

## **Parent/Carer's Guide to Home to School Transport Assistance**

Home to school transport assistance is provided to pupils who meet the criteria as set out in the Council's Home to School Transport Policy, a copy of which can be found on the Council's website [www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/schooltransport](http://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/schooltransport) and this guidance should be read in conjunction with the policy.

A brief overview of the different criteria is described below; however if you do have any questions regarding the eligibility for home to school transport assistance then please contact the School Transport Team at [school.transport@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:school.transport@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk) or on 0300 300 8339

Please note Central Bedfordshire Council only provide transport to families who reside in Central Bedfordshire, if you are not a resident of Central Bedfordshire or your application is for a looked after child placed by another local authority please refer to your local authorities' policy.

### **1. Pupils attending mainstream schools**

For pupils who attend a mainstream school, transport may be provided if they meet one of the following criteria:

Pupils aged 5 – 8 years old who live more than the statutory walking distance of 2 miles, by the shortest available walking route to the nearest school or designated catchment school. Pupils aged 8 – 16 years old (years 4 – 11) who live more than the statutory walking distance of 3 miles by the shortest available walking route, to the nearest school or the designated catchment school.

If the pupil is entitled to transport under the above distance criteria whilst under the age of 8 years, they will continue to receive free transport until the end of the academic year in which they reach the age of 8 (Year 3)

The statutory walking distance may not apply where the route which the pupil would be expected to walk to their nearest or designated catchment school (when accompanied by an appropriate adult) is assessed as unavailable. If you have any questions regarding the walking route then please contact us.

The pupil may also be entitled to transport in the event that you are not successful when applying for one or all of your school preferences via the School Admissions Team. If the School Admissions Team identify a school, which was not on your list of preferences and you meet any of the above criteria, the pupil may be entitled to transport assistance

## **2. Transport for Pupils with Special Educational Needs**

Having a Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) does not guarantee transport. However transport may be provided if:

- The pupil is attending a mainstream school and meets the criteria stated in section 1
- The pupil is attending the nearest special school with spaces available which is over the statutory walking distance relevant to their age (see section 1) and has been identified by the Council as being able to appropriately meet their needs.
- If the pupil attends their nearest or designated catchment mainstream school or their nearest appropriate special school with places available and they live under the statutory walking distance and there are no road safety concerns, then their needs may be assessed to ascertain whether it would be reasonable or safe for them to walk to school when accompanied by an appropriate adult. A medical needs or special educational needs application form would need to be completed and returned to us for it to be assessed. These forms are available on the Council's website [www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/schooltransport](http://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/schooltransport)

A Passenger Assistant is only provided if the Council believes that the health and safety of the pupil, driver or anyone else travelling in the vehicle would be at risk if not provided.

The Council will consider transport to the nearest suitable school. If by parental preference a more distant school is named in the pupil's EHCP but the Authority's view differs, transport will not be provided.

A school designated by the Council as the most appropriate school for a particular pupil will normally be deemed to be the nearest suitable school.

## **3. Low Income**

Pupils from low income families may be entitled to transport assistance. The pupil will be entitled if parents receive the maximum amount of Working Tax Credits. They must also meet one of the criteria set out at 1.

If you wish to apply for home to school transport assistance based on low income eligibility, then please complete the Low Income Application form which is on the Council's website [www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/schooltransport](http://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/schooltransport)

## **4. Children Attending a School on the Grounds of Religion or Belief**

Travel assistance will not be provided by the Council to a parent/carer of a pupil attending school on the grounds of religion or belief ('denominational grounds') with the exception of where a pupil is from a low income family (see section 3).

## **5. Pupils with Temporary Medical Problems**

Travel assistance may be considered where a pupil lives within the defined walking distance to school relevant to his or her age (see section 1) and is attending the nearest or designated catchment school with spaces available but is unable to walk to school because of a medical condition.

For pupils who have a current statement of special educational needs or EHCP and have a medical condition which impacts on their ability to walk to school, then transport assistance may be considered to the nearest school which has been assessed by the Council as being able to meet their needs.

To apply for transport on medical grounds please complete and return a medical needs application form which can be found on the Council's website [www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/schooltransport](http://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/schooltransport).

## **6. Parents with a Disability**

The Council may exercise its discretion to provide transport where a child lives within the walking distance (see section 1) to school but where his/her parents or another responsible adult, are unable to accompany them on the walk to school because of a medical condition or disability.

Please contact us to discuss transport on these grounds and be aware that you will be asked to provide evidence which demonstrates that you are unable to walk the pupil to school due to your disability.

## **7. Temporary Residential Circumstances**

Where a family is forced to re-locate temporarily to alternative accommodation owing to circumstances outside their control the Council may provide transport. Each case is assessed on its merits and will be subject to assessment against the statutory walking distance. Pupils placed in refuges, whose safety may be at risk may be provided with transport without taking distance into account.

An application and supporting evidence will be required.

## **8. When transport is not provided**

There are certain circumstances where home to school transport assistance is not provided by the Council and transport would be parental responsibility. These include:

- where the pupil is attending a school which is not the nearest or designated catchment school and the attendance is due to parental preference
- to an address which is not the primary registered address. The primary registered address is where the pupil will spend the majority of their time and will be registered with the school as the primary domiciliary address.
- to enable the pupil to attend extra curricular activities or between institutions within the school day. (For these journeys the organising school or institution will be responsible for transport arrangements);

- to attend dental or hospital appointments, or other non-educational appointments;
- in the event of sickness, where the pupil must be collected from school (or returned to residential school midweek);
- for parents/carers attending review meetings;
- to attend work experience;
- to attend an induction day at another establishment;
- to accompany a friend home;
- where the journey is to a nursery or pre-school setting;
- following misbehaviour occurring on transport, which threatens the Health and Safety of staff and/or other pupils;
- when the pupil travels at lunchtimes or at any time other than the normal start and end of the school day. Travel between these times will remain a parental responsibility.
- where other parental responsibilities such as other children or work commitments prevent them from being able to walk the pupil to school. It would be parental responsibility to make alternative arrangements.
- respite/Social Care Transport is not assessed by the School Transport Team. Please continue to contact Social Workers for this transport.

## **9. Concessions**

When there is a Council operated school bus with spare seats available after all the entitled pupils have been offered their seats, the Council may sell these as concessions. They are sold on a first come, first served basis, one term at a time and being accepted for a place for one term does not guarantee a place for the next term.

Applications for concessionary places, can be made on line at [www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/school/transport/apply-online.aspx](http://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/school/transport/apply-online.aspx)

## **10 Assistance Offered**

**The type of assistance offered will be the most cost effective to meet the needs of the pupil being transported:**

- Parental Mileage, details can be found at [www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/school/transport/apply-online.aspx](http://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/school/transport/apply-online.aspx)
- Personal Transport Budget details can be found at [www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/school/transport/apply-online.aspx](http://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/school/transport/apply-online.aspx)
- A place on a contracted route
- Bus or rail pass for a public transport route
- Independent travel training
- Individual transport

## **11 Additional Information**

1. When considering applying for a new school place for your child please ensure that you are clear about how they will get between home and school.
2. If you believe your child is entitled to home to school travel assistance you must make an application as soon as you accept a school place.
3. All applications for transport must be completed and returned by the deadline date provided on the application. Applications received after that date will result in travel assistance not being provided until the October half term.
4. If a sibling is transported a new application must be made for additional children in the family.