

North Northamptonshire Council

Home to School Transport and Travel Assistance Policy

For pupils of Statutory School Age

Academic year 2026/27

This policy document will apply to all new applications for transport and travel assistance for Home to School for the academic year commencing September 2026.

For in-year changes prior to September 2026 the previous policy will still apply.

Version	Author	Date	Changes
V 01	Transport Delivery Manager	July 2023	Previous Policy reviewed. Layout changed. Appeals information updated Approved by Executive on 12 July 2023
V 02	Transport Delivery Manager	September 2024	Dates updated. Clarification of application process. Update of contact details.
V 03	Transport Delivery Manager	August 2025	Dates updated Paragraphs re-ordered Clarification of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nearest Suitable School – measuring distances. • Admissions criteria and transport eligibility criteria. • Parental Preference • Withdrawal of transport and pupil behaviours • Stage 2 Appeal process • Update Contents page

Home to School Transport and Travel Assistance Policy

This policy document sets out the policy and process for people living within the area of North Northamptonshire Council in respect of Home to School Transport and Travel Assistance for children and young people aged between 5 and 16 years of age (including those who will become 5 during the course of the academic year).

Throughout this document:

North Northamptonshire Council will be referred to as “The Council”

The term “Parents” should be taken as referring to Parents, Carers, and other Guardians with parental responsibility for a child or young person.

This policy document will apply to all new applications for transport and travel assistance for Home to School for the academic year commencing September 2026.

For in-year changes prior to September 2026 the previous policy will still apply.

Transport for Post 16 students is set out in the Council’s ‘Post-16 Transport Policy Statement’ which can be found at [School travel assistance | North Northamptonshire Council \(northnorthants.gov.uk\)](https://www.northnorthants.gov.uk/school-travel-assistance)

The post 16 policy is revised annually and is published in May each year

Parents are requested to be aware that being offered a place by particular school does not mean that a child will automatically be entitled to travel assistance to that school. Parents and carers should read the Home to School Transport policy carefully to understand the eligibility criteria before applying for a school place.

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Legal Background

The Council is required to publish an annual Sustainable School Travel Strategy showing:

- An assessment of the travel and transport needs of children and young people in North Northamptonshire
- An audit of the sustainable travel and transport infrastructure within North Northamptonshire that may be used when travelling to and from schools and colleges
- A strategy to develop that infrastructure to better cater for the travel needs of children and young people
- How the Council will promote sustainable travel and transport to, from and between schools and other institutions

The Council is also required to provide assistance for travel between Home and School for children and young people residing in the area who meet the eligibility criteria explained in this document.

This document refers to the legislation governing home to school travel for children of ***compulsory school age***, in particular:

- section 508A of the Education Act 1996 – local authorities’ duty to promote sustainable modes of travel
- section 508B of and Schedule 35B to the Education Act 1996 – travel arrangements for eligible children
- section 508C of the Education Act 1996 – travel arrangements for other children
- section 509AD of the Education Act 1996 – local authorities’ duty to have regard to religion or belief
- the School Information (England) Regulations 2008

Section 1 Home to School Transport and Travel Assistance

North Northamptonshire Council (the Council) recognises parents'/carers' responsibility for ensuring attendance of their children at school. It also recognises that in some circumstances assistance may be required.

1.1 Definitions (Jargon Buster)

Home is defined as the place where a child is habitually and normally resident. Where parents do not live together and a child or young person spends part of each week or alternate weeks with each parent, parents should agree which address is to be treated as "Home". Where this cannot be agreed between parents, the Council will look to the address where Child Benefit is paid for the child or young person. The Council will not provide transport from both addresses.

"Suitable school" is defined as the school with places available that provides education appropriate to the age, ability and aptitude of the child or young person, and any SEN that the child or young person might have. "Suitable school" does not mean the most suitable school for a child or young person, merely one which can meet the majority of the needs of the child or young person concerned.

Where a child's nearest school is oversubscribed and unable to offer them a place, the nearest school with places available is their nearest suitable school for school travel purposes.

Linked school; Schools are said to be "linked" if there is a priority given to applicants from a certain school or location. This primarily affects young people transferring from primary to secondary education.

Parents are asked to be aware that the criteria for admission to any school (including so called "linked" schools) may differ from the criteria for eligibility for travel assistance. Parents are advised to check the relevant policies for the latest entitlement criteria.

Walking distances; Except where otherwise specifically stated, the distance between a child or young person's home and school will be measured by the shortest available walking route.

Availability of school places; Where a place is not available at the child or young person's nearest suitable school at the point of starting school, transferring to secondary school, or moving into a new area, free travel assistance will be provided to the next nearest suitable school, subject again to distance and route acceptability criteria.

Parental Preference; The Council supports the right of parents to express preferences for schools. However, in order to be eligible for free home to school transport or travel assistance, (subject to meeting the other eligibility criteria) the child or young person must be attending their nearest suitable school which has places available.

Transition point; The point or stage in a child's education at which their entitlement to transport might change. For example, age 8 when the walking distances change, or at the end of years 6 and 11 when young people transition to the next stage of their education.

Pick up and set down points; Assistance with transport may not be provided from door to door. Young people may be expected to walk to and from a pick up and set down point, accompanied by an adult if necessary. The walking distance will not exceed ½ a mile for children aged between 4 and 8th birthday and up to 1 mile for children aged between 8 and

16. Account will be taken of a pupil's special educational needs and/or disability and parents/carers' disability when allocating suitable pickup and set down points.

1.2 Who is entitled to Free Transport and Travel Assistance

The Council is required to provide assistance for travel between Home and School for children and young people residing in the area who meet the eligibility criteria set out below.

The Council also has responsibility for those who live outside the area but for whom the Council has financial responsibility, for example Looked after Children,

There is no automatic entitlement to assistance with travel between home and school. Parents requiring home to school transport or other travel assistance will need to make an application as set out in Section 4.

The Council will only enable a child or young person to travel to school for the beginning of the **school day**, and to return **home** at the end of the **school day**.

The Council is not required to make arrangements for travel between institutions during the **school day**, or to enable children or young people to attend extra-curricular activities and other commitments outside school hours. Responsibility for making, together with costs of, travel arrangements in these cases will lie with the parents or school, or in exceptional circumstances the Social Care and Health team.

The Council will provide transport or travel assistance, or make free travel arrangements for pupils meeting the following criteria:

(i) Pupils between 5 and 8 years of age (including those who will become 5 in the course of the academic year, referred to in this document as Rising 5s) who are attending their nearest suitable school and who live more than 2 miles from that school.

(ii) Pupils aged 8 to 16 years who are attending their nearest suitable school and who live more than 3 miles from that school

(iii) Pupils aged 5 to 16 years of age, (including Rising 5s) where their nearest suitable school is within the walking distances set out above BUT where the walking route is assessed as unacceptable to walk according to the Council's published criteria, even if accompanied by an adult as necessary.

(vii) Pupils aged 5 to 16 (including Rising 5s) whose parents/carers have a disability. Where the Council relies on a parent/carer accompanying a pupil along a walking route for it to be considered safe, or to accompany a pupil between home and a picking up or setting down point but the parent's or carer's permanent or temporary disability prevents them from doing so, then the Council may provide free transport as a "reasonable adjustment" under the terms of the Equality Act 2010.

With effect from academic year 2024/25 linked schools are no longer treated as the nearest suitable school for new applicants for transport, unless the school is actually the nearest suitable school with places available.

Pupils already attending a school and receiving transport under the linked school element of the former policy will continue to receive transport under their current terms until they reach their next transition point or until they change address or school placement.

1.3 Identifying the Nearest School

Children may sometimes live a very similar distance from more than one school.

Where the schools are within the statutory walking distance, the Council will determine which is the nearest by measuring the shortest walking route. Once the nearest school has been determined the Council will then separately determine the safety of that walking route for the purposes of assessing a young person's eligibility for free travel.

Where the schools are beyond walking distance, the Council will assess which is the nearest school by the same method, even though there is no expectation that the child would need to walk to school.

The Council will use Google Maps and its own GIS software to identify the shortest walking route.

Where a child's nearest school is oversubscribed and unable to offer them a place, the nearest school with places available is their nearest suitable school for school travel purposes. A child's nearest school may be in a neighbouring local authority area.

1.4 Faith Schools and Single Sex schools

Pupils aged 5 to 16 years (including Rising 5s) attending Single Sex or Faith (Denominational) Schools will be entitled to assistance with transport in the following circumstances:

- the school concerned is the nearest suitable school **AND EITHER:**
 - a. the distance between home and school is greater than the statutory walking distance (2 miles for pupils aged rising 5 to 8 or 3 miles for pupils aged 8 to 16) by the shortest safe walking route; OR
 - b. the distance between home and school is less than the statutory walking distance relevant to the child's age but the walking route is assessed as unacceptable to walk according to the Council's published criteria, even if accompanied by an adult as necessary.

1.5 Extended Rights for those on Low Income

A child or young person will qualify for travel assistance under the low income criteria if:

- they are attending their nearest suitable school **and**
- are entitled to receive free school meals on financial grounds or their parents are in receipt of Universal Credit or the Maximum level of Working Tax Credit.

Children, who attend a primary school and who are aged 8 years but less than 11 years, must also:

- attend their nearest suitable school for transport purposes **and;**
- live between 2-6 miles from the school.

Children attending a secondary school and therefore aged between 11 and 16 years, must also:

- attend one of their three nearest suitable schools for transport purposes **and;**

- live more than 2 miles and less than 6 miles from the school.

Primary and Secondary aged children, who are attending a faith school must in addition to receiving the benefits above;

- Be attending a faith school as expressly requested by their parents at time of admission, where that school is the nearest appropriate faith school based upon their beliefs and
- live more than 2 miles and less than 15 miles from the school.

If eligibility for free school meals or Universal Credit or maximum level Working Tax Credit ceases, then free transport will be withdrawn at the end of the academic year.

A full list of the low-income qualifying criteria is available in Appendix A3 attached to this policy.

1.6 Inaccurate Applications

The Council reserves the right to reclaim the cost of any transport provided, if it is found that any incorrect information has been provided to the Council in order to gain admission or transport to a school that would otherwise be outside of the eligibility criteria.

1.7 Transport and Travel arrangements for non-entitled pupils/students of statutory school age (Discretionary Transport or Fare paying pupils)

Where parents have chosen and have accepted a place at a school that is not their nearest suitable school, they also accept the responsibility for, and cost of, the transport of the child to and from school.

Where a young person does not meet the criteria for free home to school transport or travel assistance, and where there is spare capacity on a contracted vehicle, parents may wish to purchase a paying ticket for the service

Passes for these spare seats will be offered on a first come first served basis at a cost to be determined annually. The fares are listed in the Fees and Charges Book, which is reviewed and published every year.

[Fees and charges | North Northamptonshire Council \(northnorthants.gov.uk\)](http://northnorthants.gov.uk)

Except by special arrangement with schools, additional vehicles will not be contracted to cater for fare paying pupils and a minimum of five seats will be held unsold to cater for entitled pupils who may become eligible for transport during the school year.

Parents/carers are advised that the facility could be withdrawn at reasonable notice – not less than one month, if the space should be required for children or young people who are entitled to free transport or travel assistance. If this is the case, parents will be refunded for the remainder of the fare period.

Spare seat tickets for non-entitled pupils aged 5 to 16 (including Rising 5s) will only be available

- on receipt of payment of the fare or creation of an agreed payment plan AND
- where there is spare capacity on a contracted vehicle.

The Council reserves the right to decline to sell passes for spare seats on transport provided for pupils with Special Educational Needs.

Section 2 Travel arrangements for pupils with SEN or a Disability

2.1 Transport can be an important factor in the support for children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities.

Not all children or young people with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) will receive home to school transport. All children and young people will be assessed in accordance with The Council's Transport and Travel Assistance Policy, regardless of whether they hold an EHCP or not.

All children and young people, including those with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) up to the age of 25, are subject to general Local Authority Transport criteria as described in Section 1 for primary and secondary mainstream children and young people.

Please note that where a pupil with SEN or a disability lives further than the statutory distance from school, (i.e. over 2 miles from home address if under 8 OR over 3 miles from home address for those between 8 and 16) AND the school is their nearest mainstream school, or the nearest suitable special provision, then transport or travel assistance will be provided on the grounds of distance, taking into account any additional needs that they may have.

Transport or Travel assistance will additionally be provided for children and young people who cannot reasonably be expected to walk to school because of their mobility problems or because of associated health and safety issues related to their special educational needs (SEN) or disability. Eligibility, for such children will be assessed on an individual basis.

It is the responsibility of all parents with children of compulsory school age to ensure their child or young person's regular attendance at school, regardless of any SEN or disability.

For pupils with special educational needs each case is considered individually, guided by the criteria that follow:

Transport or Travel assistance will be agreed for pupils with SEN or a disability where:

1 The pupil is attending the nearest suitable school as determined by the LEA and as named in their EHCP if they have one.

and

2 The pupil has a condition where they cannot reasonably be expected to walk to and from school, and there is detailed written advice from appropriate medical personnel to corroborate this.

In determining whether a pupil cannot reasonably be expected to walk due to their special educational needs or disability, the local authority will consider whether the pupil could reasonably be expected to walk if accompanied and if so, whether their parent or carer can reasonably be expected to accompany them.

The general expectation is that a pupil will be accompanied by a parent where necessary. Where a parent or carer may be working at the time their child is travelling to or from school, or they have other children attending different schools, they will normally be expected to put in place suitable alternative arrangements.

The Council will consider each case on its own merits and take account of the individual family circumstances when determining whether transport or travel assistance is required.

Travel arrangements will not be made where the pupil is not attending their nearest mainstream school, or the nearest suitable special provision, and the school attended is one of parental preference.

2.2 General points for SEN travel

- The ongoing provision of travel arrangements will be reviewed as part of the child or young person's annual review of the EHC plan, or other relevant information regarding a child's SEN or disability. The provision of existing travel arrangements will also be reconsidered if the child moves school or home address or if there is any other significant change to the child or young person's needs.
- The development of independence skills is a key part of Preparation for Adulthood.
- Where the child or young person uses a wheelchair on a vehicle, the chair used must be approved for that use and must have appropriate tie-down points. This can be confirmed by the wheelchair manufacturer and will be checked by the Council before authorising transportation.
- Where a wheelchair is found to be not suitable for use in a vehicle, the passenger will be expected to be able to self-transfer to a vehicle seat.
- The Council or their contractors will provide standard Wheelchair tie downs and Occupant restraint systems. (WTORS) and other standard passenger harnesses. Any non-standard passenger and wheelchair harnesses and restraints must be supplied by the parents/carers and will need to be confirmed as compatible with the vehicle in which they are being used before travel commences.

2.3 Home Collection and drop off

Wherever possible, young people will be collected and dropped off at a safe place near to their home. Some young people with SEND may find it difficult to access collection and drop off points a short distance from their home. These young people may be allocated a home collection. Parents/carers of children with a home collection/drop-off are required to ensure their child is ready in good time for when the vehicle arrives at the normal home address. The vehicle will park as close to the home as possible but cannot park where it would be illegal or dangerous to do so. Parents are asked to keep a lookout for the arrival of the vehicle. The driver or Passenger Assistant will NOT come to the house door, especially if there are other children on board the vehicle.

Parents/carers are also required to ensure they or an authorised adult are available to meet the child at the normal home address or drop-off point at the end of the school day.

2.4 Short Break Service and Respite Care

The Home to School Transport service has no responsibility to provide home to school travel arrangements for children to and from respite care facilities. Except in exceptional circumstances, where transport is agreed, it will only be provided to and from the normal home address or drop-off point. However, if there is the capacity to assist with respite care

arrangements, then the Transport team at North Northamptonshire Council will assist by making alternative arrangements as long as there is no additional cost to the Council.

For arrangements outside these criteria parents should contact their support worker or NCTTransport@NCTrust.co.uk to agree funding for transport to Respite and Short Break establishments.

2.5 Transport of Children and Young People with Medical Needs

Some young people have medical needs which may cause them difficulty when travelling. When we are notified of medical needs, we carry out a risk assessment to identify how those needs might affect the child during their home to school journey. We will then endeavour to put in place proportionate arrangements to manage those needs.

The matters we will need to consider are likely to include:

- the health condition, its triggers and symptoms
- the likelihood of the condition affecting the child on the journey to and from school, and the consequences for the child if it does happen
- the action that may need to be taken to manage the condition, for example whether the child may require medication and, if so, what dose is required, how it should be administered, and by whom.

In order to obtain the necessary information to make this assessment and determine what arrangements should be put in place, we may need to seek further information from parents, the school and any health care professionals involved in the care of the child, for example the school nurse, health visitor, GP and any designated clinical officer/ medical officer or consultant.

A medically qualified Passenger Assistant will only be appointed in the most exceptional cases. It would be more normal to train one or more Passenger Assistants in how to deal with the child's needs and condition. This may require arranging for specialist training and support from the School Nurse or other professional involved with the child.

Where it is felt that it would be unsafe to transport the child on Home to School Transport, parents may be requested to transport the child themselves in exchange for a mileage payment.

2.6 Exceptional circumstances:

The Council will consider applications for transport or travel assistance due to exceptional circumstances on a case by case basis.

By its very nature an exceptional circumstance is difficult to define, however, some examples of where the Council may exercise its discretion to provide free home to school travel arrangements are as follows:

- Where a pupil faces a temporary medical problem which affects their mobility, so that they are unable to access school without support and school has considered and put in place reasonable adjustments.
- Where a family has to move suddenly to temporary accommodation, for example, because of a house fire or domestic violence.

- Where a child's **parent** is unable to take their child to school because they are suffering from serious illness and they are unable to make alternative arrangements themselves, e.g. no friends or family in the area.

In each case, consideration will be given to family circumstances and to any medical advice which may be available.

Section 3 What Travel Assistance will be provided

3.1 Travel Options

The Council has a duty under Section 508A of the Education Act 1996 to promote the use of sustainable travel and transport. This duty applies to all children and young people of compulsory school age (5 to 16) who travel to receive education or training in a local authority's area

The Council must also ensure that any travel arrangements they make take account of the needs of the child concerned. Those arrangements should enable the child to travel in reasonable safety and comfort, and without undue stress, strain or difficulty, so that they arrive at school ready to learn.

Please note that all school transport will normally only pick up and set down at a safe place near the pupil's home address as shown on the school roll and Council records. Consideration will be given to requests to pick up and set down at other locations e.g. childminders or other family members, provided this is notified in writing and does not involve any further costs to the Council.

3.1.2 The legislation permits local authorities to meet their duty in a range of alternative ways.

Parents may be asked to support their child with home to school travel, for example receiving a mileage allowance or accompanying them on public transport, however this can only be put in place with parental consent.

Travel options which may be considered:

- Walking (alone or accompanied by parent or other adult supervisor)
- Walking bus (walking with other children and adult supervisors)
- Cycling or Scooting
- Bus/Train Pass for public transport
- Discounted travel schemes
- Parental mileage payments
- Personal budget
- Independent Travel Training
- Dedicated school bus routes
 - With passenger assistant if required
- Minibus or shared MPV from pick up points
 - With passenger assistant if required

- Minibus or shared MPV from door to door
 - With passenger assistant if required
- Shared Taxis
 - With passenger assistant if required
- Solo taxi
 - With passenger assistant if required

3.1.3 As part of our commitment to encouraging and supporting the use of sustainable modes of transport, where it is appropriate to do so we will make use of commercial and public bus and train services. This not only supports the services for the whole local community, it often also provides greater flexibility for the young person, enabling them to travel earlier in the morning or later in the afternoon than the normal school bus service allows.

3.2 Length of journey

As a general guide, the maximum length of time allowed for a child of primary school age to journey to school is 45 minutes, and 75 minutes for a child of secondary school age. There will, however, be circumstances in which this is not possible, for example in rural areas where children live in remote locations.

Travel arrangements for children with special educational needs, disability or mobility problems can be particularly complex to make. Whilst shorter journeys may be desirable, some children may need to travel a long way to the school that is able to meet their needs and one vehicle may need to collect several children.

Where long journeys are unavoidable, we will look to minimise negative impacts for the children, for example if a child becomes distressed on long journeys the parent or school may be able to offer advice on effective ways of keeping them calm or engaging with them to minimise distress.

3.3 Passenger assistants

Passenger Assistants will not be provided on all routes.

Passenger assistants will only be provided where –

- It is necessary in the interests of safety, taking into account the special needs of the pupil or pupils being transported.
- Pupils are of pre – school age (i.e. under 5);
- A specially adapted vehicle that requires additional assistance is used;

The provision of a passenger assistant may be agreed on the basis of the pupil's special educational need and/or disability. The passenger assistant may be shared between several passengers or provided for one specific passenger on a shared vehicle.

All Passenger assistants are given PATS (Passenger Assistant Training Scheme) training. This is a nationally recognised standard for passenger assistants. Where necessary the Passenger Assistant may also receive additional training to deal with the specific needs of one or more passengers.

Where a child is travelling as the sole occupant of a vehicle, parents or carers may, if they wish, volunteer to accompany their child / children rather than appoint a Passenger Assistant to travel with the passenger. Any such arrangement will need to be agreed with the Transport Team. Parents will not be permitted to travel with their child where there are other passengers on the vehicle.

3.4 Transport to and from residential schools.

It is anticipated that parents/carers will want to transport their children to Residential Placements themselves. This provides an opportunity for regular personal discussion between parent/carers and the staff at the residential provision. This arrangement must be agreed in advance with the Transport team at North Northamptonshire Council and mileage can be claimed at the agreed rate on a termly basis.

Where parent/carer transport is not possible, children on termly placements (i.e. 3 terms a year) will be provided with transport at the start and end of each term and half term holiday. In addition, a mileage allowance at the agreed rate may be claimed for one visit to the school each half term.

For weekly placements, transport will be provided at the beginning and end of each week, usually on a Monday morning and Friday afternoon.

Section 4 Applying for Transport Assistance (All students)

4.1 How do I apply for transport assistance

The Travel Assistance home page contains links to all transport policies and application forms. The Home page can be found at:

[School travel assistance | North Northamptonshire Council \(northnorthants.gov.uk\)](https://www.northnorthants.gov.uk/school-travel-assistance)

Please ensure that you use the appropriate link for your child or young person's age and schooling.

4.2 When should I apply

You should apply as soon as possible after your child or young person's placement at school is confirmed.

4.2.1 Applications for the new academic year.

For transport or other travel assistance to start at the beginning of the September Term, applications should be made to the Council by **the 3rd Friday in May**.

While we endeavour to process all applications received as quickly as possible, we cannot guarantee that travel assistance will be in place at the beginning of the new school year for any application received after this date.

We will look at the information you provide and make a decision on what support is necessary. We may need to call or email if we require further information.

We will endeavour to acknowledge receipt of your application within 10 working days. However, we may not advise you of any decision before 15th August. There is no need to contact us before this date unless something has materially changed with your application.

You can advise us of any changes by emailing: schooltransport.nnc@northnorthants.gov.uk

It would help us if you could quote the application reference number as well as the child's name in the email

4.2.2 Late Applications

Applications for September start which are received after the 3rd Friday in May will be acknowledged BUT MIGHT NOT BE PROCESSED IMMEDIATELY. All applications will be dealt with in order of the date on which they are received. While we endeavour to process all applications received as quickly as possible, we cannot guarantee that travel assistance will be in place at the beginning of the new school year for any application received after the cut-off date.

For late applications, transport may not be in place until October half term.

Until the travel arrangements are in place, it will be the parent's responsibility to make the necessary arrangements for their child to attend school.

4.2.3 In year Applications

For Applications for transport to start at any other time of the year, please allow up to 6 weeks for the application to be processed and transport commissioned. Wherever possible the Council will process the application and put transport in place more swiftly than this, but we ask for the additional time to allow for the procurement process should a new service or route be required.

Until the travel arrangements are in place, it will be the parent's responsibility to make the necessary arrangements for their child to attend school.

4.3 How often will I need to reapply?

Once awarded, transport or travel assistance will remain in place until the next transition stage unless otherwise notified at the time of awarding it.

Please be aware that you will need to reapply:

- At the end of Year 3 in which the child or young person attains the age of 8 years
- At the end of Year 6 in preparation for transfer to Secondary education
- At the end of Year 11, even if they are remaining at the same school for Sixth Form studies.
- If you change your home address (see 4.4 below)
- If your child or young person changes school (see 4.5 below)

4.4 Change of Address

When you move house, you will have to apply for a change to your transport.

Parents/carers of pupils who move home address during their schooling to an area where another school is the nearest suitable school may either:

- apply to move their child to the nearest suitable school for their new address and if successful the policy stated above will apply **or**:

- retain the child's place at their current school but they will become responsible for the child's transport provision and costs

The council will not normally provide transport or travel assistance to the current school where the family have moved home unless the current school remains the nearest school with places available.

However, if the pupil is in Year 11 and following examination courses at the point of moving, some assistance may be available, based upon exceptional circumstances.

Help is not usually available for pupils in other year groups, even if they are following examination courses. Some help may be available in other exceptional circumstances, where, for example, the pupil concerned would otherwise be at risk of harm.

If your application for transport is refused because there is a nearer school to your new home, and you are subsequently informed that there are no places available at that school you should file an **appeal** against the refusal to provide transport, based upon the lack of places in the nearer school. Please note that your original application will not be reviewed until an appeal has been filed.

Each case will be considered on its own merits by a senior Transport Officer.

4.5 Change of School

If the child or young person changes school, parents should re-apply for transport or travel assistance, and eligibility will be assessed as set out above.

If parents/carers elect to move a pupil to a school that is not the nearest suitable to their home address then they will become responsible for the child's transport provision and costs, except in very exceptional cases, for example where the pupil concerned would be at serious risk of significant harm.

Bullying, poor educational achievement, and similar factors will not normally be considered as exceptional circumstances.

4.6 Delayed applications

Sometimes applications may be delayed for additional information, for example where a school placement has not yet been confirmed, or the EHCP has not been approved and published. Applications where we are awaiting further information will be put "on hold" until the information becomes available, and the normal timescales might not be met. We will inform you that we are seeking additional information and who we need to provide this. We will endeavour to keep you up-to-date with progress of your application.

Section 5. Quality Standards and Responsibilities

5.1 Safety

A child's safety and welfare is always the main priority.

- Where appropriate all vehicles used or contracted by the Council are fitted with the standard seat belts, child seats and equipment to secure wheelchairs. Specialised equipment required to support the child or young person must be supplied by the parents.
- All children will be independently seated, one seat per child. The Council does not permit 3 passengers to a double seat.
- Trained passenger assistants will be made available where necessary.
- All passenger assistants will be approved by North Northamptonshire Council. Passenger assistants will carry an identification badge at all times.
- Vehicles contracted by the Council are expected to be licensed, taxed, insured and maintained appropriately, including MOT and other regular safety certification; this is a condition of the contract and will be periodically checked.
- All drivers must be licensed appropriately and should carry an identification badge at all times.
- All drivers and passenger assistants employed by the Council will be checked as appropriate in accordance with the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS). Drivers and Passenger Assistants employed on contracted vehicles are subject to DBS checks by their employer.
- All vehicles, drivers and passenger assistants will be subject to random checks by Council inspectors.

Wherever possible you will have a regular driver and/or Passenger Assistant. Please be aware that this can sometimes change at short notice, for example due to staff sickness, so we are unable to guarantee that the same driver and/or Passenger Assistant will always be on your child's route.

Parents/carers of pupils who have an EHC plan will receive a letter before the term commences in September detailing their child's travel arrangements. Timings given at this point are approximate and may change throughout the year. Every effort will be taken to ensure that any disruption will be kept to a minimum, but we cannot guarantee that the timings will remain exactly the same throughout the year.

5.2 Pupil Behaviour and parental responsibilities

Pupils have a right to safe and trouble-free travel. Pupils are expected to behave in a safe and appropriate manner as set out in the Transport Service Agreement supplied to parents/carers.

Parents/carers have a key role to play regarding the conduct of their children on transport and are responsible for ensuring that their children are aware of the necessity to behave in a reasonable and responsible manner.

Unacceptable behaviour may include, but is not limited to, being rude, pushing and kicking, bullying, distracting the driver, refusing to wear a seatbelt, or refusing to remain seated. This includes the use of hate speech and abusive language, as well as physical behaviours which may endanger the safety and wellbeing of other people on the transport.

Parent/carers need to ensure their children are aware that failure to behave in a reasonable manner may have consequences, including:

- cost to parents/carers for damage to the vehicle or to property caused by misbehaviour of their children;
- Temporary or permanent withdrawal of free transport with no recompense

Withdrawal of transport is a major step and the decision to do so is not taken lightly. Where a pupil misbehaves persistently, despite reasonable interventions from school, Service Provider and parents, transport provision may be withdrawn and parents will need to make alternative arrangements for their child to access school.

Please be aware that there is no right of appeal against a decision to remove a young person's entitlement to transport assistance on the grounds of unacceptable behaviour. Where a parent or service user disagrees with a decision to remove transport, they should contact NNC Transport Compliance transportcompliance.nnc@northnorthants.gov.uk for the decision to be reviewed.

Children and young people with SEND are not exempt from the requirement to behave appropriately on transport.

The Council and its staff and agents are aware that a child's challenging behaviour may be part of their special educational needs, disability or mobility problem and they may use it as a way to communicate their needs, for example a child who exhibits challenging behaviour may be trying to communicate discomfort or distress.

Parents should advise the passenger assistant, if there is a particular difficulty with their child on a given day, or if there is reason to believe that the child or young person may be more prone to becoming distressed or uncomfortable that day.

We aim to work with transport operators, schools and parents to find positive ways to manage challenging behaviour wherever possible.

5.3 Bus Passes

Where a child or young person is entitled to free travel assistance and it is appropriate for them to use a commercial or public service the Council will make arrangements for them to receive a bus pass from the service Operator.

For bus services commissioned by the Council, the young person will receive a pass for the service to which they are allocated. This includes passes for discretionary travel which have been paid for.

Pupils who qualify for assistance in the form of a bus pass can expect to receive the bus pass by mid-August for applications for the beginning of the academic year, or within 4 weeks of the application being received by North Northamptonshire Council for in-year applications.

Some passes may be offered in a digital form to be kept on the young person's phone or iPad. Please let the Travel Assistance team know if your young person would be unable to utilise a digital pass, and arrangements will be made to provide a physical version.

Whichever format of bus pass is issued, please make sure that your child or young person takes care of their bus pass, as they may be refused travel without it.

5.4 Lost or stolen Bus Pass

Pupils who have had their bus pass stolen/lost can expect to receive a replacement within 7 days of the loss being reported to North Northamptonshire Council. Reasonable requests for travel expenses will be considered by the Council if the above deadlines are not met. There may be a charge for the replacement pass. The charges are listed in the Fees and Charges Book, which is reviewed and published every year.

[Fees and charges | North Northamptonshire Council \(northnorthants.gov.uk\)](https://www.northnorthants.gov.uk/fees-and-charges)

Section 6 Appeals and Complaints

What is the difference between an appeal and a complaint?

There is a difference between an Appeal against a decision and a complaint because you feel that you have been mistreated or the service you have been offered is not good enough.

6.1 Complaints arise when you are unhappy with the service provided by the Council and/or its transport providers, for example, this might include consistent late running of a vehicle, a member of staff or a contractor being unhelpful or that there has been an unacceptable delay in resolving an issue.

If you are unhappy about something, then you are invited to make a formal complaint. Information on how to make a formal complaint is available using the link below:

<https://www.northnorthants.gov.uk/complaints>

6.2 An Appeal is for when you feel that the wrong decision has been made and you would like it re-examined.

If you are unhappy with a decision which has been taken, for example your application for transport has been declined, and you think that decision was incorrect, you may submit an appeal.

You may challenge a decision on any or all of the following grounds:

- Eligibility – you believe that we have failed to take into account some significant factor in assessing whether your child is eligible for travel assistance
- distance measurement between home and school
- safety of the walking route between home and school
- transport arrangements offered are not suitable for the child or young person's needs

Please be aware that there is no right of appeal against a decision to remove a young person's entitlement to transport assistance on the grounds of unacceptable behaviour. . Where a parent or service user disagrees with a decision to remove transport, they should contact NNC Transport Compliance transportcompliance.nnc@northnorthants.gov.uk for the decision to be reviewed.

The appeals process

Stage 1 Appeal - Review of decision

You have 20 working days from the receipt of the transport decision to make a request for a review of the original decision.

The request should detail why the decision should be reviewed and give personal and/or family circumstances, which should be considered during the appeal process. You might like to include other documents to support your case.

These may include

- a recent medical report stating how the young person's medical condition or disability negatively impacts on their ability to travel. This must be from a relevant consultant or specialist working with the family.
- Map evidence to show how you have calculated the walking distance,
- An independent report showing why you believe the route to be unsafe or
- any other third party evidence you wish us to consider as part of the review.

A Senior Officer from the Transport team will review the original decision and will send you a letter detailing the outcome of the review within 20 working days of receipt of the written request.

This will set out the following information:

- the decision reached
- how the review was conducted
- information about other departments and/or agencies consulted as part of the process
- what factors were considered
- the rationale for the decision reached
- information about escalation to Stage 2, if appropriate

Stage 2 Appeal

If you are still not happy with the decision, you will have 20 working days from receipt of the Stage 1 decision, to make a request to escalate the matter to a formal appeal. As in Stage 1, you may present further recent evidence to support your case if you wish.

An independent appeal panel, made up of 3 representatives of the North Northamptonshire Council, will be convened to consider the appeal within 40 working days of receipt of your request.

The independent appeal panel may consist of a combination of

- a councillor
- an assistant director or their representative
- a senior transport officer
- Another senior officer from outside the Transport team

No member of the appeal panel will have been involved in the original decision to decline transport assistance or in the Stage 1 Appeal.

An officer from democratic services may be asked to act as clerk to record the appeal decision.

This panel will consider verbal and written representations from both the parent and officers involved in the case.

You will be invited to attend the hearing to present your case. Most appeal hearings are held virtually on-line. If this would be a problem for you please contact the Appeal Officer.

If you do not wish to attend or are unable to attend, the panel will make its decision based upon your written representations. The evidence from the original application and the Stage 1 review will be re-examined together with any new evidence that you have presented.

The Senior Officer from the Transport Team involved in the review of the decision at Stage 1 may also be invited to attend.

Within 5 working days of the hearing you will receive a letter or email, detailing the outcome of the appeal hearing, which will set out:

- the nature of the decision reached
- the rationale for the decision reached
- how the review was conducted
- information about other departments and/or agencies that were consulted as part of the process
- what factors were considered
- information about escalation to the Local Government Ombudsman if appropriate

To request a review or an appeal, email transportappeals.nnc@northnorthants.gov.uk.

Local Government Ombudsman

There is a right of complaint to the Local Government Ombudsman on the grounds that there was a failure to comply with the procedural rules or there was an irregularity in the way the appeal was handled.

Contact the [Local Government Ombudsman](#).

APPENDICES

Appendix A1

North Northamptonshire Council School Transport

Safety of Walking Routes (Built-up areas inc. in villages)

When determining whether the Council should provide transport to schools on safety grounds, a number of criteria have to be considered in order to determine a route's acceptability for pupils to walk. The criteria assume that pupils aged 4-11 will be accompanied by a responsible adult, and that pupils aged 11 or over may travel independently. The law expects that all pupils will be accompanied "as appropriate". Pupils are expected to travel by the shortest available route. However, where that route is judged to be unacceptable longer alternatives may be considered provided that they are still within the agreed walking distance.

The following are the criteria that must all be met for a route to be acceptable for use by child pedestrians in an urban or village environment.

1 Can the route be walked without walking on a classified¹ road?

If yes, the route may be acceptable.

If no, the route is unacceptable.

2 Is the 85th percentile speed² more than the guidelines for enforcement³?

If yes, the route is unacceptable.

If no, the route may be acceptable.

3 Are there formal crossing facilities⁴ available on A class roads as required?

If no, the route is unacceptable.

If yes, the route may be acceptable.

In measuring the speed of vehicles to apply criterion 2, only the data collected on schooldays between 0700hrs and 0900hrs and between 1500hrs and 1700hrs will be taken into account.

The route will be considered acceptable if the average speed of 85% of traffic over the week during the stated times is below the enforcement guidelines. If a route appears to meet all of the criteria, it will be deemed to be acceptable. Should a decision be challenged, a site visit would be made to verify that no exceptional circumstances exist.

1 Class A, B or C.

2 The speed which 85% of vehicles does not exceed.

3 As determined by the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO).

4 School Crossing Patrols, pedestrian refuges, zebra, pelican or other light-controlled crossings.

Appendix A2

North Northamptonshire Council School Transport
Safety of Walking Routes (Village to Village Routes)

When determining whether the Council should provide transport to schools on safety grounds, a number of criteria have to be considered in order to determine a route's acceptability for pupils to walk. The criteria assume that pupils aged 4-11 will be accompanied by a responsible adult, and that pupils aged 11 or over may travel independently. The law expects that all pupils will be accompanied "as appropriate". Pupils are expected to travel by the shortest available route. However, where that route is judged to be unacceptable longer alternatives may be considered provided that they are still within the agreed walking distance.

The following are the criteria that must all be met for a route to be acceptable for use by child pedestrians.

1 Is the route classified as Red or Amber¹ by the Highway Authority?

If yes, the route is unacceptable.
If no, the route may be acceptable.

2 Can the route be walked without walking on a classified² road?

If yes, the route may be acceptable.
If no, the route is unacceptable.

3 Is the traffic flow over 1,000 vehicles in the peak hour?

If yes, the route is unacceptable.
If no, the route may be acceptable.

4 Is the 85th percentile speed³ more than the guidelines for enforcement⁴?

If yes, the route is unacceptable.
If no, the route may be acceptable.

5 Are there formal crossing facilities⁵ available on A class roads as required?

If no, the route is unacceptable.
If yes, the route may be acceptable.

In measuring the speed of vehicles to apply criterion 4, only the data collected on schooldays between 0700hrs and 0900hrs and between 1500hrs and 1700hrs will be taken into account.

The route will be considered acceptable if the average speed of 85% of traffic over the week during the stated times is below the enforcement guidelines. If a route appears to meet all of the criteria it will be deemed to be acceptable. Should a decision be challenged, a site visit would be made to verify that no exceptional circumstances exist.

1 Under the Casualty Reduction Strategy, all roads in the county are classified Red, Amber or Green on the basis of their overall accident record.

2 Class A, B or C.

3 The speed which 85% of vehicles do not exceed.

4 As determined by the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO).

5 School Crossing Patrols, pedestrian refuges, zebra, pelican or other light-controlled crossings.

Appendix A3

North Northamptonshire Council

Low Income Criteria for Extended Rights Home to School Transport

If you are in receipt of any of the following, your child may be eligible for free Home to School Transport under the extended right legislation. You also need to meet the other qualifying criteria set out in section 1 of the Home to School Transport and Travel Assistance Policy.

Below is the Low Income qualifying criteria which is the same as for free school meals for children in year 3 or above:

- Income Support
- Income based Job Seekers Allowance
- Income related Employment and Support Allowance
- Support under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- Child Tax Credit, with no element of Working Tax Credit, and a household income below £16,190 (as assessed by HM Revenue and Customs)
- Guarantee Element of State Pension Credit
- Universal Credit

A child must reside with the applicant to receive free school meals.

Useful Contacts.

Schools and Education

[Schools and education | North Northamptonshire Council \(northnorthants.gov.uk\)](https://www.northnorthants.gov.uk/schools-and-education)

School Admissions

[Contact the school admissions team | North Northamptonshire Council](https://www.northnorthants.gov.uk/school-admissions)

[\(northnorthants.gov.uk\)](https://www.northnorthants.gov.uk)

admissions.ncc@northnorthants.gov.uk

SEND Information and advice Service

[SEND Information Advice Support Service | North Northamptonshire Council](https://www.northnorthants.gov.uk/send-information-advice-support-service)

[\(northnorthants.gov.uk\)](https://www.northnorthants.gov.uk)

Phone: **0300 373 2532**

Email: **SENDIASS@northnorthants.gov.uk**

Local Offer

[North Northamptonshire Local Offer \(northnorthants.gov.uk\)](https://www.northnorthants.gov.uk/local-offer)

Education Health and Care Plan team

Assessment: EHCNorth.Assessment@northnorthants.gov.uk

Annual Reviews: EHCReviews.NCC@northnorthants.gov.uk

Resolution and Family Liaison Team: EHCNorth.Resolutions@northnorthants.gov.uk

Provision and Placement Team: EHCNorth.EHCP@northnorthants.gov.uk

Journey Planning

[Plan Your Journey | Traveline](https://www.northnorthants.gov.uk/plan-your-journey)

<https://www.smartmovenorthamptonshire.net/journey-planners>

Road Safety Tips

[The Highway Code - Rules for pedestrians \(1 to 35\) - Guidance - GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/the-highway-code)

[\(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk)

[THINK! – Road safety](https://www.northnorthants.gov.uk/think-road-safety)