

Free School Transport Application Guidance Notes

Please read these notes before completing an application form.

Who is entitled to school transport?

The pupil must ordinarily be a resident in Shropshire and the 'home' address is defined as the address at which Child Benefit is claimed. A pupil is entitled to free school transport if attending full time at the nearest or catchment primary or secondary school to the home address and living over 2 miles (for primary aged pupils) or 3 miles (for secondary aged pupils), measured by the shortest available pedestrian route.

In relation to the shared Shrewsbury secondary catchment area, the local authority's designated catchment is determined using the 'nearest school' test as defined within the admissions code.

Measurements made for determining whether home addresses are 2 or 3 miles from the school in question, or for determining the nearest school to a home address, are made from the nearest available access point of the home to the nearest available access point of the school, both from points where the nearest access point meets the public highway. The pick-up point will be within a reasonable distance of the home. Door to door transport is not normally provided.

A pupil's entitlement to transport can only be given by letter from the Authority following completion and submission of a Free School Transport Application form by the applicant and not by any telephone or verbal communication.

Transport is not provided for after school activities

Parents who state a preference for a place at a school that is not the nearest or catchment area school, will be responsible for all school transport arrangements and costs during the child's school life. Please note that, if you are eligible for free school transport to your child's existing primary or secondary school and you choose to move your child to another school, for whatever reason, free school transport eligibility does not automatically transfer with the change of school. You may find that your eligibility ceases when you make the transfer. For eligibility to be reassessed, a new free school transport application should be submitted.

Income Assessed School Transport

If your child is of secondary school age (aged 11-16, school year 7-11) and receives Free School Meals funded by the Local Authority, the Authority can provide transport assistance to one of the three nearest schools to the home address, where the distance between school and the home is between two and six miles.

Examination Grounds

An application for transport assistance on Examination Grounds will be considered where a family move address during a child's examination year (year 10 or 11). In order for assistance on Examination Grounds to be granted, the pupil must have been attending the nearest or catchment area school prior to the address change. The Authority will only provide assistance where the distance between the new home address and the school is over 3 miles, but no more than 10 miles. Where assistance is granted, transport will be provided in the form of a bus pass for an existing school contract or public service vehicle. If there is no suitable transport already in existence, assistance by way of Parents Travelling Expenses will be provided. Bespoke or taxi transport is not provided in these circumstances.

Unsafe Walking Routes

Shropshire Council may award transport to those living less than the statutory walking distance to their nearest or catchment area school, if the route has been assessed as 'unsafe' and there is no alternative route below the walking distance. Where an eligible pupil has been awarded transport because they live over the statutory walking distance, but concerns are expressed about the route between home and the designated pick up point, the Authority may also assess if the route to the pickup point is 'unsafe'.

Certain factors are not considered when assessing a route:

- Personal security or safety
- Weather conditions
- Transient events, such as road closures
- Difficult/arduous terrain
- Practicalities or time taken to walk the route

How long does it take for an application to be processed?

There is no set time for processing applications although we aim for each application to take no more than 10 working days to be processed. If your application is being made prior to your child starting school in September, it may take longer for your

application to be processed, due to the volume of the applications being received. Please note that parents/carers are responsible for all travel arrangements prior to receiving confirmation of entitlement to free school transport and the child/ children must not begin travelling on school transport until such confirmation has been received.

Changes to details given on the application form

It is vital that you notify the Entitlement Team as soon as possible of any changes, such as your child's school, a house move or a change of contact details. You can email schooltransport@shropshire.gov.uk or call 0345 678 9008.

Pupils with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)

If a pupil has an Education, Health & Care Plan (EHCP) you will need to apply for SEND school transport at www.shropshire.gov.uk/the-send-local-offer/travel-and-transport. All associated information can be found here including options for SEND pupils accessing transport once they leave school.

Replacement travel passes

If your child loses their travel pass or it is stolen or damaged, a duplicate should be ordered. There is a charge for a replacement pass. These can be ordered by calling 0345 678 9008 or online at www.shropshire.gov.uk/pay. Parents/Carers will be responsible for paying any daily fares incurred prior to the issue of the new pass. Duplicate travel passes are sent to the school for collection.

Concerns around transport

Please email schooltransport@shropshire.gov.uk or call 0345 678 9008 if you should have any concerns regarding the transport that your child is receiving.

Appeals

You have the right to appeal the outcome of a transport application. Appeals should be made in writing and set out the exact nature and grounds of the appeal. Please note that during the appeal stages travel assistance will not be provided, nor will a change to existing travel assistance be made. Any request for appeal should be sent in writing via email to schooltransport@shropshire.gov.uk or to Passenger Transport Group, Shropshire Council, 107 Longden Road, Shrewsbury,

Changes to transport arrangements

Transport provision can be changed with little or no notice where there are operational, safety, financial or other service reasons for doing so. We appreciate that change can be difficult and aim to keep such instances to a minimum and where at all possible, provide parents/carers with reasonable notice of any such proposed changes. We will also work with parents/carers and schools to make any transitions as smooth as possible.

Safety on School Transport

A link to information on safety on school transport is sent out to all pupils who have been granted school transport. This can be viewed at www.shropshire.gov.uk/school-transport/child-safety/.

When the Council provides transport, parents/carers are fully responsible for the safety and care of their children until they board the provided transport at the designated pick-up point and, on return home, from the moment they alight from the vehicle at the designated drop-off point.

When crossing the road, pupils should follow the Green Cross Code. In dark winter months, pupils should wear appropriate light, fluorescent and reflective clothing.

In severe weather or other major emergencies, school transport may not operate or schools may close. Parents/carers should be aware of this and they may need to make appropriate arrangements to look after their children at home. Parents/carers need to ensure that schools have their up to date emergency contact details in case children have to return home early. Parents who take their children to school in bad weather should also bring them home in the afternoon.

Local radio will give you what advice and information it can. Parents need to have contingency arrangements in place to allow children to return home early, where transport has failed to operate for any reason in the mornings or for any other emergency, such as an evacuation from school during the day. Children should be familiar with these parental contingency arrangements, as problems can occur at any time, without warning.