



Passenger Transport Group

Application for Free School Transport—Guidance Notes

Please read **ALL** of these notes **BEFORE** completing an application form.

IMPORTANT: A pupil's entitlement to transport can only be given by letter from the Authority following completion and submission of a Free School Transport Application form by the applicant and not by any telephone or verbal communication.



Who is entitled to Free School Transport?

The pupil must ordinarily be a resident in Shropshire.

A pupil is entitled to free school transport if attending full-time at the nearest or the local Authority's designated catchment primary or secondary school to the home address and living over 2 miles (for primary aged pupils) or 3 miles (for secondary aged pupils), measured by the shortest available pedestrian route. In relation to the shared Shrewsbury secondary catchment area, the local authority's designated catchment is determined using the 'nearest school' test as defined within the admissions code. General advice about free school transport can be obtained by telephoning 0345 6789008, although it will not be possible to give a definitive answer over the telephone.

The Council will consider every application on its merits, within the context of the current legislation and all other relevant factors and determine whether discretionary school transport be provided by the Council or not.

Income Assessed Home to School Transport

From September 2008, if your child is of secondary school age (aged 11-16, school year 7-11) and you are either:

- Entitled to free school meals or
- Receiving the maximum level of Working Tax Credit (your working tax credit calculation within your award notice will say 'deduction due to income £0.00') and can provide a copy of the latest Tax Credit award notice or a recent letter from the Benefits Agency confirming receipt of maximum Working Tax Credit. In this case, your child will have an additional entitlement to transport to one of the three nearest qualifying schools where parents live more than 2 miles, but no more than 6 miles from the school.

Measurements made for determining whether home addresses are 2, 3 or 6 miles from the school in question, or for determining the nearest school to a home address, are made from the nearest available gate of the home to the nearest available gate of the school, both from points where the nearest gate meets the public highway.

Existing transport networks already provide buses or cars from near to most homes. The pick-up point will be within a reasonable distance of the home. Door to door transport is not normally provided.

Transport is not provided for after school activities.



Who is entitled to Free School Transport?

Examination Grounds

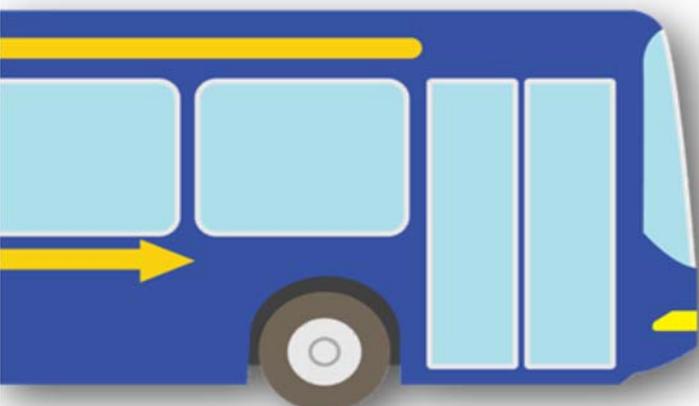
An application for transport assistance on Examination Grounds will be considered where a family move address during a child's examination year (year 10 or 11). In order for assistance on Examination Grounds to be granted, the pupil must have been attending the nearest or catchment area school prior to the address change. Furthermore, the Authority will normally only provide assistance where the distance between the new home address and the school is over 3 miles, but no more than 10 miles. Where assistance is granted, transport will only be provided in the form of a bus pass for an existing school contract or public service vehicle. If there is no suitable transport already in existence, assistance by way of Parents Travelling Expenses will be provided. Bespoke or taxi transport is not provided in these circumstances.

Other reasons to apply

As explained above, every application is considered on its own merits and therefore, should you wish to apply for any other reasons than those explained above, please submit a free school transport application for consideration, detailing your reasons for applying.

Parents who state a preference for a place at a school that is not the nearest or catchment area school, will be responsible for all school transport arrangements and costs during the child's school life.

Please note that, if you are eligible for free school transport to your child's existing primary or secondary school and you choose to move your child to another school, for whatever reason, free school transport eligibility does not automatically transfer with the change of school. You may find that your eligibility ceases when you make the transfer. For eligibility to be reassessed, a new free school transport application should be submitted.





About my application...

How do I complete the application form?

Applications can be made online via Shropshire Council's website, www.shropshire.gov.uk or over the phone with the Council's Customer Service Team by calling **0345 6789008**. Paper application forms can be sent upon request.

What details of transport assistance should I give?

If known, please give details of the transport that you want for your child. If more than one route is involved, please give details of both journeys if known. If you do not know what transport is involved leave this section blank.

What will happen next?

Your application will be dealt with as quickly as possible and you will be informed via email, where an email address is provided or a letter to your home address, whether or not free school transport has been granted. If you qualify you will be informed what transport has been agreed. The Authority does not issue travel passes for primary or secondary aged pupils unless the student utilises a fare paying bus service.

Where free school transport is granted, this is normally for the length of time that the pupil will be in attendance at the school that has been applied for. There is no need to reapply each September, the transport will continue as normal. New applications should only be submitted if there is a change of circumstances, such as a change of address or school. The Authority will be in touch with you if there should be any changes to the existing transport.

How long does it take for my application to be processed?

There is no set time for processing applications although, we aim for each application to take no more than 2 weeks to be processed. If your application is being made in the spring or summer term prior to your child starting school in September, it may take longer for your application to be processed, due to the volume of the applications being received during this time. Please note that parents/carers are responsible for all travel arrangements prior to receiving confirmation of entitlement to free school transport and the child/children must not begin travelling on school transport until such confirmation has been received.

If any of the details given by me on the application form change do I need to notify anyone?

YES – It is vital that you notify the Entitlement Team as soon as possible. Either via email to schooltransport@shropshire.gov.uk or by calling **0345 6789008**.



Other information...

Pupils with Special Educational Needs

If a pupil has a **Statement of Special Educational Needs** or an **Education, Health and Care Plan**, you will be required to complete a separate form.

This can be done online via the following:
www.shropshire.gov.uk/the-send-local-offer/

You will then need to search for 'Transport' and all the information will be listed there for you.



Appeals

If an application for travel assistance is not approved, or you're unhappy with the nature of the assistance being offered, you do have the right to appeal. Appeals should be made in writing and should set out the exact nature and grounds of the appeal. Please note that during the appeal stages travel assistance will not be provided, nor will a change to existing travel assistance be made. Any request for appeal should be sent in writing via email to schooltransport@shropshire.gov.uk or to the postal address,

Passenger Transport Group
Shropshire Council, 107 Longden Road,
Shrewsbury, SY3 9DS

What if my child loses their travel pass?

If your child loses the travel pass that they have been issued, or it is stolen or damaged, a duplicate should be ordered. There is a £3 charge for duplicate travel passes and these can be ordered by calling 0345 6789008. Please note that, should your child travel on a public service vehicle, you will be responsible for paying any daily fares incurred prior to the issue of the new pass. Duplicate travel passes are sent to the school for collection.

Who should I contact if I have concerns about the transport my child is receiving?

Please contact via email, schooltransport@shropshire.gov.uk or over the phone by calling **0345 6789008** if you should have any concerns regarding the transport that your child is receiving.



Things to consider...

Changes to transport arrangements

It should be noted that transport provision can be changed with little or no notice where there are operational, safety, financial or other service reasons for doing so. We appreciate that change can be difficult and aim to keep such instances to a minimum and where at all possible, provide parents/carers with reasonable notice of any such proposed changes. We will also work with parents/carers and schools to make any transitions as smooth as possible.



Safety and contingency arrangements

Home to School
Transport

Your Child's Safety

A leaflet about safety on school transport is sent out to all pupils who have been granted free school transport. A copy of this form can also be viewed following the 'Your Child's Safety' link on the website.

When crossing the road, pupils should follow the Green Cross Code.

In dark winter months, pupils should wear appropriate light, fluorescent and reflective clothing.

In severe weather or other major emergencies, school transport may not operate or schools may close. Parents/carers should be aware of this and they may need to make appropriate arrangements to look after their children at home. Parents/carers need to ensure that schools have their up to date emergency contact telephone numbers in case children have to return home early. Parents who take their children to school in bad weather should also bring them home in the afternoon. Local radio will give you what advice and information it can.



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CODE OF CONDUCT
FOR PUPILS USING SCHOOL TRANSPORT

Parents need to have contingency arrangements in place to allow children to return home early, where transport has failed to operate for any reason in the mornings or for any other emergency, such as an evacuation from school during the day. Children should be familiar with these parental contingency arrangements, as problems can occur at any time, without warning.

Please note: When the Council provides transport, parents are fully responsible for the safety and care of their children until they board the provided transport at the designated pick-up point and, on return home, from the moment they alight from the vehicle at the designated drop-off point.