

Home to School Transport

Parents and carers have a legal duty and a responsibility to ensure that their children attend school regularly and to make any necessary arrangements to ensure that they attend. In certain circumstances based on statutory guidance the Council has a duty to provide free home to school transport support and this document sets out these circumstances.

Parents are encouraged to support their children to walk or cycle when the route is safe. There are health benefits for children who walk or cycle to school but local communities also benefit through improved road safety, reduced traffic congestion and associated noise and air pollution. One of our service aims is to promote the independence of our children wherever possible.

For those children who do qualify for free home to school transport support, the council reserves the right to decide on the type of transport support that is offered

Distance

Free home to school transport support can be provided for a child of statutory school age on distance grounds if he or she attends either:

- a) The 'defined area' school

Or

- b) The nearest appropriate school

And either:

- c) The child lives more than 2 or 3 miles walking distance by the shortest available route from that school

Or

- d) The Council has agreed that there is no route of less than 2 or 3 miles walking distance that would be safe for the child to use, accompanied as necessary by an adult



The relevant walking distance depends on the age of the child: for a child under the age of 8 years at the start of the school year then the walking distance is 2 miles, whilst for children aged 8 or over it is 3 miles.

The shortest appropriate route between a school and a home address is measured by the Council using a computerised geographical information system. Each house and school has a unique reference, as do all the redways and paths, which are coded at any point or junction such as at an underpass or where it crosses with another path. This enables the programme to calculate the distance from home to school.

If the transport support offered is in the form of a taxi or minibus provision from a home address the provider will only pick up from one primary address. This is usually the home address of the parent/s that receives the child benefit for the child/ren receiving school transport support. In exceptional circumstances an alternative address may be considered however this will need to be agreed in advance by the Local Authority.

To apply for free home to school transport support under the eligibility criteria set out in this policy parents and carers should complete the [Application form for children eligible for free home to school transport](#)

Low income families - children aged 8 to 11

Government has extended the eligibility for free home to school transport support for primary age children aged 8 to 11 from low income families. Children entitled to free school meals or with parents or carers in receipt of maximum Working Tax Credit living more than 2 miles from the 'defined area' or appropriate school are eligible for free home to school transport support.

Parents and carers need to apply to the Council for assistance. Should family circumstances and the entitlement to free home to school transport support come to an end then transport support will be withdrawn as soon as possible.

Low income families – children aged 11 to 16

Government has extended the eligibility for free home to school transport support to maintained secondary schools and academies for children from low income families. Children entitled to free school meals or with parents or carers in receipt of maximum Working Tax Credit then:

Page: 2

Date issued: March 2019

Review date: July 2022

Prepared by: School Admissions and Transport Manager

- a) The Council will ensure that those from low income families have free transport support to any one of the three nearest suitable schools, where the distance travelled is between two and six miles.
- b) 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 must also have travel arrangements made for them to the nearest suitable school preferred on grounds of religion or belief, where they live more than two miles but not more than 15 miles from that school.

Parents and carers need to apply to the Council for assistance. Should family circumstances and the entitlement to free home to school transport support come to an end then transport support will be withdrawn as soon as possible.

Special education needs, disability or mobility difficulties

Special educational needs, disability or a mobility difficulty does not give an automatic right to free home to school transport support, even if the school attended is a special school.

It is the child's individual needs that will determine their entitlement.

The Council applies the same guidelines when considering whether children with special educational needs, disability or a mobility difficulty require transport support as they do for other children and in the majority of cases children with special educational needs, disability or mobility difficulties are treated in the same way as other children.

If a child's special educational needs, disability or mobility problems mean that they could not be reasonably expected to walk to school then these may constitute exceptional circumstances which require free home to school transport support to be provided. The Council's default offer of transport support is a child bus pass. If the default offer of support is inappropriate then it is in these circumstances that parents and carers will need to complete a Transport Exceptions and Appeals application form which is reviewed by a panel of officers at the Transport Exceptions Appeals panel. Exceptions are generally only made when:

- a) The nature and/or severity of the child's special educational need, disability or mobility difficulty make it unreasonable for them to travel without additional assistance

And

b) No other suitable travel arrangements are in place.

The nearest appropriate school is one that the Council considers to be suitable for the specific needs of the pupil. Parents or carers should be aware that if they express a preference for a school other than the nearest appropriate school then there is no automatic entitlement to free home to school transport support.

To apply for free home to school transport support on exceptional grounds then parents and carers should complete the [Application form – exceptions and appeals](#).

Travel Exceptions and Appeals Panel

If following the outcome of a HTST application, a parent or carer is dissatisfied, a Travel Exceptions and Appeals (TEA) application can be made for the following reasons:

- A. The parent/carer believes that this policy has been incorrectly applied
- B. The parent/carer believes that the policy has been correctly applied, but their child/family's needs are exceptional and merit consideration outside of normal policy
- C. Travel assistance has been agreed under policy, but the parent/carer believes that the manner in which it is being provided is inappropriate for their child's needs

All decisions of the TEA Panel are made on the basis of information produced by the parent or carer. The Panel will decide if the case is exceptional and select the form of transport support offered.

There are a number of transport support options that will be considered:

- Bus pass and/or an adult bus pass to accompany the student.
- Independent Travel Training; a scheme to build confidence and enable young people to access education, services and leisure by public transport.
- Mileage payments for two journeys per day at 45p per mile that are claimed on a monthly basis
- Family Led Travel Budget; a scheme where monthly payments are made to enable families to put suitable transport arrangements in place.
- Shared transport or taxi where a seat is available.



The council may exercise discretion and request a contribution towards travel costs for students (or their family) if in receipt of mobility allowance.

Dissatisfied with Travel Exceptions and Appeals outcome

Where a Travel Exceptions and Appeals application has been heard and the parent/carer is not satisfied with the outcome a further application can be submitted in the following circumstances:

- Parent/carer omitted significant information from application
- Family circumstances have changed

Where the above does not apply, the Panel decision is final and a complaint can only be made where policy has been incorrectly applied. Details for making a complaint are available on [our website](#).

More information on the TEA process can be found on [the home to school transport webpage](#)

Denominational transport

From September 2012, free denominational transport is no longer offered by the Council to new applicants.

Children Living in Temporary Accommodation

For families placed in temporary accommodation Home to School Transport is only applicable where full duty to re-house is confirmed and it is established that the housing placement is anticipated to be for less than one school term. Families who are anticipated to be placed in temporary accommodation for more than one school term should make an application for a more local school place.

Please be aware that the Home to School Transport team is unable to progress an application for school transport support until this information has been verified by the Housing team. If you wish to check the status of your housing application ahead of making a Home to School Transport application please email homeless.enquiries@milton-keynes.gov.uk or call 01908 253481.

Privilege fare scheme

For children not entitled to free transport support the Council may still be able to offer transport under the privilege fare scheme for which a charge is made. Arrangements made in this way depend on there being surplus places available on an existing service. These places can be withdrawn if they are needed for another child entitled to free home to school transport. Normally a notice period is given. Please note the Privilege fare scheme **does not** include taxi or minibus provision and is only applicable for our coach provision.

To enquire about seat availability under the privilege fare scheme and pricing parents and carers should contact the Home to School Transport Team (details at the end of this document).

To apply for a fare place parents and carers should complete the [Application form for the Privilege Fare Scheme](#)

Family circumstances

The Council may provide home to school transport support where family circumstances mean parents or carers are unable to take their child to school.

These circumstances may include:

- Where the parent or carer is required to take children to different schools and when it is not possible for this task to be shared by others or when schools are unable to make reasonable adjustments to facilitate different arrival and departure times.
- When a parent or carer is unable to walk their child to school or use public transport because of a long term illness or medical condition.

To apply for free home to school transport support on these grounds then parents and carers should complete the [Application form – exceptions and appeals](#).



Post 16 transport

As a general rule the Council does not provide free transport support for Post 16 students who live in Milton Keynes attending school sixth forms, sixth form colleges and colleges of further education. However, Milton Keynes Council funds a concessionary fare scheme which enables young people up to 19 to travel on public transport at a reduced rate. For more information on all these services please call the Milton Keynes Council Bus Card Section on 01908 252558.

Please see our Post-16 policy for more specific information on Post-16 transport support.

Travel review and termination

When Milton Keynes Council agrees to put transport support in place an end date will also be issued. This is to enable family and student needs to be reassessed at regular intervals. It is a parent or carers responsibility to ensure that if transport support is still required past this end date that a new transport application is made. Re-application reminders will not be issued to parents or carers. Additionally, if there is a change in circumstance before the transport end date it is the parent/carers' responsibility to advise the Council. Any of the following changes will require a new application to be submitted:

- Change of address
- Change of location where student is studying
- Student or family needs change in way which mean that current arrangements are no longer suitable

The Council undertakes regular reviews of students receiving support with travel, if at any point it is identified a change of circumstances has occurred without notification, travel arrangements will be terminated. The Council regularly reviews transport support offered to ensure that we are maximising the use of resources and providing best value for tax payer's money. This may mean that throughout the course of a child's eligibility there are changes made to the transport support offered. If changes are to be made we aim to do this with as much notice given as possible.



Enquiries

Home to School Transport
Telephone (01908) 252526

Email: client.transport@milton-keynes.gov.uk

If you wish to make a comment, compliment or complaint about the council please complete the online form which can be found at www.milton-keynes.gov.uk