

Home to school transport policy

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1. Introduction and definitions

Responsibilities for home-to-school transport

1.1 Parents are responsible for ensuring that their child attends school. [Section 7 of the Education Act 1996](#) requires parents to secure education of their children of compulsory school age either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

1.2 In certain circumstances the council will assist parents in carrying out this duty by providing access to transport.

1.3 This document explains who's entitled to free home to school travel arrangements and why. In the last section you will find [the criteria that we use to make decisions on travel arrangements](#).

1.4 We hope this document answers most of your questions about home to school transport. If, after reading it, you want to speak to someone, please .For SEND travel assistance team on 01582 548098 and for non-SEND education travel assistance team on 01582 548227

Aims of the policy

- To help parents by ensuring that their children can access education, and arrive in a good state to learn.
- To ensure that decisions on access to free home-to-school transport are made fairly and transparently.
- To ensure that all children and young people have the opportunity to develop their independence.
- To increase the use of sustainable transport and to reduce the use of private cars.

Definitions

Statutory school age

In Luton we define this as 5 to 16 years old, or, for transport purposes, a child in the Reception year, approaching 5 years old, who's already attending an infant or primary school

Suitable school

A school with places available in the relevant year group that meets the child's needs. Travel arrangements will only ever be made to the nearest suitable school. We regard a maintained school with places available as a suitable school.

Nearest suitable school

The local catchment school or, if this is full, then the next nearest school with places available. Transport may be provided to another maintained school if it is physically nearer than the catchment school.

If a pupil has been permanently excluded from school, or has had a managed move suggested by a school, the nearest suitable school becomes the next nearest school (or pupil referral unit/alternative provision if necessary) that can offer the child a place, or the school identified under the In-Year Fair Access protocol.

Statutory distance

Where the distance from home to the nearest suitable school is:

- greater than 2 miles for children up to age 8

From September 2007 all primary school age pupils (aged 5 to 11) who receive free school meals (FSM), or whose parents receive maximum Working Tax Credit, will qualify for free transport if they live more than 2 miles away from their nearest suitable school.

- greater than 3 miles for children aged 8 and over

From September 2008 all secondary school pupils (aged 11 to 16) who receive free school meals, or whose parents receive maximum working tax credit, will qualify for free transport to any one of their three nearest suitable schools, providing the school they attend is more than 2 miles and less than 6 miles from their home.

Where a parent wants their child educated in accordance with their religion or belief, secondary pupils aged 11 to 16 who receive FSM, or whose parents receive maximum Working Tax Credit, qualify for free transport to their nearest suitable school where they live more than 2 miles but not more than 15 miles from the school.

Faith school

A faith school is a school that the Secretary of State for Education has legally designated as having a religious character.

2. General policies

Introduction

2.1 The policies in this section are relevant to all children living in Luton who are of statutory school age ([see definition](#)).

Does my child qualify for home-to-school transport?

2.2 The council will make travel arrangements free of charge to your child's nearest suitable school ([see definition](#)) where there is a place available, as long as:

- your child has been admitted to the school
- the distance from your home to that school is greater than the statutory distance relevant to the child

How is this distance measured?

2.3 The distance is measured by the shortest walking route that is considered safe. Routes are measured from the front of the child's house to the school gate on well-lit roads and footways using a specially designed computer software package.

However, for high schools, the 6 mile upper limit to the three nearest schools and the 15 mile limit to a school preferred on grounds of religion or belief will be measured along road routes (see definitions section for further information).

What type of transport is provided?

Infant, junior or primary school pupils

2.4 If the distance criteria are met, primary school pupils are usually provided with a space on a school bus or mini-bus. Parents are responsible for ensuring that their child is at the pick-up point on time for the bus.

Alternatively, if a parent prefers to make their own arrangements for transport to school including walking or cycling to school with their child they will be reimbursed for mileage at the rate of 52.2p per mile ([see paragraph 2.28 for restrictions on claiming mileage for car use](#)).

Payments will be made at the end of each term following confirmation from the school that the pupil's attendance has been at least 95%.

2.5 If the distance criteria are met, secondary school pupils are usually provided with either a place on a school bus or a bus pass for use on local service buses. Alternatively, if a pupil chooses to walk or cycle to school they will be reimbursed for mileage at the rate of 52.2p per mile on the same basis as outlined in paragraph 2.4 above.

What if I want my child to go to a school that is not the nearest suitable school?

2.6 If you want your child to go to a school that is not your nearest suitable school, you should consider the oversubscription criteria carefully to assess whether you will get a place.

However, if your child attends a school that is not the nearest suitable school ([see definition](#)) he or she will not qualify for free home to school transport.

What if my child's nearest suitable school is full?

2.7 If the council cannot offer your child a school place within the relevant statutory walking distance, travel arrangements will be made to an alternative school with an available place.

Travel arrangements to the alternative school will remain in place to the end of year 6 for primary pupils or to the end of year 11 for secondary pupils.

Do I get additional help with transport as I am on a low income?

2.8 For transport purposes children from low-income groups are defined as those entitled to free school meals, or those whose families are in receipt of their maximum level of Working Tax Credit.

2.9 Children aged eight and above in primary school, from low income families, will have travel arrangements made where they live more than two miles from their nearest suitable school.

2.10 Children of compulsory school age who are 11 or over from low income families will have travel arrangements made to one of their three nearest qualifying schools, where they live more than two miles, but not more than six miles from that school.

2.11 Where a parent has expressed a preference for a school, and that preference is based on the parent's religion or belief*, then a child aged 11 to 16 from a low income family will also have travel arrangements made for them to the nearest suitable secondary school preferred on grounds of religion or belief, where they live more than two miles, but not more than 15 miles from that school.

* DFE guidance will be used to determine the definition of religion or belief for transport policy purposes.

2.12 If your child is not eligible for FSM, but you receive the maximum level of Working Tax Credit you must attach your 'Tax Credits award notice' to your application form.

What if I want my child to attend a school because of my religion or my belief?

2.13 Denominational transport will not be provided except for secondary pupils, aged 11 to 16, from low income families who will qualify for free transport to their nearest state funded denominational school within 2 to 15 miles of their home.

Low income is defined as pupils who receive free school meals, or whose parents receive the maximum level of Working Tax Credit

2.14 The child must have been admitted to the school on the basis of the family's religion or belief. Evidence of the parent's religious affiliation must be provided to either the school or the Education Travel Assistance team to support the claim for transport.

The parent will also need to provide documentary evidence to prove that they are in receipt of the maximum level of Working Tax Credit or that their child is entitled to FSM.

What about pre-school children?

2.15 Pre-school children attending their nearest nursery do not qualify for free travel arrangements. However if a child attends one of the groups for children with special needs, or has a resourced nursery place they may qualify for transport. [See the section on children with special educational needs.](#)

What if my child moves house?

2.16 If you move house within Luton and your child's school is no longer his or her nearest school, he or she will not be eligible for transport to the original school unless the child is in year 10 or 11 and the relevant distance criteria has been exceeded. However, we will not usually provide transport if the child is expected to travel for more than an hour each way.

What if we had no choice and had to move?

2.17 This might happen to:

- a family in temporary accommodation
- a family that has suffered an emergency, such as domestic violence or a fire
- a child that had to move if they become looked after and move to a foster family or into residential provision

Although in these cases the council will try to ensure the child does not have to move too far, it may be that after the move their school is no longer the nearest.

2.18 In these cases travel arrangements will be made if the statutory distance criteria is exceeded and one or more of the following apply:

- the child is in year 10 or 11 and still lives within Luton
- the child is looked after and the placement is likely to be short-term (up to 6 months)
- the Local Authority Transport Panel (LATP), comprising education officers and PTU representatives, believe that the child's well-being would suffer from a change of school

2.19 However, in all these cases the benefits of attending the same school will be weighed against the potential negative effect on the child of regularly travelling an excessive distance. We will not usually provide transport if the child is expected to travel for more than an hour each way.

2.20 Where travel arrangements are made, an appropriate date will be set to review the need for transport.

My child has been excluded from school. Will he or she receive transport to his or her new school?

2.21 If the distance criteria apply, travel arrangements will be made to ensure that an excluded pupil is able to attend:

- the next nearest suitable school
- pupil referral unit (such as [ACE@The Hub](#))
- alternative provision set up by the council offering them a place, or the school identified under the in-year fair access protocol

What if my child attends more than one school site?

2.22 If your child attends lessons at more than one site (for example, as part of the Campus Luton programme), transport between sites during the school day is the responsibility of the schools or colleges involved.

2.23 If your child is attending a pupil referral unit such as ACE@The Hub, they may qualify for travel arrangements even if the distance criteria do not apply. However it is the responsibility of the transport panel to decide if your child needs transport.

I have a disability/illness which means I can't take my child to school. Will he or she get free transport?

2.24 If a primary school child or a child with a statement of special educational needs (SEN) is dependent on a parent to travel to school, and that parent's disability or illness prevents them from reasonably doing so, travel arrangements may be made.

2.25 In these cases the transport panel will assess the family's situation and recommend travel arrangements if necessary. Where travel arrangements are made, an appropriate review date will be set.

My child does not have a statement of SEN but is unable to walk to school due to their special needs, disability or mobility problems.

2.26 Parents must produce robust evidence of their child's special needs, disability or mobility problems. The transport panel will consider this information and decide whether travel arrangements should be made.

My child meets the criteria for transport but I would prefer to drive him or her to school. Can I claim mileage for this?

2.27 If your child is attending his or her nearest suitable school and the statutory distances are exceeded, travel arrangements will be made for your child.

2.28 If you prefer to drive your child you may be eligible to reclaim mileage at the current agreed rate.

2.29 However, mileage will only be provided if:

- there are no spare seats on a suitable existing transport route
- public transport would be unsuitable because of the child's needs or age

2.30 Payments will be made at the end of each term following confirmation from the school that the pupil's attendance has been at least 95%.

Do I qualify for transport because my child is unable to walk in safety to school because of the nature of the route?

2.31 Where children live within the statutory walking distance of their nearest qualifying school, the council will make travel arrangements where the nature of the route is such that a child cannot reasonably be expected to walk (accompanied as necessary) in reasonable safety.

In assessing the comparative safety of a route, the council will usually conduct an assessment of the risks a child might encounter.

Requests for travel assistance, due to the nature of the route, will be considered by the transport panel.

My child has a medical problem/illness. Will he or she get free transport?

2.32 If the child's illness means that they cannot travel to school in their usual way, and if parents, friends or relatives are unable to help, transport may be provided. Transport must be recommended by the transport panel and be supported by a medical certificate.

2.33 The council will arrange the most suitable type of transport that meets the needs of the child. This is consistent with the council's aim to promote independence for all children.

2.34 When transport is allocated a review period will be set.

How do I apply for transport for my child?

2.35 [Fill in the relevant online application form here](#). If you complete a paper version, Education Travel Assistance team, Luton Council, Planning and Admissions, Town Hall, Luton, LU1 2BQ, unless your child has SEN, in which case you should [follow the procedure set out in section 3](#).

2.36 If you have any questions about your application you can contact 01582 Education Travel Assistance team on 01582 548227.

What if I'm not happy with a decision made about my child's transport?

2.37 In the first instance discuss your complaint with the Education Travel Assistance team on 01582 548227.

2.38 If you're still dissatisfied you can ask for your case to be reviewed by writing to:

- **Shaun Askins, Service Manager – Strategy and Sustainability** For cases relating to pupils **with** an EHCP
Email: shaun.askins@luton.gov.uk for cases relating to pupils with disabilities and special needs.
- Admissions & Planning Manager **Deborah Craig, Senior Education Officer**
For **students without** an EHCP Email: Deborah.craig@luton.gov.uk
- for all other cases

2.39 Alternatively, correspondence can be addressed to either officer and posted to: Luton Council, Town Hall, George Street, Luton LU3 3QB.

2.40 If you're still unhappy with the decision you can apply for your case to be heard by the appeals panel by writing to the above mentioned officers. The appeal panel will comprise of:

- a school representative
- a local authority officer (not involved in the original decision making process)
- a member of the Parent Partnership Service or an alternative parent representative

If you wish you can present your case in person. Parents can appeal if they feel that:

- the policy has not been applied correctly or fairly
- their case is exceptional
- there is additional information which has not yet been considered, and which may support their case for travel assistance

What happens if I am not present to meet my child from the bus?

2.41 If no one is present to meet the child at the planned drop off point the driver will:

- try to contact you or any other individual nominated by you - you must nominate two other responsible adults who can collect your child

- if this is unsuccessful the driver will contact the council offices - an officer there will then try to make contact with you and others nominated

2.42 If you, or your nominated responsible adult, are not present to meet your child at the normal drop off point on more than two occasions in one term, transport will be revoked. Behaviour

2.43 Before travel arrangements are made the child and parent will enter into a behaviour contract. This contract explains:

- the expected standard of behaviour of you and your child
- the implications of behaviour falling below this standard

2.44 If the child's behaviour affects the comfort and/or safety of the driver, escorts, or other passengers, you and your child will be issued with a warning.

If the child has an SEN statement this may need to be reviewed to identify whether the transport currently provided is suitable.

In extreme cases, if behaviour does not improve the child will be temporarily or permanently excluded from transport. In these cases the parent/carer will resume responsibility for making arrangements to transport the child.

3. Pupils with SEN and/or disabilities

Introduction

3.1 Children with special needs and/or disabilities are subject to the general policy set out above. This section covers further transport entitlements that are intended to assist parents with their duty to ensure that their child attends education.

3.2 The council applies the same guidelines when considering whether children with special needs and/or disabilities require transport as they do for other children. In the majority of cases, children with SEN are treated in the same way as other children.

However, where a child's special needs and/or disabilities means that they cannot travel to school in the same way as other children of the same age, the council may help the family make travel arrangements if this is necessary.

3.3 Some children with SEN and/or a disability may, by reason of their SEN and/or disability, be unable to walk even relatively short distances to school. The local authority will make suitable travel arrangements, if necessary, for these children even if they attend school within the statutory walking distance.

3.4 If transport is necessary, due to the child's needs, the council will arrange transport that meets the needs of the child. In making this decision the council will take into consideration:

- the nature of the child's needs
- his or her level of mobility
- how vulnerable the child is
- how far he or she travels

3.5 Mainstream travel arrangements should be used wherever possible unless tailored travel arrangements are required. The list below shows the types of transport available - the lower down the list the more tailored the arrangements.

For example, a travel pass is more mainstream, and an individual vehicle is more tailored. This is consistent with the council's aim to promote independence for all children, including those with SEN.

- 1) Walking or cycling including payment of walking/cycling mileage
- 2) Walking or cycling with an escort/parent, including payment of walking/cycling mileage for parent
- 3) A travel-pass for the pupil
- 4) A travel-pass for the pupil and parent/carer
- 5) A shared vehicle without an escort to a drop-off point
- 6) A shared vehicle with an escort to a drop-off point
- 7) A shared vehicle without an escort door-to-door
- 8) A shared vehicle with an escort door-to-door
- 9) Payment of car mileage for the pupil's parent
- 10) An individual vehicle without an escort
- 11) An individual vehicle with an escort

3.6 Transport provision for children with special needs and/or disabilities will be reviewed annually. For children with a statement of SEN, this will be done as part of the statement review.

Where possible the council, in discussion with the parent and school, will try to move the type of transport a child receives up the list above. For example, transport to a drop-off point rather than door-to-door. This is intended to help the child develop their independence.

What about pre-school children with special needs?

3.7 Children with special needs who are recommended for a resourced SEN place at a maintained nursery school by the authority's Early Years Panel may qualify for transport.

Children with special needs who attend the following groups may also qualify for transport:

- sensory group at Lady Zia Werhner School
- First Steps at Liverpool Road Health Centre
- opportunity group for hearing impaired at Icknield Primary
- other opportunity groups

All requests for transport for pre-school children with special needs will be considered by the Early Years Panel.

3.8 As early years children are below statutory school age the statutory distances do not apply and are not taken into account when making decisions about transport.

3.9 When making the decision the following factors will be considered:

- distance
- nature of the child's needs, for example whether the child requires special equipment that is difficult to transport
- whether the parent needs to transport other children to school at the same time

3.10 Where possible transport will also be provided for a parent, if they're attending a group with their child. However, the council cannot guarantee that this will always be available.

Will an escort be provided to supervise my child?

3.11 If pre-school children are travelling without their parents an escort will be provided. For older children a decision will be made on whether or not an escort is necessary at the same time as the decision about transport.

3.12 If an escort is necessary, and is not already provided, a parent or carer may be asked to act as an escort for their child. They would be reimbursed for this at the rate of 52.2p per mile.

What travel arrangements will be made if my child has a place at an independent special day or residential school?

3.13 If the child is attending the school named in his/her statement of SEN, and the local authority agrees that a nearer school is not appropriate to meet the child's needs, suitable travel arrangements will be made.

3.14 Certain levels have been set for different types of placement. If a child is attending a termly residential placement, transport will only be provided at the beginning and end of each term and at the beginning and end of the mid-term holiday.

3.15 If a child is attending a weekly residential placement, travel arrangements will be made to school on Monday and from school on Friday each week.

3.16 For pupils requiring a 52-week placement, the local authority will make travel arrangements up to a maximum of three return journeys per year.

3.17 If the placement is outside Luton the council will pay the cost of one parent attending one statement review per year.

I have received a mobility car on account of my child's disability. Is my child still eligible for home-to-school transport?

3.18 If the child qualifies for transport on account of their disability, and if there are no existing transport routes suitable for the child, parents may be asked to accept responsibility for transport. They would then be eligible for mileage payments at 52.2p per mile.

Decision making guide

Pupil name: [Click to enter text](#)

Pupil's address: [Click to enter text](#)

Date of birth: [Click to enter text](#)

School: [Click to enter text](#)

These criteria are used for all decisions on home-to-school travel arrangements. In each case circle the appropriate answer and note any other relevant information in the details box at the end.

Part 1: Does the child need travel arrangements?

Primary children

1 Does the child attend his/ her nearest suitable school?

Yes (Go to Q2)

No (Do not provide transport)

2 Does the statutory distance criteria apply?

Yes (Provide transport)

No (Go to Q3)

3 Are the child's special needs such that he/ she cannot reasonably travel to school in the same way as other children of the same age?

Yes (Transport Panel to consider case)

No (Do not provide transport unless criteria below are applicable)

Secondary children

4 Is the child from a low income family?

Yes (Go to Q5)

No (Go to Q6)

5 Does the child attend one of their three nearest qualifying schools where they live more than 2 miles but not more than 6 miles from that school?

Yes (Provide transport)

No (Go to Q8)

6 Does the child attend his/her nearest suitable school?

Yes (Go to Q7)

No (Go to Q8)

7 Does the statutory distance apply?

Yes (Provide transport)

[Click or tap here to enter text](#) No (Do Not Provide Transport)

8 Are the child's special needs such that he/ she cannot reasonably travel to school in the same way as other children of the same age?

- Yes (Transport Panel to consider case)
 No (Do not provide transport unless criteria below are applicable)

If a child has recently moved house and is now not attending the nearest school

9 Does the child still live in Luton and live further than the relevant statutory distance from their school?

- Yes (Go to Q10)
 No (Do not provide transport)

10 Is the child in year 10 or 11 or in a short term care placement or has the Transport Panel decided that the child would suffer emotionally from a change of school?

- Yes (Go to Q11)
 No (Do not provide transport)

11 What distance would the child need to travel and how long would this take*?

Distance [Click to enter text](#)

Time [Click to enter text](#)

* Transport should be provided unless the child would be expected to travel for more than an hour each way.

If a child attends a school on the basis of religion or belief

This also includes non-faith schools where the catchment area school is a faith school

12 Does the child meet both these criteria?

- Aged 11 to 16 attending the nearest state funded secondary school on the grounds of the family's religion or belief; and
- Meets the low income criteria

- Yes (Go to Q13)
 No (Do not provide transport)

13 Has the school admitted the child on the grounds of the family's religion or belief?

- Yes (Go to Q14)
 No (Do not provide transport)

14 Do the statutory distances apply?

- Yes (Go to Q15)
 No (Do not provide transport)

15 Is the school within the maximum distance policy?

- Yes (Provide transport)
 No (Do not provide transport)

If the child is pre-school age

16 Does the child have special needs and a resourced place at a maintained nursery or attends another listed group?

- Yes (Go to Q17)
- No (Do not provide transport)

17 Can the parents reasonably be expected to transport the child?

Factors to consider here include:

- distance
- nature of the child's needs, for example does the child require special equipment making travel difficult?
- does the parent need to transport other children to school at the same time, but, transport will not be arranged to suit parent's working arrangements?

- Yes, parent can be expected to transport child (Do not provide transport)
- No, parent cannot be expected to transport child (Provide transport)

If the parent has a disability or illness

18 Has a need for transport been recognised by the Transport Panel?

- Yes (Go to Q19)
- No (Arrange assessment)

19 Is the child of primary school age or does the nature of his/her special needs mean that they need accompanying to school?

- Yes (Go to Q20)
- No (Do not provide transport)

20 Is the parent's disability such that they cannot accompany the child?

- Yes (Go to Q21)
- No (Do not provide transport)

21 Are there any friends/ relatives/ neighbours that could help?

- Yes (Encourage parent to accept help from friends/ relatives)
- No (Provide transport)

If the child has a medical problem or illness preventing them travelling to school in the usual way

22 Is the parent/ carer able to transport the child?

- Yes (Encourage parent to transport child)
- No (Go to Q23)

23 Are there any friends/ relatives that could help?

- Yes (Encourage parent to accept help from friends/ relatives)
- No (Transport Panel to consider case)

Other details

Click to enter text.

Final decision

Travel arrangements made?

- Yes
- No

Part 2: What type of travel arrangement best suits the child?

All pupils except those with a temporary medical condition

Select the type of transport most suitable for the child. The least tailored type of transport possible should be chosen. Option 1 is the least tailored and option 10 is the most tailored.

- 1) Walking or cycling including payment of walking/cycling mileage
- 2) Walking or cycling with an escort/parent, including payment of walking/cycling mileage for parent
- 3) A travel-pass for the pupil
- 4) A travel-pass for the pupil and parent/carer
- 5) A shared vehicle without an escort to a drop-off point
- 6) A shared vehicle with an escort to a drop-off point
- 7) A shared vehicle without an escort door-to-door
- 8) A shared vehicle with an escort door-to-door
- 9) Payment of car mileage for the pupil's parent
- 10) An individual vehicle without an escort
- 11) An individual vehicle with an escort

Reason for decision

Mainstream: Primary school pupils are normally offered options 1, 2 or 5. Secondary pupils are normally offered options 1 or 3.

Pupils with SEN: All options above should be considered, depending on the child's age, the nature of his/ her disability, mobility, potential vulnerability and capacity to develop independence.

Click to enter text.

Pupils with temporary medical conditions

Circle the type of transport most suitable for the child. Choose the type of transport nearest the top of the list (option 1 is the top).

- 1) A travel-pass for the pupil
- 2) Payment of car mileage for the pupil's parent
- 3) A travel-pass for the pupil and parent/carer
- 4) A shared vehicle without an escort
- 5) A shared vehicle with an escort
- 6) An individual vehicle without an escort
- 7) An individual vehicle with an escort

Reason for decision

Click to enter text.

Part 3: Review

Decisions to be reviewed on: Click to enter a date

Decisions to be reviewed by Click to named officer

Signed* Click to enter text.

* Typing your name into this field is accepted as your signature.

Name Click to enter text.