcare), then they will be responsible for complying with relevant rules regarding Tax and National Insurance, Employment Law, Insurance, Health and Safety or any other relevant rules or legislation in force at that time. In addition, parents/carers should make relevant and appropriate checks on whether employed staff have current Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) certificates; and parents/carers should arrange or pay for those checks if directly employing an individual who doesn't have one.

Similarly, if a parent/carer uses the Personal Transport Budget to enter into contracts with organisations e.g. after school/extra-curricular clubs, or individuals, the parent/carer would be responsible for complying with the terms and conditions of those contracts. This may include payment arrangements or notice of cancellation.

Personal Transport Budgets cannot be used in the following circumstances:

- to buy or utilise space on transport services from the Council
- for any purpose that does not enable the pupil or student to travel to/from the school/educational setting
- to travel to activities other than the educational setting, for example work experience
- for any activity that is illegal, unlawful, or unsafe
- for other purposes that may bring the Council into disrepute

To apply for a Personal Transport Budget the pupil/student will need to:

- live within the area where Buckinghamshire is the local council
- have an Education, Health and Care Plan
- attend the school/s or educational setting/s outlined in the Education, Health and Care Plan. See section 10.2 for further information
- comply with the eligibility criteria described in section 3.9

All children with an Education, Health and Care Plan in the same family would be considered when agreeing the amount awarded via a Personal Transport Budget. There may be some circumstances where it is appropriate for a family to have one child travelling on Post-16 SEND Council arranged transport (and paying an annual fee), while the other child has a Personal Transport Budget. Where this is an appropriate arrangement, this would be discussed with the family. Where a pupil or student attends more than one educational setting, their eligibility for a Personal Transport Budget to each setting will be assessed separately.

Regular and proportionate checks will be carried out to ensure that Personal Transport Budgets are used appropriately, in accordance with the Council's Personal Transport Budget agreement with the parent/carer.

A Personal Transport Budget may be withdrawn in some circumstances or a reduction in the payment amounts made, including if:

- a pupil's/student's attendance falls below 90% (this aligns with the government definition of "Persistent Absence" in school-age children which is an absence rate of 90% and below). It would be recognised that attendance for some pupils may be affected by their medical needs,

and the details and evidence of this will be taken into consideration in determining whether to withdraw, reduce or reclaim a Personal Transport Budget.

- a pupil/student regularly arrives late at their educational setting in the mornings or in an unfit state to learn
- a Personal Transport Budget is not being used appropriately
- it is not cost-effective for the Council to continue providing the Personal Transport Budget
- it has been assessed that the pupil/student is no longer eligible for travel assistance
- there is a change to national legislation and/or the Council's policies

Agreeing the amount of Personal Transport Budgets

To determine the appropriate Personal Transport Budget amount the following factors, alongside discussion with the family, will be considered:

- the special educational needs and disabilities of the pupil/student
- the travel distance as measured by the Council
- how the pupil/student might travel to their educational setting
- the time the journey takes
- whether the pupil/student is able to travel alone or if they need to be accompanied
- the age of the pupil/student
- whether any specialist equipment might be required

The standard amount that would be awarded with a Personal Transport Budget is 45p per mile, using the shortest road distance as measured by the Council's transport software system. The cost of two return journeys per day of attendance at their educational setting (i.e. all four legs of the journeys) would be included in the Personal Transport Budget amount. Any variation to the standard amount will be considered as part of the pupil's/student's travel assessment. As a Personal Transport Budget can be used in many ways there is no expectation that the parent/carer will use the same route as measured by the Council.

There might be circumstances where a Personal Transport Budget is not appropriate. This could include where the Council can arrange transport at a lower cost and would take into account the specific needs of the pupil/student. This will be assessed as part of the application process. The Council will make the final decision based on all the available information.

More detailed information can be found on our [Personal Transport Budgets webpage](#).

7.2 Mileage allowance for pupils/students with SEND

Personal Transport Budgets have replaced mileage allowances. However, there may be exceptional circumstances where a mileage allowance could be offered on a temporary basis. These are assessed and offered to parents/carers on a case by case basis.

8. ~~Looked After~~ Children Looked After (under the care of the Council - all ages)

The Council is committed to supporting those most in need, ensuring that travel assistance is available to those who require it. It is recognised that ~~Looked After~~ Children Looked After face specific challenges and

barriers to achieving their full potential, and as corporate parents we are committed to reducing those barriers.

For ~~Looked after Children~~ ~~Looked After under our care~~ living in Buckinghamshire, ~~transport travel assistance~~ will be provided as follows:

- if a ~~Looked After Child~~ ~~Looked After~~ is educated at a school that is not the nearest suitable school for less than one term, ~~transport travel assistance~~ will be provided by the Council for this period.
- if a ~~Child Looked After~~ ~~Looked After child~~ is educated at a school that is not the nearest suitable school for more than one term, ~~transport travel assistance~~ will be provided by the Council for one term. During this term 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 Head Teacher of the Virtual School will be taken into account when senior officers consider any exceptional circumstances.

9. Fares, Passes and Travel Cards

9.1 Sustainable modes of travel

The Council has a [Sustainable Modes of Travel Strategy](#).

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.

9.2 Spare Seats Scheme

The Council contracts with companies to provide school bus transport for pupils who are eligible for Council funded transport. ~~At the Council's discretion~~ spare seats on these vehicles may be sold ~~where if~~ there are seats remaining after the allocation of seats to eligible pupils have been made. More information about the Council's [Spare Seat Scheme](#), ~~including detailed terms and conditions of the scheme~~, are published on our website.

Spare seats on Council provided transport are extremely limited, ~~seats are offered at the Council's discretion~~, and the Council may not offer spare seats every school year. All purchased seats are subject to the seat being withdrawn with 5 working days' notice if it is required for a pupil who is eligible.

~~On routes where spare seats are available and where applications are received by the advertised deadline, spare seats will be prioritised and allocated in the following order:~~

- ~~1. renewal applications~~
- ~~2. looked After Children or former Looked After Children who have been adopted~~
- ~~3. pupils/students with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) who have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP)~~
- ~~4. children of Armed Forces personnel in line with our duty as part of the [Buckinghamshire Armed Forces Covenant](#)~~

5. siblings of pupils/students allocated a place in priority 1 and siblings of eligible pupils travelling on the same route.

6. all others – on a first come first served basis from date of application

Detailed [terms and conditions](#) on the Spare Seats Scheme are published on our website.

The travel pass provided for this transport is the responsibility of the pupil/student. If lost or damaged, contact us online to [request a replacement](#) quoting a valid student reference number, name, address and date of birth. An administration charge will apply.

10. General Guidance

10.1 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. [Normal home address](#) is defined as being the address at which the parent/carer ordinarily resides and with whom the child normally lives.

In the event that a family has separated, travel assistance will only be provided from one address, if the eligibility criteria are met. ~~In situations of joint parental custody~~ Where there is a shared care arrangement, the home address would normally be that at which the parent/carer, in receipt of the child benefit for that pupil ~~resides lives with that pupil~~. 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.

In the event of a Court Order, a copy of the Court Order to demonstrate that the split is 50/50 will be required for our Transport Exceptions Panel to consider. However, the Court Order usually dictates the care arrangements for the child(ren) and does not compel a council to provide travel assistance from both addresses.

10.2 Educational placement for pupils/students with an EHCP

Parents/carers have the right to ask for a preferred school/setting to be named in their child's EHCP when the plan is first drawn up and when the Council amends the existing plan. Where naming the parent's preferred school/setting would be unsuitable for the pupil's/student's age, ability, aptitude or special educational needs, or incompatible with the efficient education of others or the efficient use of resources, the Council must name a different school that would be appropriate for the pupil/student.

There is no automatic [eligibility for entitlement to](#) travel assistance.

Where a parent/carer would prefer their child to attend a school that is further away from their home than the nearest school with available spaces that would be able to meet their child's needs, the Council will consider the cost of the two educational placements. Where relevant, this will include the estimated costs of Council funded travel assistance to each setting. If the Council determines naming the parent's preferred school would be incompatible with the efficient use of its resources, the Council may:

- name a different school that would be appropriate for the child's needs, which may be the nearer school, or
- name the parent's preferred school on the condition that the parent arranges and provides all of the cost of the travel.

This is at the discretion of the Council based on efficient use of resources. The decision will be made in line with the Council's legal responsibilities in completing the EHCP.

The Council will record the decision to name the parent's/carer's preferred school on the condition that the parent/carer arranges and pays for their child's home to school travel. The Council may review the school named in the EHCP if the parent/carer is later unable or unwilling to arrange or pay for their child's travel.

10.3 Medical needs while onboard transport

The driver and/or any passenger assistant are not responsible for the administration of routine medical aid or medication during the journey. If a pupil/student has a medical condition which would require the administration of routine medical aid or medication during the journey, the Council will make suitable transport arrangements in line with the pupil's/student's travel needs assessment. For example, the Council will make suitable arrangements for medical aid onboard transport where a child has complex medical needs requiring a **medical professional suitably trained person** to administer treatment or medication during the journey. The transport arrangements will be informed by supporting evidence from a **senior suitable** medical professional e.g. a consultant. Alternatively, the parent/carer may choose to receive a Personal Transport Budget and make their own suitable transport arrangements.

In the event of a medical emergency while the pupil/student is onboard transport, the driver will stop the vehicle where it is safe to do so. The driver and/or passenger assistant will call 999 and while they wait for paramedic assistance, they will follow the instructions given to them by the emergency operator.

Parents/carers are responsible for advising the Council of any changes to their child's medical needs which may affect their transport arrangements.

10.4 Change of address and emergency contact details

Parents have an obligation to notify the council when they move house. **See section 11 for the relevant team's contact details for pupils/students with and without EHCPs.**

If an eligible pupil or student moves to an address further away from the school such that their current school is no longer the nearest suitable school, Council funded travel assistance will be withdrawn from the moving date.

If the parents/carers apply for and are allocated a place at their nearest suitable school, the pupil's/student's eligibility for Council funded travel assistance will be reassessed.

If a pupil or student is confirmed as being eligible for travel assistance from their new home address to their nearest suitable school, it can take up to 15 working days to organise the transport arrangements. During this time, the parent/carer is responsible for ensuring school attendance.

Parents/carers must provide the council with up to date emergency contact numbers and email addresses. It is the parent/carer's responsibility to provide updated information where there are changes.

10.5 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 submitted in order to gain travel assistance, **or**

- if the family do not update the Council of changes that impact transport eligibility.

10.6 Students living outside of Buckinghamshire

Students who live outside of Buckinghamshire attending a school in Buckinghamshire should apply to their own Local Authority for assistance with transport.

10.7 Grounds of religion or belief

There is no eligibility for transport assistance for pupils on the grounds of religion or belief, except in relation to low income families (see section 3.5).

10.8 Transport during the school / college day

Travel assistance will not be provided outside of the pre-agreed timetable that has been pre-agreed by the Council.

Transport is only provided Monday to Friday. The only exception to this may be instances where weekend travel is required for pupils/students who are boarders at residential schools.

Transport is provided at the start and end of the normal school or college day. Transport will not be provided for journeys made during the school/college day.

Examples of circumstances where travel assistance will not be provided are:

- to enable pupils/students to undertake work experience, work placements, apprenticeships or traineeships
- to enable the pupil/student to attend any off-site provision arranged by the school/college
- to enable a dual registered pupil to attend a pupil referral unit
- to transfer the pupil/student between the main school/college site and a satellite site during the school's or college's normal day
- for induction, transition or taster days
- to take students home after extra-curricular activities or detentions
- for students who are taken ill at school/college to enable them to return home
- to enable students to attend medical or dental appointments

Transport will not be changed to accommodate examination timetables or individual college/course timetables where transport is shared with other students.

In all of the above circumstances the school, college or parent/carer, as appropriate, must make their own arrangements and pay for transport.

10.9 Transport timing

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/carers who are unable to be home at the specified pick-up and drop-off times and location will have to make alternative arrangements.

Pupils/students **without EHCPs and who are** receiving mainstream transport assistance are expected to walk up to 1 mile to their pick-up point, with or without a parent/carer as appropriate. The pick-up point for **SEND** pupils/students **with EHCPs** may be a short distance from their home address.

Parents/carers are responsible for ensuring their child is at the pick-up point near their home and for accompanying their child to/from this point where required. Where necessary, parents/carers are responsible for ensuring they are waiting to meet their child at the setting down point on the return (homeward) journey.

SEND transport guidelines are [published on our website](#).

10.10 Transport for pupils/students with an EHCP **SEND transferring to a different school/setting or moving into Buckinghamshire**

Where an eligible pupil or student with an EHCP **SEND** receives Council funded travel assistance, this is arranged from **their home address or pick-up point** to the **designated named** school/setting only. When an eligible pupil or student with SEND transfers to a different school/setting **or moves to a new address**, Council funded travel assistance will be withdrawn and the pupil's/student's eligibility for Council funded travel assistance **from their home to the new school/setting** will be reassessed.

Where a pupil/student with an EHCP maintained by another Local Authority moves into Buckinghamshire, the EHCP will transfer immediately. After the EHCP transfers to Buckinghamshire, the pupil's/student's eligibility for Council funded travel assistance will be reassessed.

The parent/carer will need to make suitable travel arrangements while **the pupil's/student's** eligibility **to the new school/setting** is reassessed. If the pupil/student is not eligible for Council funded travel assistance **to the new school/setting**, the parent/carer is responsible for their child's travel arrangements, including the cost of those arrangements.

If a pupil or student is confirmed as being eligible for travel assistance **to their new school/setting**, their travel needs may be reassessed. It can take up to 15 working days from the date that the travel needs assessment is completed to make Council funded travel assistance arrangements. During this time, the parent/carer is responsible for school attendance.

10.11 Changes to school transport due to severe weather

School closures are listed on the Buckinghamshire Council website.

If a school decides it needs to close early or not open because of severe weather, we will attempt to advise parents/carers of these changes by email and SMS text messaging, using the contact details we hold. This may not always be possible, especially in the case of larger schools. The school **may also will** advise parents/carers of their procedures in the event of an emergency closure.

In severe weather conditions, the transport operator is the sole judge of whether to begin or complete a school transport journey, giving priority to the safety of the pupils/students on the vehicle.

Parents/carers must ensure that the pupil/student is appropriately dressed in case the journey to or from school is very slow or even halted in severe weather.

~~In the event that~~ If transport is not able to operate in the morning because of adverse weather conditions, but a parent/carer nevertheless decides to take the pupil/student to school, then they are expected to make their own arrangements to collect the pupil/student either at the end of the day, or at the time of early closure.

~~Council contracted~~ drivers are required to seek the safest route and may therefore make changes to the normal routes in order to stay on major roads, or to avoid specific hazards. They are instructed that they must only set-down pupils/students at specific set-down points. Where transport is not able to access the predetermined set-down point due to severe weather, passengers may be required to leave the vehicle at an alternative safe location.

~~Where these arrangements are made, Any~~ Problems with bus routes will be available online at the following links:

For school closures: [Council arranged transport](#)

For changes to bus routes: [Public buses](#)

Where a road is too hazardous for school transport in the morning due to severe weather conditions, the transport operator is under no obligation to attempt the afternoon ~~return journey run~~. Parents/carers ~~will~~ ~~would~~ be informed if this is the case so they can make alternative arrangements to collect their child from school.

10.12 Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) Checks

Enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks are carried out on all drivers and passenger assistants prior to them being employed on Home to School Transport contracts. Following a satisfactory check and appropriate safeguarding and other relevant training, an identity badge is issued to drivers and passenger assistants by the Council which is worn at all times as proof of approval to undertake the work. If a driver or passenger assistant cannot produce their badge, you should notify the Client Transport Team immediately on 01296 387 439 and not let your child travel in the vehicle.

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

10.13 Safety of Transport Arrangements

The Council will monitor the routes and vehicles used 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. The Council reserves the right to make changes to routes and types of travel as necessary.

If you are concerned regarding the safety of a route, you can report this by completing the school transport '[Contact Us Form](#)'.

10.14 Identification of new routes

The Council reserves the right to review all routes in light of any changes to the [Admissions Policies](#), ~~changes to highways infrastructure~~, or areas of new housing. If such changes mean that a pupil/student

will no longer be eligible for Council funded travel assistance, then they will be given one **half term's month's** notice from the date of notification to the parent/carer before Council funded travel assistance is withdrawn.

Examples of changes **could** include the building of new roads or housing developments, opening of new or repairs to existing footpaths, **opening of a new school closer to the pupil's/student's home address**, or changes to the safety of a route as determined by the Council.

10.15 Journey Times

The Council will make every effort to ensure that travelling times to and from school are a maximum of:

- 45 minutes each way at primary school age;
- 75 minutes each way at secondary school age

The distances involved mean that some pupils/students will have longer journeys. As return journeys are not constrained by specific times 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.**

Parents/carers will receive a schedule of journey pick up times and will be notified if there are any changes.

10.16 Data Protection

The Data Protection Act 2018 and UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR) regulates the way we use your personal information.

You provide this information when you seek services from or come into 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 we regularly review our compliance.

~~The Council employs a Data Protection Officer.~~ Our data protection policy can be found here: [data protection](#)

10.17 Parents/carers of pupils or students with SEND who are not at home

In the event that parents/carers of pupils/students with SEND are not at home when the pupil/student is returning from school, the driver or passenger assistant will notify the Council's Client Transport team to seek advice. Where possible, they will continue their route and will make a return visit to the family home to check if the parent or carer has returned.

If the parent/carer has not returned by the end of the route, the driver or passenger assistant will contact the Client Transport team to inform them of the situation. The Client Transport team 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 leave the pupil/student with an appropriate adult. In all cases, a note will be left for the parent/carer containing details of who they should contact and the whereabouts of the pupil/student.

If an incident happens after 5pm Monday to Thursday, and after 4.30pm on a Friday, contact will be made with the Social Care Emergency Duty Team. All incidents will be recorded and considered by the Council.

10.18 Passenger Assistants for pupils/students with SEND

Passenger assistants are responsible for the supervision of pupils/students to and from school. They will oversee the pupil's/student's conduct and safety in such a way that the driver is able to drive the vehicle safely. The role of the passenger assistant is to help the driver to ensure the pupil/student can access their transport provision in a safe and appropriate way.

The needs of each individual pupil/student will be assessed to determine whether they will require supervision by a passenger assistant. There is no minimum and maximum age that determines whether a passenger assistant is required.

Passenger assistants receive training to understand the needs of pupils/students placed in their care. All Council passenger assistants are subject to an Enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check. SEND transport guidelines are [published on our website](#).

We understand change can be unsettling for some pupils/students and we will do our best to minimise changes. Every effort will be made to ensure that the same passenger assistant and driver continue to transport a pupil/student. This may not always be possible and changes may need to be made, for example as a result of staff unavailability/staff turnover/contract renewals.

The passenger assistant is not responsible for the administration of routine medical aid/medication during the journey. If an eligible pupil/student has a medical condition which will require the administration of routine medical aid/medication during the journey, the Council will make suitable transport arrangements. Alternatively, the parent or carer could choose to receive a Personal Transport Budget and arrange their own transport.

10.19 Residential Schools

The frequency of transport for pupils/students in 52-week placements will be determined on a case by case basis.

The frequency of transport for pupils/students in a standard 40 week placement will depend on the number of weeks in the school calendar. The following numbers are for guidance only:

- 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

Where a pupil/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 is due to take place, the journey will be provided at an alternative date agreed between the Transport Officer and the parent/carers.

A parent/carers will be expected to make their own transport arrangements if the Council is notified less than 24 hours before the journey is due to take place.

10.20 Expected level of behaviour for all pupils/students

We aim to ensure the safety and well-being of all pupils/students travelling on Home to School Transport. All pupils/students using Council organised transport are expected to meet standards of behaviour that will ensure their own safety and that of other passengers. The Council will work in partnership with schools and other educational settings to promote appropriate standards of behaviour and pupils/students being transported will be expected to follow the same behaviour codes as they do when in school or other educational settings. Behaviour that does not meet our standards will be monitored and appropriate action taken.

When behaviour first becomes an issue dialogue with the parents/carers and the school/educational setting will begin, with a view to resolving issues prior to any further action being taken. If the issues are not resolved, parents/carers will be notified when transport will be suspended or withdrawn, giving 5 working days' notice of the suspension/exclusion. This will take the form of a written warning letter, suspension or withdrawal letter. If an incident is of a serious nature the Council reserves the right to withdraw the pupil/student from transport immediately to ensure the safety of the pupil/student and others. In these instances the parent/carer will be notified.

The withdrawal or suspension of transport for a set period would be a matter of last resort. The length of the suspension or withdrawal from home to school transport will be dependent upon the seriousness of the incident.

The decision to suspend or withdraw transport for eligible pupils/students will take into account any special educational needs and disabilities the pupil/student may have that impact on their presenting behaviour. Where this is the case, the Council will work with parents/carers and the pupil/student with SEND (where they have capacity) to identify alternative solutions to safely transport them to their school/educational setting. As this is an exceptional circumstance, if an immediate solution cannot be identified a Personal Transport Budget may be offered on a temporary basis.

Parents/carers are responsible for transporting their own children during any period of suspension/exclusion from transport due to inappropriate behaviour that is unrelated to any special educational needs and disabilities. No refunds for transport provided under the Spare Seats Scheme will be made during this period.

Behaviour that falls below the required standard includes that which is likely to significantly offend or endanger others, including, but not limited to:

- serious damage to the vehicle by the pupil/student
- actions which may constitute a health and safety risk to themselves or others
- assaults on others
- verbal, written or online abuse of other people including but not limited to swearing, taunting, racist, sexist, transphobic or homophobic comments, threatening behaviour
- incitement of others to engage in misbehaviour
- making repeated malicious false allegations of mistreatment requiring investigation
- serious misuse of a travel pass including allowing others to use their travel pass
- failure to comply with the reasonable instructions of the driver, passenger assistant, Council officer, or authorised member of school / establishment staff

During the period of suspension or withdrawal, it is expected that parents/carers take steps to address the behaviour. The parent/carer, pupil/student (where reasonable) and school/educational setting will be consulted on arrangements for the return to transport.

Parents/carers who wish to appeal a decision taken to suspend or withdraw transport should follow the process outlined in the suspension or withdrawal notification letter. This will enable a review of the case.

Parents/carers are expected to meet similar standards of behaviour and maintain respectful communication to ensure their own safety and that of our transport crews and passengers.

More detailed information is provided in the Council's school transport [behaviour protocol](#) and [terms and conditions of travel](#).

10.21. Application and Review Process

Application process

For enquiries about school transport eligibility for pupils/students with EHCPs please contact your named [Education, Health and Care Coordinator](#) or the SEND Service at ehcenquiries@buckinghamshire.gov.uk

For all other pupils, school transport eligibility is assessed and confirmed by the Admissions and Transport Team, who invite the parent/carer of eligible pupils to apply for school transport via an online portal. Enquiries about school transport eligibility can be made using the [Admissions and school transport 'Contact us' form](#).

Find out more about the [free school transport process](#).

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. As pupils/students build their travel independence, their transport provision may change e.g. moving from a shared minibus to using a Council funded public transport pass.

Transport will be discussed at EHCP annual review meetings and a decision taken on whether an eligibility review is needed.

All pupils/students who receive travel assistance 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;
- following a change in circumstances e.g. new school/educational setting or home address.

If during the course of any school year the Council determines that the provision of home to school transport does not need to be provided any longer, it will stop ~~at the end of the term in which~~ one month after the decision is made.

10.22 How to challenge a decision

Concerns about transport arrangements

Transport arrangements are based on the Council's assessment of the young person's individual transport needs and relate to how their transport is delivered. Examples include the type of vehicle, number of passengers, use of a passenger assistant.

If you have a concern about your child's transport arrangements, you should [contact the Client Transport Team](#) in the first instance. If your concern is not resolved, please see section 10.23 on How to make a Home to School Transport complaint.

Appeals about transport eligibility

Transport eligibility relates to whether the child or young person:

- has a legal right to have transport provided, or,
- meets Buckinghamshire Council's criteria for exceptional reasons to have transport provided.

The Council has a 2 stage appeal process for young people and parents/carers to challenge a decision about transport eligibility.

Stage 1 – Review by a senior officer/officer panel

Parents/carers have 20 working days to request a review of our decision about home to school transport eligibility. Parents/carers should write to us, detailing why the decision should be reviewed, giving details of any personal/family circumstances, and including all supporting evidence to be considered for example, evidence from a medical professional. In most cases the parent/carer will be asked to complete a form for further information. The parent/carer will receive an acknowledgement when we have received their written request for a review.

The parents/carers of pupils/students with EHCPs should contact their named [Education, Health and Care Coordinator](#) or [the SEND Service at \[ehcenquiries@buckinghamshire.gov.uk\]\(mailto:ehcenquiries@buckinghamshire.gov.uk\)](#)

The parents/carers of all other pupils should write to the Admissions and Transport Team using the [Admissions and school transport 'Contact us' form](#).

The decision will be reviewed by a senior officer or via the Transport Exceptions Panel. The Transport Exceptions Panel meet throughout the year and is made up of officers from Children's Services, the Client Transport team and [the SEND Service](#).

Within 20 working days of receipt of their written request including all supporting evidence, parents/carers will be advised in writing of the appeal decision.

Stage 2 - Review by an Independent Appeal Panel

Parents/carers have 20 working days from receipt of our Stage 1 appeal decision notification letter to write to ask for it to be reconsidered at Stage 2, which is a review by an Independent Appeal Panel. Details of where to send the Stage 2 request will be included on the Stage 1 appeal decision letter. Within 40 working days of receipt of the parents/carers Stage 2 request, an Independent Appeal Panel will consider written and verbal representations from both the parent/carer and officers involved in the case. The Independent Appeal Panel 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
- if there are any other irregularities in the way the appeal has been handled

For further information please [contact the Admissions team](#).

10.23 How to make a Home to School Transport complaint

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

Formal complaints should be made through our [Feedback and Complaints Procedure](#).

11. Further information and key contact details

If you require further information or need help in making an appeal, please contact the relevant service as follows:

For pupils/students with EHCPs please contact your named [Education, Health and Care Coordinator](#) or the SEND Service at ehcenquiries@buckinghamshire.gov.uk

For all other pupils please contact the Admissions and Transport Team using the [Admissions and school transport 'Contact us' form](#).

See more information on [school transport on our website](#) and [the SEND Local Offer](#).

For impartial, confidential information, advice and support in relation to SEND transport, see [Transport to education provider - Bucks SENDIAS](#) and if necessary contact SENDIAS using their contact form at [Ways to get in touch with the SENDIAS team | Buckinghamshire Council](#)