

Home to school transport policy

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 (HTST) 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.

The categories of eligible children who are entitled to transport support are defined below. These apply to children of compulsory school age (5-16)

Statutory walking 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 their nearest suitable school.

- Beyond 2 miles (if below the age of 8); or
- Beyond 3 miles (if aged between 8 and 16)

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 (such as Respite Care) an alternative address may be considered however this will need to be agreed in advance by the Local Authority.

Extended rights eligibility

The Council will support children with transport where pupils are entitled to free school meals or their parents are in receipt of maximum Working Tax Credit and if:

- The nearest suitable school is beyond 2 miles (for children over the age of 8 and under 11)
- The school is between 2 and 6 miles away (if aged 11-16 and there are not 3 or more suitable nearer schools)
- The school is between 2 and 15 miles and is the nearest school preferred on the grounds of religion or belief (aged 11-16)

Should family circumstances and the entitlement come to an end then transport support will be withdrawn as soon as possible.

Special education needs, disability or mobility difficulties

If a child's special educational needs, disability or mobility problems mean that they could not be reasonably expected to walk to school then the Council will assess each child on an individual basis to identify the most appropriate transport option.

Unsafe route eligibility

The Council will make transport arrangements for children who cannot be reasonably expected to walk to their nearest suitable school because the nature of the route is deemed unsafe to walk. The Council uses a computerised geographical information system to assess the safety of routes.

Suitable school

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.

Transport options

The council will consider a range of options for transport based on the application form submitted and relevant information gathered from professional services. Where possible the Council will encourage and support families and individuals to remain/become as independent as possible.

If transport is agreed that uses third parties such as taxi or minibus, where possible the Council will add new applicants to existing transport options as the first option rather than procure a new contract.

Application for home to school transport

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](#)

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 application are made by a senior officer within the Home to school Transport team on the basis of information produced by the parent or carer. The Officer 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 and are paid in advance, on a termly basis
- Family Led Travel Budget; a scheme where termly payments are made in advance to enable families to put suitable transport arrangements in place.
- Shared transport or taxi where a seat is available.

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

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

This information will be reviewed by a multi-disciplinary panel who were not involved in the original decision making process.

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](#)

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 and other exceptional circumstances

The Council may provide home to school transport support where family/individual 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, supporting information would need to be provided



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. 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