

Home to School Consultation 2026

Frequently Asked Questions

Please note further FAQs will be added as the consultation progresses, in line questions that are raised throughout our information/engagement sessions.

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General Questions	
My child is due to start school in September 2026, do these proposed changes affect them?	If you apply for home to school transport before 1st September 2026 then your child will be assessed using the current policy. If you apply for home to school transport on or after the 1 st of September 2026 eligibility for home to school transport would be assessed using the new proposed policy.
What happens if I move house after September 2026?	Anyone who has a change in circumstances on or after 1st September 2026 (such as a house move) would need to apply for home to school transport and would be subject to the new proposed eligibility criteria.
Why are you proposing to make updates to the policy now?	The council is consulting on the proposed changes to the policy to ensure the policy is in line with the new national guidance published in 2023, and to provide clarification on the current policy.
Do the policy proposals change eligibility criteria for my child or young person?	Children already in receipt of transport assistance would keep their entitlement unless there is a change of circumstances. If there is a change of circumstances a new application would be required and assessed in line with the new proposed policy. Any new applications, including siblings of children already in receipt of transport, would be assessed in accordance with the new proposed policy.
My child/young person currently receives SEND home to school transport would this affect us?	Children with SEND in receipt of transport assistance would keep their entitlement until they complete their current course or key stage. If there is a change of circumstances, a new application would be required and assessed in line with the new proposed policy. Any new applications, including siblings of children already in receipt of transport, would be assessed in accordance with the new proposed policy.
What would I do if my child/young person has moved to a new education setting, and I need to apply for transport? How do I know what training drivers have to do and what checks do they have to have?	If the change of education setting is after the 1st of September 2026 the pupil would be assessed against the new proposed policy. If the transport application is submitted before 1 st September 2026, it would be considered in accordance with the current policy. All home to school transport drivers and passenger assistants have received the minimum training as outlined by the DfE guidance and have an enhanced DBS check.

Eligibility- Compulsory school age Including school spaces and parental preference, extenuating circumstances and extended rights.	
When applying for my child's secondary school our first preference is the school that their sibling goes to and we have accepted this place, this is not our nearest or priority school. Would we still get free home to school transport? Their sibling does.	Your child would not be eligible for home to school transport assistance as you did not preference your nearest or priority school before the accepted school. The policy change would not affect the sibling's current travel entitlement unless a change of circumstances requires a new transport application after 1 st September 2026. This aspect of the new proposed policy does not alter from the current policy
We were not happy with the school offered to our child and appealed the decision through the education service. We were successful with our appeal; does this mean we would get free home to school travel assistance?	A successful appeal through the admission service does not guarantee access to transport assistance. If you would like to apply for home to school transport assistance, please see the Warwickshire County Council home to school transport website to apply. This aspect of the new proposed policy does not alter from the current policy
When applying for my child's secondary school, our first preference was a grammar school and then our nearest school. We have accepted a place at the grammar school. Would we still be able to access free home to school travel assistance as this is the most appropriate school for my child's ability?	Your child is not eligible for home to school transport assistance as you did not preference your nearest or priority school before the accepted school. This aspect of the new proposed policy does not alter from the current policy
What if I cannot get my child into the nearest school or priority school?	If you applied for your child's priority and/or nearest school and accepted a place at one of those schools or accepted a place at the nearest school with spaces when offered a school place, then we would consider that school to be your nearest suitable school for transport eligibility purposes. This aspect of the new proposed policy does not alter from the current policy

My first preference was my child's nearest school but there were no spaces. I accepted the next school offered by admissions. Would my child be eligible for free home to school transport?	If your nearest school has no spaces, the next nearest school with available spaces would be deemed the nearest suitable school for the purposes of transport assistance. If the school is over 3 miles (2 miles for those entitled under extended rights or in reception to year 3) you may be eligible for transport assistance. This aspect of the new proposed policy does not alter from the current policy
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Eligibility- Post 16 pupils	
How would a child or young person get to the bus stop or boarding point if using public transport?	Within the new proposed policy, if a child or young person is travelling by public transport, it would be the responsibility of parents/carers to make the decision whether to accompany the pupil to the bus stop or boarding point at the time when buses are scheduled to arrive/depart.
Who does the risk assessment, and can it be appealed?	Specialist Transport Risk Assessors complete the Risk Assessment. This is a collaborative document that the parent/carer has input to. If there are differences of opinion, the assessment will be peer-reviewed by a different Risk Assessor or the Team Leader. You cannot appeal a risk assessment, but you do have the right to appeal the travel options offered by the home to school transport team. This aspect of the new proposed policy does not alter from the current policy
SEND and EHCP after 1 st of September 2026- My child is in year 10 and has an EHCP, according to the Warwickshire home to school transport assessment they are appropriate for independent travel training, however there are no local bus routes in our area? What would this mean for my child?	In the new proposed policy if independent travel training is completed and the pupil can travel more independently, their home to school transport assistance would be reassessed. If after the training, the pupil was still eligible for free home to school transport assistance and there is not a sufficient bus route, alternative home to school transport assistance would be provided.
My child has an EHCP, is in year 14 and will be attending the local college from September 2025. I do not believe that they would be able to travel independently to the college due to their needs. What am I supposed to do?	In the new proposed policy when assessing your child's eligibility for home to school transport the specialist transport risk assessment team would evaluate your child's ability to be able to part take in independent travel training. If your child's needs mean they are not appropriate for independent travel training alternative travel assistance would be provided. If you child is deemed appropriate for independent travel training, travel assistance would be provided until the training is successfully completed. Once training is completed then eligible pupils would be provided with a bus pass complete. If you child is deemed appropriate for independent travel training, travel assistance would be provided until the training begins, if your child's needs prevent them from

	successfully completing the training alternative travel assistance would be provided until the end of the academic year. If your child is assessed as appropriate for independent travel training but the offer is refused, the family would be offered a Direct Travel Payment or a bus pass. If you were unhappy with the travel assistance provided you could appeal this decision.
My child currently attends college, is in Year 12 and has an EHCP. We need transport assistance to get her to the college. What would be my options?	If your child is already in receipt of home to school transport, their current transport assistance and entitlement would remain until the end of their current course unless your circumstances change. When a new application for home to school travel assistance is required after 1st September 2026, your child's initial travel assistance options in the new policy would be independent travel training, direct travel payment or a bus pass. If your child is deemed inappropriate for independent travel training by the specialist transport risk assessment team, then alternative travel assistance would be provided.

Statutory Walking Distance and Walking Route assessment	
If my child's route is reclassified as safe, would they still be able to use the bus?	If your child is already in receipt of home to school transport then you child would remain eligible for home to school transport, until their circumstances change such as a school or house move. If circumstances do change after 1st September 2026 your child's eligibility would be assessed using the new proposed policy.
What happens if I do not agree with the outcome of the assessment?	Once a route has been assessed, Should a person wish to escalate the matter further, they would be able to use the Council's customer feedback and complaints procedure which can be found here: http://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/complaints. The process of escalating the matter in the new proposed policy does not alter from the current policy.
What happens if the route is still deemed to be unsafe to walk?	Then nothing would change, and a pupil eligible due to the unsafe nature of the route would remain to receive home to school transport assistance. This aspect of the new proposed policy does not alter from the current policy
What are capital works?	These works could include something major such as installing crossing points or something simpler such as maintaining verges and hedgerows. This aspect of the new proposed policy does not alter from the current policy
I have a disability that means I cannot walk for long distances, meaning I cannot walk my primary aged child to school. Would my child be eligible for free home to school transport?	An application and evidence would need to be submitted so that our team could assess your case on an individual basis. Application forms can be found on the Warwickshire home to school transport website. This aspect of the new proposed policy does not alter from the current policy.
I cannot accompany my child to school due to getting my other children to school and my work commitments, can I get free home to school travel for my child?	Guidance is clear that it is considered the responsibility and decision of the parent/carer to accompany a child (or arrange suitable supervision) as necessary when walking to and from school if the child is not eligible for home to school transport assistance. Therefore, the expectation is that parents/carers would make suitable arrangements for their child's journey to and from school. Guidance is clear that reasons such as "parent's working pattern or the fact they have children attending more than one school, on their own, would not normally be considered good reasons for a parent being unable to accompany their child." This aspect of the new proposed policy does not alter from the current policy.

Travel Assistance	
My child has SEND and gets free home to school travel assistance, I am at home for when her taxi picks her up, but I will not be at home when she gets back from school. She stays at home on her own all the time, does someone have to be at home when she gets back from school?	As part of the currently policy a responsible adult needs to be there to ensure the pupil reaches the pickup point and boards the vehicle safely and to meet the pupil at the drop-off point at the end of the school day, or that the pupil can make their way home independently. With applicants from 1st September 2026 parents would have the option to arrange suitable supervision as they see fit if the new proposed policy is implemented.

Parental Information	
My child has SEND and gets free home to school travel assistance, I am at home for when her taxi picks her up, but I will not be at home when she gets back from school. She stays at home on her own all the time, does someone have to be at home when she gets back from school?	As part of the currently policy a responsible adult needs to be there to ensure the pupil reaches the pickup point and boards the vehicle safely and to meet the pupil at the drop-off point at the end of the school day, or that the pupil can make their way home independently. With applicants from 1st September 2026 parents would have the option to arrange suitable supervision as they see fit if the new proposed policy is implemented.

Examples- taken from the Department of Education - Travel to school for children of compulsory school age 2023.

- Child B is twelve years old. They attend School 1, a secondary school 3 miles from their home. Their parents chose this school because it offers a choice of several modern foreign languages at GSCE. School 2 is 1 mile from Child B's home and would have been able to admit them, but it only offers one modern foreign language. Child B is not attending their nearest suitable school because School 2 would have been able to provide them with an education that was suitable for their age, ability, and aptitude.
- Child M is eleven years old and attends the second nearest secondary school to their home. It is 4.2 miles away. Their nearest secondary school is 3.7 miles from their home. Their parents applied for this school, but it was oversubscribed, and they were not offered a place. Child M is eligible for free travel to school as they are attending their nearest suitable school with available places.
- Child L is eleven years old and attends School 1 which is 4.2 miles away from their home. Their parents applied for this school as their first preference. The nearest secondary school is School 2 which is 3.7 miles from their home. They chose not to apply for this school, despite information on the eligibility for free travel to school being readily available at the time they submitted their preferences. School 2 is undersubscribed, and Child L would have been offered a place there had their parents applied. Child L is not eligible for free travel to School 1 because School 2 is their nearest suitable school and has available places.
- Child K is thirteen years old and is eligible for free school meals. Their parents are Sikh and wish them to be educated in a school with a religious character. They attend a designated Sikh school that is 8 miles from their home. There are other schools which are nearer to their home, but none of these is a Sikh school. Child K is eligible for free travel to the Sikh school due to the religious character of the school.

- Child D is seven years old and attends a primary school that is 2.6 miles from their home. There is another suitable primary school 1.2 miles from their home which has places available. Child D is not eligible for free travel to school, as they are not attending their nearest suitable school.
- Child A is thirteen years old. Their nearest school is a co-educational secondary school that is 3.4 miles from their home. Their parents choose to send them to a single sex secondary school that is 5.3 miles from their home. Child A is not eligible for free travel to the single sex school because the co-educational secondary school is their nearest suitable school.
- Child C is six years old and attends their nearest suitable school. It is 2.3 miles from their home. Child C is eligible for free travel to school.
- Child D is eleven years old and attends their nearest suitable school. It is 2.6 miles from their home. Child D is not eligible for free travel to school.
- Child F is fourteen years old and has a disability that requires them to use crutches to walk. They need to take their time to ensure they are balanced. They attend their nearest suitable school. It is 1 mile from their home. The local authority decides that they could not reasonably be expected to walk to school. Child F is eligible for free travel to school.
- Child G is eleven years old and has been diagnosed with a long-term medical condition which causes them to take a long time to recover after strenuous physical activity. They attend their nearest suitable school which is a short walk from their home. The parent applies for free travel to school on the basis that the child needs to recover for a long time after any strenuous activity. Based on the information available to them, the local authority decides that Child G would not need to recover for a long time after the short walk to their school. Child G is not eligible for free travel to school.
- Child I is eleven years old and eligible for free school meals. Their nearest suitable school is 2.5 miles from their home.

Their second nearest suitable school is 3 miles away. Their third nearest is 5 miles away. Child I would be eligible for free travel to any of these schools.

- Child J is eleven years old and eligible for free school meals. Their three nearest schools are School X, School Y and School Z. School X is 1.5 miles from their home, School Y is 2.2 miles from their home, and School Z is 5.5 miles from their home. Child J would be eligible for free travel to School Y or School Z, but not to School X due to it being under 2 miles.
- Child H is twelve years old. They attend their nearest suitable school. It is 2 miles from their home. The only walking route to this school is along a busy road with no footpaths or stepping off points. The local authority carries out an assessment of the route and decides it would not be possible for a child to walk it in reasonable safety, even if they were accompanied by their parent. Child H is eligible for free travel to school.
- Child N is nine years old and has autism. They attend their nearest suitable school which is 2.5 miles from their home. They are unaware of danger and need to be accompanied even on very short journeys. They also become distressed and can act unpredictably in noisy environments. Their walk to school would be along busy roads. The local authority determines that the parent would not be able to keep them safe on this journey. Child N is eligible for free travel to school.
- Child O is seven years old and attends their nearest suitable school which is 1.5 miles from their home. They do not have special educational needs, a disability or mobility problem. The local authority determines that they would be able to walk to school in reasonable safety if they were accompanied. There is no good reason why the parent could not reasonably be expected to accompany them or make other arrangements for their journey to and from school. Child O is not eligible for free travel to school.
- Child P is fifteen years old and is blind. They attend their nearest suitable school which is a short walk from their home.

The local authority determines that they could reasonably be expected to walk to school if accompanied. Child P's parent is a single parent with a disability which means they would not be able to accompany Child P to school. The local authority considers the individual circumstances of Child P and decides it would not be reasonable to expect their parent to plan for their journey to and from school. It decides to arrange free travel to school for Child P.

- Child Q is fourteen years old and is also blind. They attend their nearest suitable school which is a short walk from their home. The local authority determines that they could reasonably be expected to walk to school if accompanied. There is no good reason why child's parent could not reasonably be expected to accompany them or make other arrangements for their journey to and from school. Child Q is not eligible for free travel to school.
- Child X is twelve years old, has special educational needs and is eligible for free travel. They have recently moved to a new school. Having travelled quite happily in a taxi to their original school, they become distressed when travelling in a minibus to their new school. Their special educational needs mean they are unable to explain why they are distressed. The driver works with Child X's parent to resolve the issue. They identify that Child's distress is caused by having the radio on during journeys. The driver agrees to keep the radio switched off whilst Child X is travelling.
- Child X is 4 years old and has special educational needs. They are about to begin school for the first time and will be eligible for free travel. They can become very distressed in unfamiliar situations. The local authority arranges for their driver and passenger assistant to visit Child X's home to meet them before the start of term. This gives Child X the opportunity to familiarise themselves with the vehicle and sit in the seat they will use on the journey to school. It also gives the driver the opportunity to let the parent know that two children will already be on the vehicle when it comes to collect Child and that it will collect one further child after Child. This enables the parent to talk to Child X to prepare them for what will happen on the journey to school. The parent is also able to let the passenger assistant know about some strategies they have found useful when Child X has become distressed when travelling.

- Child X is seven years old and has an EHC plan which names their nearest suitable school. This school is 20 miles from their home. The route is often very busy meaning the journey from Child's home typically takes 45 minutes. The taxi collects one other child on the way, which adds 10 minutes to Child X's journey, meaning a total journey time of 55 minutes. Given the additional expense that would be involved in providing Child X and the other child with separate vehicles, the local authority decides it is reasonable to exceed the recommended journey time in Child X's case.
- Child X is fourteen years old and has an EHC plan which names a school that is 10 miles from their home. Previously they travelled in a taxi with one other child and the journey took 30 minutes. The local authority then combined several routes into one. Child T now travels in a minibus with 11 other children. Due to the extra stops, the journey time is now 90 minutes. Child's school makes the local authority aware that, due to their special educational needs, they often become very distressed at being in the minibus for that length of time. On arrival at school, it takes them a long time to calm down. As a result, they miss some of the activities other children participate in. The local authority decides it is not reasonable to exceed the recommended journey time in Child X's case and reinstates their original travel arrangements.
- Child X has special educational needs. They live in a village 4 miles from their nearest suitable secondary school and are eligible for free travel to school. Other children living in the village attend the school. The local authority meets its school travel duty in respect of these children by providing them with a pass for free travel on the public service bus. When Child joined the school in Year 7, the local authority determined their special educational needs meant they would not be able to travel on the bus with their peers. The local authority arranged a taxi to take Child to school.

When Child X moved to Year 9, the local authority reassessed their needs. They determined Child X was ready for independent travel training. Child R's parent was hesitant at first, but the local authority explained the benefits and the parent agreed, knowing Child would need the skill in adulthood.

The travel trainer helps Child X with understanding things such as where to wait for the bus, which bus to get on and what to do if they miss the bus or it is late. Once Child X has completed the travel training programme, the local authority

reassesses their needs and determines they are now able to travel independently on the bus. They withdraw the taxi and provide Child X with a bus pass.