

Children and Young People's Travel Assistance Policy

Warwickshire County Council



*Working for
Warwickshire*

Contents

1 Introduction

- 1.1 Purpose and scope
- 1.2 School admissions and travel assistance
- 1.3 Annual review and changes in circumstances

2 Parental Responsibility

- 2.1 Statutory duty of parents and carers
- 2.2 Accompaniment responsibilities
- 2.3 Changes, illness and travel granted in error

3 Applications for Travel Assistance

- 3.1 Examples of when an application may be submitted
- 3.2 Post-16 annual applications

4 Eligibility

- 4.1 Compulsory school age eligibility
 - 4.1.1 Eligibility summary
 - 4.1.2 Qualifying schools
 - 4.1.3 Nearest qualifying school
 - 4.1.4 Pupils with an EHCP
 - 4.1.5 Specialist nursery provision
 - 4.1.6 EHCP pupils accessing respite care
- 4.2 Extenuating circumstances
 - 4.2.1 Children in Care
 - 4.2.2 Fair Access Protocol pupils
 - 4.2.3 Alternative provision and off-site direction
 - 4.2.4 Managed moves
 - 4.2.5 Exclusions and suspensions
 - 4.2.6 Illness
 - 4.2.7 Residential schools
 - 4.2.8 Dual attendance
 - 4.2.9 Pupils educated outside normal year group
 - 4.2.10 Divorced or separated parents and carers
 - 4.2.11 Exceptional circumstances
- 4.3 Extended rights for pupils from low-income families
- 4.4 Post-16 eligibility
 - 4.4.1 General principles
 - 4.4.2 16 to 18 travel assistance
 - 4.4.3 16 to 18 contribution
 - 4.4.4 19 to 25 travel assistance
 - 4.4.5 Further post-16 considerations
 - 4.4.6 Supported internships

5 Statutory Walking Distance and Route Safety

- 5.1 Statutory walking distance
- 5.2 Pupils unable to walk due to medical needs
- 5.3 Safe walking routes

6 Forms of Travel Assistance

- 6.1 General principles
- 6.2 Public bus passes
- 6.3 Council school bus service
- 6.4 SEND independent travel training
- 6.5 Travel payments

6.6 Alternative travel assistance

7 Parent and Carer Information

- 7.1 Parental responsibility
- 7.2 Parent or carer medical needs
- 7.3 Pick-up and drop-off arrangements
- 7.4 Admissions appeal placements
- 7.5 Examination arrangements
- 7.6 Damage to vehicles
- 7.7 Training
- 7.8 Withdrawal of travel assistance

8 Appeals Process

- 8.1 Right to appeal
- 8.2 Stage 1 review
- 8.3 Stage 2 independent appeal panel
- 8.4 Appeal outcomes, Ombudsman, judicial review and complaints

9 Appendices

Appendix A Walking Route Assessment Process

Appendix B Other National and Local Support

1. Introduction

1.1 Purpose and Scope

Local Authorities have an obligation to provide travel assistance to entitled pupils aged 5-16 years in full-time education as set out in the Education Act 1996 (as amended). Warwickshire County Council ('the Council') is required to provide travel assistance to pupils resident within the administrative area of Warwickshire who are entitled under the law and this policy. This policy has been approved by Cabinet, complies with the relevant legislative framework, and will be reviewed and updated regularly.

The Council will provide travel assistance to pupils who meet the eligibility criteria set out in this policy. Assistance will be limited to what the Council determines to be necessary and suitable to enable the pupil's attendance at their education setting.

1.2 School Admissions and Travel Assistance

School admissions and travel assistance are administered separately. Admission to a particular school or the naming of a school or institution in an Education, Health, and Care Plan (EHCP) does not provide automatic entitlement to travel assistance.

1.3 Annual Review and Changes in Circumstances

Eligibility for travel assistance, and the type of assistance provided, will be reviewed at least annually and whenever there is a material change in circumstances, including but not limited to a change of home address or education setting.

When exercising discretion in the provision and form of travel assistance, the Council may take into account how the applicant travels, or is reasonably able to travel, for non-educational purposes such as social, recreational or personal activities.

2. Parental Responsibility

2.1 Statutory Duty of Parents and Carers

Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 requires parents to ensure their children of compulsory school age receive a suitable full-time education.

2.2 Accompaniment Responsibilities

It is the duty of those with parental responsibility to make suitable arrangements to ensure that their child is accompanied, as necessary, on walking routes to school, to and from pick-up and drop-off points, and/or at the address travel assistance is to and from.

Parents/carers are responsible for determining whether their child requires accompaniment and for making suitable arrangements. Where parents/carers are unable to arrange accompaniment and believe travel assistance is required as a result, the Council will assess whether accompaniment is necessary. This applies to all children of compulsory school age.

2.3 Changes, Illness and Travel Granted in Error

Any changes in circumstances that may affect a pupil's entitlement to travel assistance must be notified to the Council in writing. For pupils under 18, this responsibility rests with parents/carers; for those aged 18 and over, notification must be made by the individual or a person acting on their behalf.

In cases of pupil illness, unplanned circumstances or scheduled appointments requiring early departure from school, parents and carers are responsible for arranging suitable transport, regardless of the pupil's eligibility for travel assistance.

Where a pupil has been deemed eligible for travel assistance in error, the provision will be withdrawn after providing the parent/carer with one calendar months' notice.

3. Applications for Travel Assistance

3.1 Examples of When an Application May Be Submitted

An application may be submitted when:

- A family has moved to Warwickshire, and the pupil has been allocated a school place.
- A pupil is at the start of their school journey, such as going into Reception.
- A pupil's school or establishment has changed, and the family believe the pupil is eligible for travel assistance.
- A pupil's home address has changed, and the family believe the pupil is eligible for travel assistance.
- A pupil has a school named in Section I of their EHCP.
- A pupil is leaving Year 11 and progressing onto a post-16 establishment.

3.2 Post-16 Annual Applications

All post-16 pupils are required to apply every academic year.

4. Eligibility

4.1 Compulsory School Age Eligibility

The Education Act 1996 sets out the categories of children and young people of compulsory school age who are eligible for free travel assistance. The Council's policy is to provide travel assistance to these categories of eligible children in accordance with its legal obligations, and not otherwise, unless there are evidenced extenuating circumstances.

For the purposes of this policy, the terminology "priority school" means the same as the pupil's catchment school.

4.1.1 Eligibility Summary

To qualify for travel assistance, a pupil must meet criteria A, B and C, and at least one of criteria D1, D2 or D3.

A	The pupil must be resident in Warwickshire.
B	The pupil must be attending their nearest qualifying school.
C	The pupil must be of compulsory school age. This includes all pupils from the start of the academic year in which they turn 5 until the end of the academic year in which they turn 16
D1	The pupil must live more than the statutory walking distance from their nearest qualifying or priority school OR there is no route to the qualifying school which is less than the statutory walking distance and deemed as safe route to walk
D2	The pupil cannot reasonably walk to their nearest qualifying or priority school because of their special educational need, disability, or mobility problems (subject to an assessment of their needs)
D3	The pupil meets the conditions for consideration against the extended rights criteria AND OR • lives more than 2 miles from their nearest qualifying school or priority school • lives less than 2 miles from their nearest qualifying school or priority school and cannot reasonably walk due to their special educational need, disability, or mobility problems (subject to an assessment of their needs) OR

- | | |
|--|---|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • there is no route to school which is less 2 miles and deemed as safe route to walk. |
|--|---|

4.1.2 Qualifying Schools

A qualifying school falls within one of the categories set out below:

- Community, foundation, voluntary aided and voluntary controlled schools.
- Academies, including free schools, university technical colleges, studio schools and special schools.
- Alternative provision academies.
- Community or foundation special schools.
- Non-maintained special schools.
- Pupil referral units.
- Maintained nursery schools where attended by a child of compulsory school age.
- City Technology Colleges and City Colleges for the Technology of the Arts.
- Independent schools, if named in a pupil's EHCP.

4.1.3 Nearest Qualifying School

The qualifying school for a pupil is either the closest qualifying school (as per the shortest available route) to the pupil's home address, with places available or the pupil's priority school, that provides education appropriate to the age, ability, and aptitude of the pupil and takes into account any special educational needs that the pupil may have.

4.1.3.1 Admissions

When applying for a school place, parents/carers should consider the following guidance:

- If a parent/carer lists their nearest qualifying school as their first preference, but their child is offered a place at a lower ranked or nonpreferred school by the admissions service, they may be eligible for travel assistance.
- If a parent/carer:
 - lists their nearest qualifying school lower than the school offered, or
 - does not list their nearest qualifying school at all,
 and the child would have been offered a place at that nearest qualifying school had it been ranked higher, they will not be eligible for travel assistance.

4.1.4 Pupils with an Education, Health and Care Plan

Where a pupil has an EHCP, the school named in Section I will normally be considered their nearest qualifying school, unless otherwise stated.

Under the Children and Families Act 2014, parents/carers have the right to ask for a particular school to be named in their pupil's EHCP. If the Council concludes that naming the parents/carers preferred school would be incompatible with the efficient use of resources, the Council may agree with the parents/carers to name their preferred school on the understanding that parents/carers will be responsible for the costs of home to school travel arrangements. Should such an agreement be reached, the EHCP will be worded accordingly to make this position clear.

4.1.5 Specialist Nursery Provision

Free travel assistance will be provided to children in early years where:

- They are resident in Warwickshire;
- The pupil is attending the nearest appropriate specialist nursery provision and has a place confirmed by IDS (Integrated Disability Service);

and

- The pupil is aged 3 or 4 years old

4.1.6 EHCP Pupils Accessing Respite Care

The Council may provide travel assistance for pupils with an EHCP who access respite care to travel between their school and the respite setting. This support will only be available where the pupil meets the criteria for an “Eligible Pupil” as set out in this policy.

4.2 Pupils with Extenuating Circumstances

At times families and children face extenuating circumstances. In such circumstances, applications will be assessed in line with this policy, including consideration of statutory walking distance and available travel arrangements. However, the pupil’s nearest qualifying school will be determined as set out below.

4.2.1 Children in Care

For pupils who are CiC, Warwickshire residents and looked after by Warwickshire County Council, the school specified by the Social Care team will be deemed their nearest qualifying school for the purposes of travel assistance.

Requests for travel assistance for other CiC pupils who reside in Warwickshire will be considered on a case-by-case basis dependent on location and other circumstances, to ensure that travel assistance is always provided for those who qualify.

4.2.2 Fair Access Protocol Pupils

Where a pupil is a resident in Warwickshire and is allocated a school place through the Fair Access Protocol (FAP), the school agreed by the FAP panel will be treated as the pupil’s nearest suitable qualifying school for the purposes of determining eligibility for home to school travel assistance. This will remain the case for as long as the pupil attends that school.

4.2.3 Alternative Provision and Off-Site Direction

Where off-site direction or alternative provision is supported and/or commissioned by the Council, home to school travel assistance may be provided where both the Council’s Education Services and Transport Delivery Service determine that such assistance is necessary to ensure the pupil receives a suitable education.

4.2.4 Managed Moves

Pupils placed in a school by the Local Authority through a managed move may be eligible for travel assistance. Any such assistance will normally be funded by the Area Behaviour Partnership (ABP) and will be determined on a case-by-case basis.

4.2.5 Exclusions and Suspensions

If a pupil has been excluded and the Council decides that an alternative provision is a suitable education setting until the pupil is placed on a school roll, then the alternative provision will be deemed to be the pupil’s nearest qualifying school for travel assistance purposes.

When a pupil is suspended (temporarily excluded) from a school (but remains a registered pupil of that school) and attends an educational establishment that is not a qualifying school and is not within the statutory walking distance of their home address, this establishment will be treated as if it were a qualifying school for the purposes of assessment of travel assistance.

4.2.6 Illness

A child may be eligible for free travel assistance to a place that isn’t a qualifying school where they receive education at a place other than a school by virtue of arrangements made under section 19 (1) of the Education Act 1996 (which requires Local Authorities to decide the provision of suitable education for children of compulsory school age who would otherwise not receive suitable education for reasons such as illness).

4.2.7 Residential Schools

Where a residential school is named in Section I of the pupil's EHCP, suitable travel assistance will be provided to enable the pupil to attend that school, for example, on a Monday and Friday for pupils who are weekly boarders, or before and after school holidays for pupils who board full-time.

4.2.8 Dual Attendance

The School Travel (Pupils with Dual Registration) (England) Regulations 2007 clarify a child's eligibility for free travel to school in these circumstances. Where a child is registered at two qualifying schools which are not pupil referral units, the Local Authority's duty to provide free travel to school applies to whichever of the schools the child is attending on any school day on which travel is required. This means that travel assistance will be provided on the days that a child is attending their nearest qualifying school and/or their Priority Area school so long as the child meets the eligibility criteria for that school, but not on other days to any other school.

4.2.9 Pupils Educated Outside Normal Year Group

Occasionally, pupils may be placed in a year group below their chronological year group assumed by their date of birth. Pupils who are legally entitled to travel assistance will continue to receive travel assistance until the end of the academic year in which they reach the age of 16. This will mean entitlement for those of compulsory school age ends at the end of Year 10, and parents would be responsible for ensuring their child attends regularly throughout Year 11, subject to any separate entitlement under this or other policies.

4.2.10 Divorced or Separated Parents and Carers

Where parents or carers are divorced or separated and a pupil resides at more than one address, eligibility for free travel assistance will be assessed separately from each address, based on the qualifying school for that address.

Where the pupil's nearest qualifying school is the same from both addresses, free travel assistance may be provided from each address, subject to the normal eligibility criteria.

Where the chosen school is the nearest qualifying or priority area school from only one address, travel assistance will be provided from that address only, subject to eligibility.

4.2.11 Exceptional Circumstances

This policy sets out the circumstances in which the Council will provide home to school travel assistance. In exceptional cases not covered by this policy, the Council may consider discretionary transport, for example where there are emergency house moves beyond the family's control, significant mental health needs affecting travel, or SEND related barriers to school attendance. Discretionary transport is not an entitlement and will be considered on the basis of individual circumstances and supporting evidence. Any assistance awarded may be time limited and subject to review as circumstances change.

4.3 Extended Rights for Pupils from Low-Income Families

Pupils are considered to be from a low-income family if they are entitled to certain benefits, such as the family is in receipt of Universal Credit and earns less than £7400 a year (supporting evidence will be required).

When a pupil is from a low-income family, free travel assistance will be provided when:

- Pupils aged 8 or over but under 11, attending their qualifying school, if more than 2 miles from their home by the shortest available walking route
- Pupils aged 11-16, attending 1 of their 3 nearest qualifying schools, provided it is more than 2 miles (by the shortest available walking route), but not more than 6 miles from their home
- Pupils aged 11-16, attending a school that is more than 2 but not more than 15 miles from their home that their parents/ carers have chosen on the grounds of their religion or belief if, having regard to that religion or belief, there is no suitable school nearer to their home

4.4 Post-16 Eligibility for Travel Assistance

4.4.1 General Principles

Local Authorities do have a duty to prepare and publish an annual transport policy statement specifying the arrangements for the provision of transport, or other support, that the authority considers necessary to implement to facilitate the attendance of all persons of sixth form age receiving full-time education or training.

The Government's Raising of the Participation Age has not created any new entitlement to free or subsidised post-16 travel assistance. Pupils are not required to stay at school or college but can work, volunteer, or take part in an apprenticeship whilst continuing their education. Travel assistance is not available from the Council for those attending work placements or work experience.

Many pupils manage their own travel arrangements by walking or using public transport. Bus companies often offer their own passes at competitive prices, which may be the most cost-effective option.

The Warwickshire Post-16 travel assistance scheme is for pupils who are resident in Warwickshire only. Pupils living outside of Warwickshire should approach their own local council.

4.4.2 Eligibility for 16 to 18 Travel Assistance for Pupils with an EHCP

Local Authorities are not obligated to provide free or subsidised post 16-18 travel support.

Submission of an application for post 16 - 18 travel support constitutes an agreement between the applicant and the Council that the applicant/their caregivers will provide the required contributory payment.

A	The pupil must be resident in Warwickshire.
B	The pupil must be between the ages of 16 – 18 on 1st September within the relevant academic year of study - pupils will cease to be eligible from 1st September following their 19th birthday, even if they are continuing the same course.
C	The pupil must have a current EHCP or provide proof of learning difficulties and/or disabilities.
D	The pupil must be attending a course funded by the Government; support is not given to pupils paying fees for their tuition, or studying as part of a paid apprenticeship
E	The pupil must undertake at least 15 hours or 7 sessions of study per week for 39 weeks in an academic year*.
F	The pupil must be attending the nearest establishment to offer the required level of course**.
G	The pupil must live over 3 miles from the establishment, measured by the nearest available safe walking route from the pupil's home address***

* Any timetable which does not meet this requirement must be fully outlined in the relevant section of the pupil's EHCP and will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

** The nearest establishment will be the closest establishment (as per the shortest available walking route) to the pupil's home address that provides the majority or similar course subjects, and which is able to offer the level (not necessarily type) of course.

*** Unless the student's mobility needs mean that they would not be able to walk the relevant distance

4.4.3 16 to 18 Travel Assistance Contribution

The contribution rate is fixed regardless of the number of days travelling, the distance travelled or cost to the Council. Costs may be subsidised to reflect time already passed for those applying after the commencement of the relevant academic year.

Submission of an application for post-16 travel support constitutes an agreement between the applicant and the County Council that the applicant/their caregivers will provide the required contributory payment.

Failure to adhere to this agreement, such as by not making on-time payments, or not maintaining any arrangements agreed for the payment of sums in arrears, will result in travel assistance (including any contracted transport) being withdrawn following a 4 calendar weeks' notice period, and further action will be taken to recover any outstanding debt.

Those who breach the agreed payment arrangements will not be granted travel assistance in the following academic year unless the required annual contribution is paid in full and in advance of the commencement of assistance.

The contribution rate goes towards the cost of providing travel assistance and the Council funds the remaining balance. This contribution is required due to the high cost of travel support and the Council's limited resources, and it enables the Council to provide travel assistance to a greater number of young people; particularly those with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

4.4.4 Eligibility for 19 to 25 Travel Assistance for a Young Person with an EHCP

A	The young person must be resident in Warwickshire.
B	The young person must be between the ages of 19 – 25 on 1st September within the relevant academic year of study – the young person will cease to be eligible from 1st September following their 25th birthday, even if they are continuing the same course.
C	The young person must have a current EHCP or provide proof of learning difficulties and/or disabilities.
D	The young person must be attending a course funded by the Government; support is not given to pupils paying fees for their tuition or studying as part of a paid apprenticeship.
E	The young person must be undertaking at least 15 hours or at least 7 sessions of study per week for 39 weeks in an academic year*.
F	The young person must be attending the nearest establishment to offer the required level of course**.
G	The young person must live over 3 miles from the establishment, measured by the nearest available safe walking route from the young person's home address***.
H	The young person must be enrolled on a course of a higher academic level than was studied in the previous academic year or a continuation of a course.

* Any timetable which does not meet this requirement must be fully outlined in the relevant section of the pupil's EHCP and will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

** The nearest establishment will be the closest establishment (as per the shortest available walking route) to the pupil's home address that provides the majority or similar course subjects, and which is able to offer the level (not necessarily type) of course.

*** Unless the student mobility needs mean that they would not be able to walk the relevant distance

4.4.5 Further Considerations for Post-16 Learners

We would encourage the use of 'Motability' vehicles (etc) as a way of those with access getting to their education setting. However, such individuals are still entitled to apply for transport assistance under the policy.

Suitability of travel assistance will be determined by the Council – this will be based upon balancing reasonable costs and reasonable travel/waiting times and enabling the pupil to access their education establishment at the general start/finish times as stated on the establishment's website. This could mean that the pupil may not receive travel assistance for the quickest or most convenient transport.

Travel assistance for Post 16 pupils will be offered by means of public bus pass, Council operated school bus service, independent travel training, or a travel payment*. All pupils will be expected to meet at a vehicle boarding point or set-down point.

* Unless mobility needs are assessed as otherwise. Evidence will be required, and a Care Act Assessment requested.

4.4.6 Supported Internships

Supported internships typically involve a mixture of studying at a learning establishment and attending a work placement. Pupils may be eligible for assistance under the Council's post-16 schemes to the main registered base of the learning establishment only. Travel assistance will not be available to/from the work placement. The employer may offer support, or applicants may be able to claim further assistance through 'Access to work' funding.

5. Statutory Walking Distance and Route Safety

5.1 Statutory Walking Distance

The statutory walking distance is:

- Two miles for pupils under the age of 8
- Two miles for pupils aged 8 - 16 for those from a low-income family and meet the conditions for consideration under the extended rights criteria
- Three miles for all other pupils aged 8 - 16

Measurement of the safe walking distance is not necessarily the shortest distance by road. It is measured by the shortest route along which a pupil, accompanied as necessary, may walk in reasonable safety.

Streetlighting will be required to consider a route safe.

When measuring a distance that is over the relevant statutory walking distance, the shortest motorised route will be used to measure the distance. This route does not have to be deemed a “safe” walking route but is used to determine which is the pupil's nearest qualifying school.

Distances will be measured from the home address to the nearest school access point, please note this may not be the main school gate

5.2 Pupils Unable to Walk Due to Medical Needs

A pupil of compulsory school age will be eligible for travel assistance due to medical needs if they attend their nearest qualifying school and if the pupil could not reasonably be expected to walk to school because of their special educational needs, disability, or mobility problems even if accompanied.

Eligibility will be assessed on a case-by-case basis, using the information provided in the application form, the Council may also request further information. The Council will consider how the applicant travels (or is able to travel) for non-educational purposes, e.g. recreation, shopping, family visits etc.

A child may be eligible because of temporary mobility problems but due to the short-term nature of some mobility problems, it may not always be practicable for the Local Authority to make travel arrangements before the child has recovered.

Where a parent/carer believes their child is unable to walk to their education setting, they must provide relevant, up-to-date evidence to support this. This may include:

- Information from the parent/carer
- Evidence from professionals involved in the pupil's care (e.g. Educational Psychologist, Physiotherapist, Occupational Therapist)
- Information from the pupil's school regarding the distance to the education setting
- Relevant details from the pupil's Education, Health and Care Plan or Individual Healthcare Plan, where applicable

The Council will consider all submitted evidence when determining eligibility for travel assistance.

Not all children with the same condition will require or receive travel assistance. Each case will be assessed individually.

In determining eligibility, the Council will consider:

- The nature of the medical condition, including triggers and symptoms
- The likelihood and potential impact of the condition affecting the journey to and from school
- Any emergency interventions that may be required, such as the administration of medication to manage the condition

5.3 Safe Walking Routes

A pupil is eligible for free travel assistance to school if:

- They attend their nearest qualifying school or priority school
- It is within the statutory walking distance of their home
- The nature of the route means they could not be expected to walk there in reasonable safety even if accompanied
- There is no alternative route within the statutory walking distance that they would be able to walk in reasonable safety, even if accompanied

Statutory walking distance is the criterion which determines whether the pupil is eligible for travel assistance or if the responsibility rests with the parent/carer. It does not mean that pupils must walk the distance. It is the responsibility of parents/carers who live under the statutory walking distance to decide how to get their child to and from school.

A safe walking route is as defined by the Council. The walking route assessment guidance is contained within the appendices of this policy. When a parent/carer believes that the route from home to school is not safe, parents/carers can request a route assessment through the Council's website.

The Council has the right to reassess routes as and when required which may alter a pupil's eligibility. The distance from an address to a particular school may change over time as the road and path network alters. This could mean that the eligibility for travel assistance is withdrawn (4 weeks' notice will be given). The provision of travel assistance to a sibling or previous occupant of a property does not guarantee that future requests for travel assistance will be agreed.

All distances between a pupil's home and nearest qualifying school are measured using the Council's own software and not any other external measuring method. Distances will be calculated to the school and home point defined in this software only.

6. Forms of Travel Assistance

6.1 General Principles

The Education Act 1996 and this policy use the phrase 'travel assistance' because the form this takes will vary and often does not involve the Council providing the transport itself. The Council will determine what is appropriate in each case, taking account of its legal obligations, the needs of the applicant, safety considerations, the best use of the Council's resources, any expressed preference, and any other relevant matter.

All travel assistance will be reviewed annually. The Council reserves the right to change the travel assistance offer at any point during the year, if necessary. The Council also reserves the right to gain access to a pupil's attendance register record to check levels of attendance, and to speak with school staff and others to gain information about a pupil's home to school travel arrangements. Please see Warwickshire County Councils privacy notice [here](#).

Travel assistance for eligible pupils may include:

- Public bus pass
- Seat on the council school bus service
- Independent travel training
- Travel payments
- Alternative travel assistance

Travel assistance will be provided:

- At the start and end of the school day as per the published core hours on the school's website

- To and from pick up points as deemed safe by the Council and within the legal requirements of the Council, in many cases from recognised bus stops
- To the main site of the school that the child is registered at
- The Council will work to, where possible, one-way journeys being less than 75 minutes for secondary pupils or 45 minutes for primary pupils

Travel assistance will not be provided:

- To accommodate part-time timetables, inductions, or integration programmes (except as necessary to support children in receipt of provision under Section 19 of the Education Act 1996)
- For school trips, after school clubs or any other activities outside of the school's core hours
- When a pupil is ill and needs to be returned home urgently
- To sites that are not the pupil's main school campus

Extenuating Circumstances

In extenuating circumstances, the Council may consider it appropriate to arrange travel assistance at an alternative time of day for those where the pupil's EHCP states that they are accessing a part-time timetable. The pupil's EHCP must be clear that they are accessing a reduced timetable as a form of special educational provision for a minimum of one term.

6.2 Public Bus Passes

Wherever possible, the Council will provide a bus pass for a public transport service. The decision about the route and the pass issued is at the Council's discretion. Passes are only valid for one academic year.

6.3 Council School Bus Service

Where there is no public transport service available, the Council, wherever possible, will provide a bus pass to use a service operated under contract to the Council. The decision about the route and the pass issued is at the Council's discretion. The pass will only be valid to use on the relevant service and valid for one academic year.

6.4 SEND Independent Travel Training

Pupils with SEND from Year 9 to Year 11 will be given the opportunity to be assessed for independent travel training.

SEND pupils in Year 9 to Year 11 that are assessed as suitable for ITT:

- Travel assistance will be provided until ITT begins and during the training
- Travel assistance will be provided until such time as ITT is successfully completed, once completed then travel assistance, typically in the form of a bus pass, will still be provided if necessary
- Pupil's may be offered alternative travel assistance if they are unable to complete ITT due to their SEND
- The form of travel assistance will be determined following an assessment of the pupil's individual needs, safety, and suitability. Travel payments or a bus pass will generally be offered as the first option. If this is declined by the parent, carer, or pupil, an alternative of Independent Travel Training (ITT) may be considered. If the parent, carer, or pupil believes this option is unsuitable, the relevant team will review the case further

SEND pupils who are in Year 12 and above (16 to 25 years) who are eligible for travel assistance and are currently not in receipt of a bus pass, will automatically be assessed for ITT.

SEND pupils that are assessed as suitable for ITT:

- Pupils will be offered ITT, if parent/carer/pupil/young person refuses this offer, an alternative offer of a travel payment or bus pass will be offered. If parent/ carer/pupil refuses this, no further travel assistance will be offered

SEND pupils who are in Year 12 and above (16 to 25 years) only - If a pupil is assessed as unsuitable for ITT due to there not being a viable public transport route for them to access or as a consequence of their needs alternative travel assistance may be provided. The pupil's travel assistance will be reviewed annually. Evidence will be required, and/or a Care Act Assessment requested.

6.5 Travel Payments

A travel payment will be offered when a pupil is unable to access a public bus or a Council school bus service. The parent/carer or adult individual then assumes full responsibility for the travel arrangements and getting the pupil or themselves to their place of education on time and achieving good attendance (as per Government guidance, working together to improve school attendance, published August 2024).

Parent/carers have the right to refuse the option of a travel payment.

A travel payment is a payment that the Council will make towards the cost of a pupil's journey from their home address to their school/establishment. All travel payments are subject to audit and investigation.

Should a more cost-effective method of transport become available, the Council reserves the right to withdraw the travel payment by giving one calendar months' notice in writing.

Should a parent decide that they can no longer accept a travel payment, they must also give one calendar months' notice to the Council in writing.

Travel payments are calculated by:

- A set rate per mile as stated on the Council's website
- If there is more than one eligible pupil to be transported within the home the rate will increase by 25% irrelevant of the number of pupils
- Two return journeys per day
- Distance is measured from the home address to the school address as per the application submitted
- Distance is measured using the Council software, other measurement will not be considered
- Distance is measured by the shortest vehicular route; other routes will not be considered

There are two types of travel payments.

Travel Payments (DTP) - paid half termly in advance.

- For pupils attending their school regularly (above 85% attendance level)
- When travel assistance is required to one educational establishment only
- The pupil's timetable is set and remains consistent

Travel Allowance (TA) - form to be submitted monthly and will be confirmed by the school. Payments will be processed in line with the Council's payment terms.

- For pupils attending school less than 85% or
- When travel assistance is required to more than one setting or
- When a pupil's timetable changes regularly

*If a pupils attendance rate falls below 85% then the Council reserves the right to reclaim excess payments.

Please see the website for more information.

6.6 Alternative Travel Assistance

The Council may provide an alternative form of travel assistance where it is considered appropriate and will take into account any reasonable suggestions made by applicants. Where alternative arrangements are

requested, an assessment will be undertaken to determine the appropriate level of assistance. Pupils will normally be required to share transport and will be collected from and returned to a suitable pick-up and drop-off point unless the Council determines otherwise.

7. Parent and Carer Information

7.1 Parental Responsibility

The Local Authority will not provide travel assistance solely because parents/carers have not made such arrangements.

Parental reasons which are not usually considered sufficient grounds for being unable to accompany their child themselves are:

- Work commitments
- Working patterns
- Caring responsibilities
- Siblings attending other education settings
- Single parent families

7.2 Parent or Carer Medical Needs

If there is no parent/carers available to accompany the pupil along the route to school due to parental disability, eligibility for travel assistance will depend on the following criteria being met:

- Attending their nearest qualifying school
- Distance to school is under the statutory walking distance
- Evidence is submitted from a health care professional, supporting the inability to walk the appropriate distance to the school

Evidence will be required, and/or a Care Act Assessment requested.

7.3 Pick-Up and Drop-Off Arrangements

All pupils will normally be collected from and returned to a safe location near their home, typically a designated bus stop. Parents or carers are responsible for ensuring that the pupil is present at the safe location in sufficient time for the vehicle's arrival.

The Council will normally seek to ensure that all pick-up and drop-off points are located within:

- Up to 0.5 mile of the pupil's home address for pupils with SEND
- Up to one mile of the pupil's home address for all other pupils

Requests for door-to-door collection or reduced distances to pick-up and drop-off points will be considered on an individual basis, taking into account the pupil's needs and any relevant supporting evidence. This may include professional evidence, such as reports from a physiotherapist or occupational therapist, where appropriate.

Where a pupil is assessed as unable to reasonably access a designated pick-up or drop-off point, alternative arrangements may be provided.

Where alternative travel assistance is agreed, parents or carers remain responsible for ensuring the pupil is ready in good time for and is safely handed over to the transport provider. Transport staff will not escort pupils from the home to the vehicle unless it is clearly stated in the pupil's Risk Assessment

7.4 Admissions Appeal Placements

Where a family has been successful in obtaining a school place via an admissions appeal, travel assistance is not guaranteed and does not necessarily mean that the school appealed for is the pupil's nearest qualifying school.

7.5 Examination Arrangements

The Council is not responsible for travel arrangements to accommodate changes to settings' timetables or locations due to exams. Where exams take place at an alternative site, it is the responsibility of the education setting to arrange appropriate travel to and from that location.

Travel assistance will not be provided for attendance at revision sessions outside of the normal day for the whole setting, even where these are described as compulsory by the education provider.

The only exception to the above is:

- Where a pupil is receiving education under Section 19 arrangements; or
- Where an exam takes place on a day the pupil would not normally attend their setting (transport will only be provided at the usual start and end of the day)

The Council will not adjust transport arrangements solely in response to exam scheduling or staffing constraints within education settings. It is expected that education providers will make appropriate arrangements to support pupils, including supervision or timetable adjustments.

7.6 Damage to Vehicles

Where damage occurs to a transport operator's vehicle as the result of the actions of the pupil, a Specialist Transport Risk Assessor will investigate the incident. Repair costs will only be sought from the pupil's parents/carers if the Council reaches a conclusion that the damage was the result of a malicious act by the pupil, unrelated to any special educational needs and/or disability the pupil may have.

7.7 Training

All Home to School Transport drivers and passenger assistants will receive the minimum training as outlined by the Department for Education guidance [here](#).

7.8 Withdrawal of Travel Assistance

The Council has the right to withdraw travel assistance with one calendar months' notice if:

- A pupil ceases to be eligible or
- Travel assistance has been granted in error

8. Appeals Process

8.1 Right to Appeal

Where an application for travel assistance is refused, and/or where the travel arrangements offered are considered unsuitable, the parent or young person has the right to appeal the decision on the grounds of eligibility or the suitability of the arrangements provided by the Local Authority.

It is the parent/young person's responsibility to source and fund transport throughout the appeals process; the Council will not reimburse any costs incurred during the appeal process.

Appeals will be processed in line with published timeframes wherever possible. Please note that parents/carers of compulsory school aged pupils have a legal duty to ensure regular school attendance, and all pupils of non-compulsory school age remain responsible for their own attendance throughout the application and appeals processes.

Communication of the outcome of either a Stage 1 or Stage 2 appeal, will contain the below information when relevant:

- Whether they have upheld the Local Authority's original decision
- Why they reached that decision
- How the review was conducted
- The factors considered in reaching their decision
- Any other agencies or departments that were consulted as part of the review

8.2 Stage 1 Review

- Submit a Stage 1 Appeal form within 20 working days of receiving the Home to School transport application decision
- A senior officer will review the application and the submitted Stage 1 Appeal
- The Council will aim to have a decision and a letter outlining the outcome, within 20 working days of receiving the appeal request
- Should the Stage 1 Appeal process uphold the original decision, the parent/young person has the right to escalate the appeal to Stage 2

8.3 Stage 2 Independent Appeal Panel

- Written communication to request an escalation to Stage 2 must be submitted within 20 working days of the date of the Stage 1 Appeal decision
- A panel of 3 Local Authority Members (including the Chair) who are experienced in Home to School Transport but are independent of the original decision-making process will form the Stage 2 Independent Panel. Parent/carers can present their case to the Independent Panel. Should the parent/young person not wish to attend the hearing, the Panel may review the case in absence
- Local Authority Members will review all documentation pertaining to the Stage 1 Appeal, alongside any further supporting evidence submitted in relation to the Stage 2 request
- Parents/carers will receive a letter/email detailing the decision of the Stage 2 Independent Appeal Panel within 5 working days where possible

8.4 Appeal Outcomes, Ombudsman, Judicial Review and Complaints

Where a parent/young person believes that the Local Authority has failed to comply with the procedural rules or if there are any other irregularities in the way the appeal was managed, they have the right to complain to the Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman. If a parent/young person considers the decision of the independent panel to be flawed on public law grounds, namely illegality, irrationality, or procedural impropriety, they may apply for judicial review.

Should the two-stage appeal process be completed and be unsuccessful, no further application reviews or appeals will be held unless there has been a notable change in circumstances. Sufficient evidence must be provided to allow for a new application to be considered.

Parents of pupils with special educational needs who require support for this process are advised to contact SENDIAS (Special Educational Needs & Disability Information, Advice and Support) for assistance.

Matters such as the punctuality of a school bus, or a delay in replying to correspondence from a parent or young person will be managed as complaints. The Local Authority's complaints procedure which can be found on the website by visiting http://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/Local_Authoritycomplaints.

Applications and subsequent appeals will be processed in line with published timeframes wherever possible. Please note that parents of compulsory school aged pupils have a legal duty to ensure regular school attendance, and all young people of non-compulsory school age remain responsible for their own

attendance throughout the application and appeals processes. The Council may, in its discretion and depending on all the circumstances of the case, offer full or partial reimbursement in instances of serious undue delays to the Council's process(es).

9. Appendices

Appendix A - Walking Route Assessment Process

A.1 Introduction

Where a parent/ carer considers a route to be unsafe for the pupil to walk to their education setting, they can request for that route to be assessed by going to the Warwickshire Home to School transport website.

Road Safety Great Britain (RSGB) provides national guidance on how to identify hazardous routes and how to assess the safety of walking routes. RSGB guidance can be found [here](#).

Warwickshire has used the RSGB guidance as a basis for their safe route policy. RSGB guidance states that a route can be deemed a safe walking route where a footpath is not present or a step off is required on certain roads with low traffic flow.

The route is assessed by considering the relevant highway and traffic conditions, not personal circumstance. Routes will be broken into sections to ensure an accurate representation of conditions is recorded. It is assumed that pupils will be accompanied, as necessary. Parents need to determine whether their child should be accompanied from home to school and are under an obligation to ensure that this accompaniment is in place, unless exceptional circumstances apply (such as disability on the part of parents which means that they are physically unable to accompany their child, and no-one else is able to assist).

A.2 Overview of Route Assessments

- Routes will initially be assessed using online facilities (such as Google Maps/Earth, OS data) to determine whether there is a footway or roadside strip on the highlighted route.
- The assessment will be conducted by appropriately trained staff either employed by Warwickshire County Council or commissioned to conduct the assessment.
- If a clear outcome cannot be determined from an online assessment, then a trained staff member will visit the site and assess the route.
- Routes are assessed at school run times (8am to 9am and 3pm to 4:30pm).
- Varying weather conditions are not considered in the assessment as per the RSGB guidance.
- Once the assessment is complete a panel of three officers will meet to consider the recommendation. The panel will consist of a Head of Service (or a delegated Service Manager) from either the People or Communities Group and two other officers. A majority decision is required. A representative from the Traffic and Road Safety Group will attend to provide advice and support to the panel.
- The safety of routes will be reassessed at least once every 12 months unless no changes have been made to the route since the most recent assessment. Routes may be assessed earlier if evidence is provided of a significant change, such as new road layouts or housing.

A.3 Assessment Methodology

- If crossing is required and crossing facilities are not available, there must be sufficient gaps in traffic to cross safely as per RSGB guidance.
- Collision history information provided by the WCC Transport and Highways team will be correlated for the location, time of day and type of collision (if any).
- Where a road crossing facility is available, it will be assumed that the crossing will be used.

- Streetlighting will be required to consider a route safe, with a maximum distance of 40 metres between each streetlight. Routes will generally be adequately and continuously lit with no unsafe dark gaps.

A.4 Crossing Facilities

- Zebra, pelican, or puffin crossings or other crossings as defined by the Department for Transport.
- Pedestrian phases at traffic signals (including necessary refuges).
- School Crossing Patrols.
- Traffic calming (sufficient to enable safe road crossing).
- Pedestrian refuges.

At locations where there is no such facility, crossing points will be assessed to ensure there is a suitable crossing point with sufficient visibility and traffic gaps to cross in reasonable safety.

A.5 Factors Not Considered

When assessing walking routes, the Council does not consider an individual's circumstances – e.g., personal availability to walk with the pupil, or the fact that younger children or prams may impede walking. The Council also do not consider the following:

- Parental finance
- Transient events – road closures, construction work, flooding
- The presence of uncut hedges unless the width of the available path is significantly decreased
- Difficult terrain/ arduousness of the route – steep hills are not a hazard
- Practicalities or time spent walking the route

Appendix B - Other National and Local Support

B.1 16 to 19 Bursary Fund

The 16 to 19 Bursary Fund provides financial support to help young people overcome specific barriers to participation, so they can remain in education.

A bursary is money that you, or your education or training provider, can use to pay for things like clothing, books and other equipment for your course, transport, and lunch on days you study or train.

There are 2 types of 16 to 19 bursary:

- A vulnerable bursary for young people in one of the defined vulnerable groups below:
 - In care or recently left local authority care
 - In receipt of Income Support, or Universal Credit in place of Income Support, in their own right
 - In receipt of Employment and Support Allowance or Universal Credit and Disability Living or Personal Independence Payments in their own right
- Discretionary bursaries which institutions award to meet individual needs, for example, help with the cost of transport, meals, books, and equipment

Schools and colleges are responsible for managing both types of bursaries. Young people who want to apply for support from the bursary fund should contact their chosen school or college to make an application.

B.2 Care to Learn

If you are a young parent under 20, Care to Learn can help pay for your childcare and related travel costs, up to £180 per child per week, while you are learning.

Care to Learn can help with the cost of:

- Childcare, including deposit and registration fees
- A childcare 'taster' session (up to 5 days)
- Keeping your childcare place over the summer holidays
- Taking your child to the childcare provider

Further information about the scheme including eligibility and how to apply can be found by using the following [link](#).

B.3 Residential Support Scheme

Whilst not assisting with transport costs the Residential Support Scheme does provide financial support with accommodation costs for students (aged between 16 and 19) who need to live away from home to study because their course is not available locally.

B.4 Residential Bursary Fund

You may be able to get a bursary towards the cost of accommodation from some specialist residential colleges under the Residential Bursary Fund. Each specialist college has its own eligibility criteria, which often includes parental income.

Document Control

Policy Title	Children and Young People's Travel Assistance Policy
Policy Owner	Warwickshire County Council
Approval Route	Cabinet approval
Effective Date	1 September 2026

Definitions

Eligible pupil	A pupil who meets the eligibility criteria set out in this policy.
Parent / Carer	A person with parental responsibility or care of the child or young person.
Home address	The residential address from which eligibility and distance are assessed.
Nearest qualifying school	The closest qualifying school or priority school, as determined by the Council.
Priority school	For the purposes of this policy, the pupil's catchment school.
Travel assistance	The suitable form of support determined by the Council to enable attendance at the education setting.
EHCP	Education, Health and Care Plan.