



North Ayrshire Council

School Transport Policy

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Contents

1. Introduction.....	9
2. Legislation.....	9
3. Journeys Covered.....	9
4. Criteria for Entitlement to School Transport.....	9
5. Exceptional Circumstances	11
6. When to Submit Your Mainstream School Transport Application.....	11
7. ASN Transport Applications	12
8. Privilege Seat Information	12
9. Pupil Behaviour.....	12
10. Appeals Process – Mainstream and ASN.....	12
11. Transport Complaints Procedure	13
11.1 Mainstream Transport.....	13
11.2 ASN Transport	13
12. Contact Information.....	13

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Council's Corporate Transport Hub manage and coordinate mainstream and additional support needs (ASN) school transport. School transport is delivered in partnership with Strathclyde Partnership for Transport (SPT), taxi contractors and/or parents/carers to ensure the most efficient, suitable and economical use of resources to support children and young people to access their educational entitlement.
- 1.2 Transport can be provided in one of the following ways:
- Dedicated school bus;
 - Bus or train pass on local service (timetabled services carrying members of the public);
 - Taxi, private hire, minibus or ferry;
 - Parental contracts - in specific circumstances the Council will support parents to transport their own child(ren) to and from school with the parent submitting a monthly Travel Expense Claim Form.

Further information may be obtained from your school.

2. Legislation

- 2.1 Section 42 (4) of the **Education (Scotland) Act 1980**, makes it clear that free school transport must be provided for a child who lives 2 miles or more (if aged under 8) and who lives more than three miles or more (if aged 8 and or over) from the relevant school premises.
- 2.2 It should be noted that the arrangements for school transport in North Ayrshire Council are more favourable than that noted in the legislation as all primary aged children living more than 2 miles from their catchment school will receive school transport.
- 2.3 Provision of school transport is set out in legislation which may be amended from time to time.

3. Journeys Covered

- 3.1 Free school transport normally covers one journey to school in the morning and the same journey at the end of the school day.

4. Criteria for Entitlement to School Transport

- 4.1 The Council may provide free transport for the whole or part of the journey between a pupil's main address and school (or other educational establishment) when the following criteria apply.
- A pupil lives more than two miles walking distance from their catchment primary school or three or more miles from their catchment secondary school using the shortest suitable walking route. Both suitability and length of any route will be determined solely by relevant Council officers.

- A pupil's walking route to school is considered to be unacceptable by the Council after consultation with the Council's Road Safety, or other suitably qualified Officer.
- Transport may be provided to pupils on medical grounds even when they live within the normal acceptable walking distance limits. Such assistance may be ongoing or temporary depending upon the nature of the medical condition. Any application on medical grounds must be supported by a letter from the pupil's own doctor or a medical consultant.
- Where a pupil is unable to attend their local catchment school due to oversubscription and is placed in a nominated school by the authority AND the pupil is further than the relevant walking distance from that school then the pupil may be entitled to free school transport. These will be considered on a case by case basis.
- If a pupil has an additional support need, transport may be provided in accordance with the relevant legislation and/or the recommendations made by Senior Managers. These will be considered on a case by case basis.
- For pupils considered to be Care Experienced Children - Looked After and Accommodated Children (in Residential, Foster Care or Formal Kinship Care) within North Ayrshire. These will be considered on a case by case basis.
- Where a primary or secondary pupil has been placed in temporary housing by referral from Housing and they live out with the relevant walking distance criteria from their previous catchment school. Transport in such cases will be provided for a restricted period only.
- A child attending an early years establishment will be provided with free school transport if they live 5 or more miles away from the nearest local Early Learning and Childcare provision. If the nearest early years establishment is oversubscribed and the next nearest early years establishment is 5 or more miles away, the child may be entitled to free transport.
- Primary 7 pupils attending transition days to their catchment secondary school if they live 3 or more miles by the shortest suitable walking route.
- For pupils already entitled to free school transport and sitting SQA exams during term time, a request can be made by the Head Teacher, in consultation with the Transport Hub for extraordinary transport provision where exams finish after the end of the normal school day.
- A pupil who has secured a college placement before their statutory school leaving date and the distance between home and the venue exceeds 3 miles by the shortest suitable walking route. This arrangement will not continue beyond the pupil's official school leaving date.
- A young person accesses college to undertake flexible learning and education and the distance between home/school and the venue exceeds 3 miles by the shortest suitable walking route. This arrangement will not continue beyond the pupil's official school leaving date.

Please note that if your child is attending school as a result of a successful placing request no transport will be provided.

5. Exceptional Circumstances

5.1 There may be occasions that a request for school transport can be made in the case

of exceptional circumstances. These will be considered on a case by case basis.

6. When to Submit Your Mainstream School Transport Application

6.1 If your child is starting primary school or secondary school, you should apply by April of that year. Applications can be made after this date, however this could result in a delay in transport arrangements being made.

6.2 The transport application e-form is available via the web link below:

[Application for transport \(flexiroute.net\)](https://flexiroute.net)

6.3 If you move to a new house during the year, you should notify your child's school, in writing, at least two weeks prior to moving. You should submit a new transport application if you meet the criteria in [section 3](#) above.

6.4 Parents/carers who have registered their child(ren) at the Gaelic Medium Education provision within Whitehirst Park Primary School, Kilwinning are able to apply for free transport if they meet any of the qualifying criteria noted above in [section 3](#).

6.5 Parents/carers who register their child(ren) at St Matthew's Academy as their catchment secondary provision are able to apply for free transport if they meet any of the qualifying criteria noted above in [section 3](#).

6.6 Parents/carers should complete a transport application during transition from Primary 7 to their catchment secondary school if they meet the appropriate criteria noted above.

[Application for transport \(flexiroute.net\)](https://flexiroute.net)

6.7 The Transport Hub will notify parents/carers in writing of the outcome of their application. This will either be:

- A minimum of two weeks prior to the beginning of the school term or
- Within two weeks of receipt for a mid-session application.

6.8 Parents/carers can confirm the details on pickup and drop-off points and times for mainstream transport by contacting SPT on 0141 333 3362.

6.9 Bus passes are issued by the school at the start of the academic year for any contracted vehicle over 16 passengers only. If the bus pass is lost, the parent /carer must contact SPT. There will be a charge for a replacement pass which the parents/carers is responsible for.

7. ASN Transport Applications

- 7.1 At the point of transition from early years to primary school or primary school to secondary school, an application for school transport will be made by the 'leaving' establishment Head of Centre or Head Teacher.
- 7.2 There may be occasions when there is a need to consider a transport request mid-term. The request will be completed by the pupils current Head Teacher, in consultation with the parent/carer.

8. Privilege Seat Information

- 8.1 Where there are vacant seats on dedicated school contracts (i.e. transport for school pupils only) these seats are referred to as privilege seats. A privilege seat may be applied for when a pupil does not meet any of the criteria noted in [section 3](#). This may include when a pupil's home address is within walking distance of their catchment school; or a pupil lives at the same address as another pupil accessing dedicated school transport; or a pupil attends a school in North Ayrshire due to a successful placing request.
- 8.2 If you wish to apply for a privilege seat for your child(ren), an application form must be submitted to the Corporate Transport Hub before the 20th September each year. This application can be found on the [North Ayrshire Council website](#).
- 8.3 Privilege seats will be allocated if and when space is available. The provision of the privilege seat will cease at the end of the school year or earlier should an entitled pupil require a place on this contract.
- 8.4 Should the number of applications exceed the number of privilege seats available, the Transport Hub will use established criteria which includes applicants residing within the distance criteria but live furthest from the school, to determine the successful applicants. Further information on this may be made available on request to the Corporate Transport Hub.

9. Pupil Behaviour

- 9.1 The responsibility for pupil behaviour whilst travelling on school transport remains with the pupil and parents/carers.
- 9.2 Misbehaviour or inappropriate conduct may result in the provision of free school transport being temporarily or permanently withdrawn. Where transport has been withdrawn, the parents/carers will be responsible for their child's journey to and from school.
- 9.3 Should an incident occur, this will be reported to the Head Teacher and the parents/carers may be invited to a meeting to discuss the behaviours and seek assurances on their child's future conduct.

10. Appeals Process – Mainstream and ASN

10.1 Parents/carers have the right to challenge a decision about their child's eligibility for transport. Where this happens, the appeals process is as follows:

- Following the original decision, a parent/carer has 10 working days to make a written request appealing the decision. The appeal will be treated as a standard service request in the normal manner;
- The appeal should be sent to: Education Transport Panel, Communities & Education Directorate, 5th Floor, Cunninghame House, Irvine, KA12 8EE, or emailed to: educationtransportpanel@north-ayrshire.gov.uk.
- The appeal should include details of why the parent/carer believes the decision should be reviewed/overturned and provide any other relevant information for consideration;
- The decision will be reviewed by the Education Transport Panel, and the parent/carer will receive a written response on the outcome of their appeal within 5 working days.

11. Transport Complaints Procedure

11.1 Mainstream Transport

11.1.1 For a complaint relating to mainstream transport, the parent/carer should contact the school in the first instance. A complaints email will be completed by the school and sent to SPT to investigate. Parents/carers may also complain directly to SPT in writing by emailing SPT via the following link: www.spt.co.uk/school-transport-complaints

11.1.2 SPT will respond directly to the school of the outcome of any investigations or directly to the parent/carer where they complained directly to them.

11.2 ASN Transport

11.2.1 For a complaint or concern relating to the operational service provided for ASN transport e.g. conduct of driver/escort, timekeeping, changes of drivers, escorts and vehicles, parents/carers should contact the Corporate Transport Hub by email at transporthub@north-ayrshire.gov.uk or by telephone on 01294 541600 Option 3 in the first instance.

11.2.2 Any concerns relating to individual medical requirements and conduct of pupils should be made to the school, where it will be handled and dealt with by the Head Teacher who will work with the Transport Hub if necessary, to resolve.

12. Contact Information

121 If you have any queries regarding your child's eligibility for free school transport please contact the Corporate Transport Hub at the following:

Address: Corporate Transport Hub,
Commercial Services,
Unit 1D Byrehill Drive,
West Byrehill Industrial Estate,
Kilwinning
KA13 6HN

Telephone: 01294 541600 Option 3

Email: transporthub@north-ayrshire.gov.uk