



GUIDANCE NOTES FOR SCHOOL TRANSPORT

WHO IS ENTITLED TO FREE TRANSPORT?

If you live in Buckinghamshire, it has been our policy to provide transport if the distance from your home to the school is greater than the statutory walking distance and your child goes to one of the following:

- Your *catchment area* school. It is proposed that with effect from September 2011 this will change to limit transport to the *nearest catchment area school* subject to the outcome of a consultation which closes on 28 March. You can respond on the website www.buckscc.gov.uk go to 'Have your Say'.
- The school nearest to your home

The statutory walking distance is 2 miles for pupils up to 8 years of age and 3 miles for older children. The distance is measured by the shortest available walking route along a road or made-up footpath, as measured from the nearest pedestrian access at the school site to the nearest entrance on the external boundary of the pupil's home address. Please note this is not necessarily the same distance as used for admissions purposes.

Children who fulfil one of the criteria but live under the statutory walking distance may be entitled to free transport if the County Council has agreed that there is no route of less than 2 or 3 miles walking distance that would be safe for a child to use, accompanied as necessary by an adult. The presence or absence of street lighting on a route is not considered to be a factor.

WHAT IF I AM NOT ENTITLED TO FREE TRANSPORT?

If you live within the catchment area of your proposed school and due to the above policy change would no longer be entitled to free transport as it is not the closest catchment school, you can apply for a discretionary fare place. More information, including the rates will be available once the final decisions are made following the above consultation.

If you are attending a school that is not your catchment school there may be an existing route with spare seats on which you could also apply for a discretionary fare place. Contact Ameytrans@buckscc.gov.uk to register your interest.

FREE TRANSPORT FOR CHILDREN FROM LOW INCOME FAMILIES

Under the terms of the Education & Inspections Act 2006 local authorities are required to provide free transport for children from low income families.

Children aged under 11 and from low income families are eligible for home to school transport if they attend their nearest qualifying school where they live more than 2 miles, but not more than 6 miles from that school. This extends the provision for children aged 8-10 and on low incomes beyond the general provision for 8-10's who live more than 3 miles from school.

Children aged 11 – 16 and from low income families will benefit from the following extensions to transport provision:

There is a right to free transport for low income families if the child attends:

- One of their 3 nearest qualifying schools where they live more than 2 miles, but not more than 6 miles from that school.
- The nearest school preferred by reason of a parent's religion or belief where more than 2 miles and up to a maximum of 15 miles from the child's home.

In order to be entitled to free school transport the children will need to **qualify for free school meals** because their parents/carers are in receipt of at least one of the following benefits:

- Income Support
- Income Based Job Seekers Allowance
- Employment Support Allowance (income related)
- Child Tax Credit (unless you also claim working tax credits) with income less than £16,190 - Form TC602(A)
- Support under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999

- Guaranteed Element of State Pension Credit

(Please note the list of eligible benefits and income levels may be subject to change in the new tax year 2011/12)

RECEPTION AGE CHILDREN

Although schools accept children at age 4+, they are not entitled to home to school transport until they become Rising 5's. Children who turn 5 between 1 Sept and 31 Dec are entitled to transport from the start of the Autumn term, those who turn 5 between 1 Jan and 30 April from the start of the Spring term and finally those who turn 5 between 1 May and 31 Aug from the start of the Summer term. If your child is not entitled to free transport you will be notified as soon as possible, otherwise you will not be advised of your child's travel arrangements until two weeks before it is due to start.

WHAT TYPE OF TRANSPORT IS PROVIDED?

Eligible children will be provided with a travel pass for use on a contract vehicle, service bus or train service. Sometimes if there is no available bus or train service, a taxi is provided. The operator of the service or the type of transport offered (including routes and timings) may change during the time your child is at school.

Boarding and alighting points are provided at frequent points along contract routes and parents are required to ensure that children get safely to and from these points. Children are expected to make their own way, up to a mile, to and from the nearest bus stop. A list of boarding points for a particular school is available on request.

Transport is provided at the beginning and end of the normal school day to and from the home address. It is not provided at lunchtimes, for out of school activities or to any alternative address (e.g. childminder).

TRAVEL PASSES

Your child's first travel pass will be sent to the home address together with a timetable of the route. These are usually despatched before the beginning of the Autumn term. Passes are issued for the entire academic year. Subsequent passes will be sent to the school and will be available for collection at the start of the Autumn term.

LOST PASSES

There is a charge of £8 to replace lost or damaged passes. Cheques should be made payable to Buckinghamshire County Council. The money may be taken to the school office where your child will be issued with an emergency pass, while the replacement is being arranged. If you have any queries contact Amey Client Transport on 01296 383956 or email to Ameytrans@buckscc.gov.uk

CHANGE OF ADDRESS/SCHOOL

You should inform the Admissions and Transport Team as soon as your new address is confirmed. Your child's entitlement to free travel or a changed discretionary route will be reassessed and, if appropriate, a new pass will be authorised.

If your child changes schools you should inform Amey Client Transport immediately on 01296 383956 and return the pass to them.

CONDITIONS OF TRAVEL

- Pupils must behave well on the transport at all times. Appropriate action will be taken against children who misbehave on vehicles and, in extreme cases, this could involve the withdrawal of transport facilities.
- Pupils must carry their travel passes at all times as they will be required to show them when they board the vehicle. Failure to produce a valid pass when requested will result in the pupil being denied travel for the morning journey.

FURTHER INFORMATION may be obtained from:

Admissions & Transport Team, County Hall, Aylesbury, Bucks, HP20 1UZ

Tel: 01296 383250

Email: educationtransport@buckscc.gov.uk

