

HOME TO SCHOOL TRANSPORT

Guidance for Parents and Carers



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Introduction

We have a statutory duty to provide free transport to children and young people who are entitled to receive it. This duty means we have to provide transport from their home to school and the return journey each school day.

The City of Edinburgh Council wish to promote the independence and well-being of all children and young people through a range of travel options. All children and young people should be encouraged to follow a healthy lifestyle including walking a reasonable distance, accompanied where necessary, and where possible, to school

We need to ensure we provide this in a cost efficient way and therefore use a number of different transport options to meet this entitlement.

In implementing this guidance (and policy), the Council aims to:

1. Assist parents and carers in their responsibility of ensuring that their child attends school safely and on time
2. Ensure that the right children and young people get the right option for travelling to school
3. Be responsible to the concerns of parents and carers in the provision of appropriate travel assistance arrangements
4. Ensure the most effective, safe and economical use of resource by the close monitoring of contract
5. Keep its arrangement for school travel assistance under continuous review

Who is eligible for home to school transport?

The Education (Scotland) Act 1980 says we must provide transport for any primary pupil up to the age of 8 living more than two miles from their catchment school or children over the age of eight who live more than three miles from their catchment school.

Here in Edinburgh we have agreed that we will provide transport for all primary aged children living over two miles from their catchment school and three miles for secondary pupils.

The Act also says we should also provide transport for children in exceptional and special circumstances.

All addresses in Edinburgh have two [catchment schools](#) – a denominational and non-denominational.

We also have several schools with a citywide catchment area:

- Gaelic medium primary or secondary
- The City of Edinburgh Music School
- The Edinburgh Dance Unit at Broughton High School
- The Scottish FA Performance School
- The Heart of Midlothian Performance School

We only provide transport support to children living with Edinburgh Council boundaries. If you live in another local authority area you will need to apply to them for support.

Please note if you make a successful placing request and send your child to a school other than one of your catchment schools or you move outside the catchment area they will not qualify for free transport and you will be responsible for transport arrangements.

Distance Measurements

We measure the distance from your home address to the nearest school gate by the shortest suitable walking route. We only consider routes that are well lit and have pavements throughout. Other factors like traffic speed and volumes and safe crossing points are also considered.

We take advice from the police and qualified road safety practitioners when assessing if a route is safe. If your house is less than the qualifying distance and they confirm a safe route is not available we will provide transport support.

If you disagree with our measurement, you can request a map from us that will show you the safe walking route we have measured. You also have the right to make a complaint if you disagree with our decision.

Exceptional Circumstances and Discretionary Assistance

There are some circumstances where we may provide transport support. Please ensure you provide as much information as possible to support your application when you apply. All applications for discretionary support will be reviewed by our Travel Allocation Panel who will decide whether support will be provided and agree what this should be.

No Suitable Walking Route:

If you do not meet the distance criteria we will provide transport if there is no safe suitable walking route to your school. We consider a route to be suitable for a child if they can walk with an adult along a pavement that is well lit throughout. Where required our own health and safety officers will carry out an assessment.

Medical Conditions:

If your child has a health condition that affects their mobility and would prevent them walking to school, we will provide transport if they are assessed as needing support.

Placed by us in an alternative school:

If there is no suitable place available in your catchment school and we place your child in an alternative school or a special school that is further to travel and meets our distance criteria we will provide transport

If we place your child in another school to ensure we can meet their needs and it is further to travel and meets our distance criteria we will provide transport

Temporary Relocation

If we move your family to another house on a temporary basis that is further from your child's school and the distance criteria are met or there are safety issues we will provide transport

Looked after children

If a child is looked after and living away from home but continuing to attend their previous catchment school

Single parent with disability

If you are unable to take your child to school and have no family or other support your child may receive transport support. This will require your social work to submit an assessment

Other Circumstances

If you believe there are other circumstances that should be considered please provide detailed information.

Transport Arrangements

Transport arrangements will be put in place to allow one daily journey from home to school and a return journey at the end of the school day.

We believe that a journey time of up to 45 minutes for primary pupils and 75 minutes for secondary pupils is an appropriate journey time. Occasionally it may be possible to exceed these times but only if the additional travel time does not place undue stress or strain on the child.

Edinburgh has good public transport links and wherever feasible we will provide a free bus pass. If this is not possible we have a range of other transport options that may be provided. Our aim where possible is to use shared transport but we recognise this may not always be appropriate.

Options provided include:

- Free Bus Pass
- The Council's own transport, for example minibus
- Coach, minibus or people carrier/taxi
- Black cab

External transport providers will be contracted following a tendering process. All vehicles will be expected to meet regulations on vehicle condition and road worthiness. In some instances for shared transport we will ask children to meet at a local pick up point. Parents are responsible for ensuring their child gets to the pick up point safely and should collect them at the same place at the end of the day.

There is no statutory requirement to provide passenger assistants when transport is provided. A passenger assistant will be provided if they are assessed as being required to meet the travel needs of a child. This is normally when a child has

complex additional support needs and/or health condition and require an additional level of support or supervision on a journey.

Additional Support Needs

In addition to the options outlined above, the following options may also be considered for children with **additional support needs**. **A Travel Allocation Panel will assess the most suitable travel support option available.**

Independent Travel

The Panel may consider providing support to enable children to travel independently.

For some children with additional support needs we will provide support to help them gain independent travelling skills. This could be through a member of staff initially escorting a child on a bus, practicing the route and or providing technology to support their journey.

Personal Assisted Travel Budget

A PTB is a sum of money paid to parents or carers of children with disabilities and additional supports needs special educational needs who qualify for free school transport.

The sum of money is based on the:

- distance from home to school
- child's travel needs

A PTB lets families decide how their child gets to and from school. Parents and carers can make arrangements which suit their needs.

School staff walking escort

If a child lives within a mile of their catchment school and there are reasons why a parent is unable to accompany their child to school, a walking escort may be provided on a temporary basis.

Shared Care Arrangements

If a child is living between parent addresses we will normally only provide transport support from one address. If more than one address is registered with the school, we will consider the address of the parent who receives child benefit to be the main residence for travel purposes.

Code of Conduct

We expect all children to behave appropriately on home to school transport. Parents are responsible for ensuring the safe and acceptable behaviour of their child to ensure that all children can travel in safety and comfort.

Misbehaviour or inappropriate conduct may result in transport being removed on a temporary or permanent basis. In these instances, parents will be responsible for ensuring their child gets to and from school.

We carry out risk assessments to ensure children are safe on their journey to and from school. We also have a duty to ensure our staff are safe. If a child's behaviour means we cannot safely transport a child in a contractor vehicle, even with a passenger assistant, we may need to look at other types of educational provision on a temporary basis until we can carry out an assessment and provide the additional support required for the child.

How to appeal a decision or raise a complaint

If your request for transport support has been refused or you believe the option offered is not appropriate you can raise a complaint through our complaint procedures. Please direct your complaint to our Travel Hub in the first instance.

Stage 1 Complaint

Our Travel Hub will aim to respond within five days unless there are exceptional circumstances. If your complaint is complex and cannot be resolved at this stage or you are unhappy with the decision you can take your complaint to Stage 2

Stage 2 Complaint

Please tell the Travel Hub you wish to take your complaint to Stage 2. It will then be passed to the Travel Allocation Panel. They will confirm within three working days they have received it.

The Panel will review your complaint and may ask you to provide further details or arrange to meet you. Within twenty days they will provide a response in writing. If for any reason they are unable to meet this deadline they will let you know and agree a revised timescale with you.

Scottish Public Service Ombudsman (SPSO)

If you have followed our complaints procedure and are still unhappy with the decision, you can ask the Scottish Public Service Ombudsman to look at it. They can only do this if:

- Our own complaints process has been followed and completed
- The complaint relates to an event that has happened or you have become aware of in the last year.

They cannot consider any matters that have been considered in court.

Contact SPSO

- In person: SPSO, 99 McDonald Road, Edinburgh, EH7 4NS
- By post: FREEPOST SPSO

- Freephone: 0800 377 7330
- Online: www.spsso.org.uk/contactus

Contact us

School Transport: SchoolTransport@edinburgh.gov.uk

Travel Allocation Panel: Travel.AllocationPanel@edinburgh.gov.uk

Travel Hub: 0131 229 2950