

# Home to School Transport Policy Consultation

7 September to  
2 November 2017



The following leaflet outlines the changes we propose to make to our Home to School Transport Policy. The purpose of this consultation is to gather your views about our proposals.

## Proposal One:

### Change to the definition of 'Nearest Qualifying School'

At the moment, a pupil's nearest qualifying school is defined by Warwickshire County Council to mean their priority school or one which is physically closer. The County Council are proposing to change the definition of the nearest qualifying school to mean **only the pupil's closest school to home with a space available for the pupil by the shortest available route** (this will be a driving route if the journey is over the statutory walking distance or a walking route if the journey is less than the statutory walking distance, using Google maps).

This may not be the priority school but will be the one physically closest to the student's home address. Low-income families would continue to benefit from extended rights eligibility criteria.

This proposal is to address the fact that many schools now have very wide priority areas and some schools are removing priority areas altogether.

**The definition for nearest qualifying school will continue to take into account any special educational needs that the pupil may have. For those who have achieved the relevant entry criteria for a selective school, that school will only be considered as the nearest qualifying school if there are no nearer non-selective schools capable of educating the child.**

If a pupil is not eligible for assistance under the proposed new criteria, they may be able to purchase a seat on the bus under the Council's Vacant Seats Scheme.

**This change would be effective to new applicants for transport from September 2019.** However, if a pupil's situation changes (i.e. a change of address or school) and they apply on or after 1st September 2019, the application will be assessed under the new criteria.

## Proposal Two:

### Unsafe Walking Routes

A total of 1779 children currently receive free transport on the basis of the walk from home to school, or home to pick-up point, being unsafe for an accompanied child.

Following the 2015 consultation, all walking routes have now been reassessed using the national RoSPA / Road Safety GB Guidance for assessing such routes. The guidance can be viewed here:

[warwickshire.gov.uk/dangerousroutes](http://warwickshire.gov.uk/dangerousroutes)

While some routes are still classified as unsafe to walk, others have been reclassified as safe under these guidelines. In some cases, capital works are required to make a route safe, and a route will not be classified as 'safe' until these works have been completed.

The full list of walking routes and their reclassification can be found on:

[warwickshire.gov.uk/ask](http://warwickshire.gov.uk/ask)

It is proposed that this new classification system for routes is implemented on all routes across Warwickshire.

When a route is reclassified as safe it is proposed that any students currently travelling will continue to receive free transport until the end of their time at their current school, provided there is no change in circumstances (such as a house move).

**All new applicants from September 2019 would be assessed using the new classification system.** Existing travellers who have a change in circumstances requiring a new application (such as a house move) will also be assessed in the same way.

## Proposal Three:

### Amendment to the criteria for students with Special Educational Needs

Warwickshire County Council is proposing to change the eligibility criteria for students with SEN so that those living within 'statutory walking distance' will not receive transport assistance unless the pupil meets both the following criteria:

- a) The pupil is both attending the nearest suitable school with a place available; **and**
- b) The pupil has special educational needs, disabilities and/or mobility issues which mean they would not be able to make the journey without transport assistance, even if accompanied.

Currently, applicants do not have to meet any mileage criteria to qualify for free transport. Under the new policy, transport assistance will still be provided if the pupil attends their nearest qualifying school **and**

- a) The pupil lives outside the statutory walking distance **or**
- b) The pupil's needs are such that they would be unable to get to school, accompanied as necessary, without transport assistance.

An individual assessment based on the pupil's SEN and how it affects their journey to/from school will be used to make a final decision.

**This would take effect from September 2019 for new applicants.** However, if a pupil's situation changes (i.e. a change of address or school) and they reapply on or after 1st September 2019, the application will be assessed under the new criteria.

## Proposal Four:

### Post 16 Medical Transport

Warwickshire County Council currently provides free transport on medical grounds to students aged 4–19 years. It is proposed to remove the specific provision for free transport on medical grounds to students aged 16–19 years. This is because there is no requirement for local authorities to provide transport on this basis for post 16\* students. (\*Post 16 is defined as any education or learning undertaken post compulsory school age).

By removing this provision, the County Council would make transport assistance support for post 16 students consistent and fair.

Students with medical needs and disabilities would still be able to access transport assistance through the 16-19 transport scheme, as well as the 19-25 transport scheme if they have an EHCP or a learning difficulty, or disability.

It is recognised that meeting the cost of transport to school / college can be difficult. A 50% discount is therefore available to low-income families who receive a qualifying benefit.

**This change would take effect for new applicants from September 2018.** Those who already travel under the scheme will continue to do so until the end of their course.



The closing date for responses to the consultation is midnight on **Thursday 2 November 2017**

## Proposal Five:

### Revision of Passenger Assistant Provision

Warwickshire County Council is proposing that passenger assistants should only be provided automatically on vehicles carrying special educational needs pupils with statements of SEN or an EHCP.

Passenger assistants are a non-statutory requirement and are currently provided on all vehicles **transporting primary school age children**. A full assessment would be carried out on each vehicle before making any decision to remove a passenger assistant.

The assessment would take into consideration the location of the pick-up and drop off points and the makeup of passengers (e.g. whether primary and secondary students are travelling together). Vehicles carrying children with a statement or EHCP would not be subject to an assessment.

This change would take effect from September 2018 onwards.

## Proposal Six:

### Independent Travel Training

Warwickshire County Council has decided to introduce a system of 'Independent Travel Training' to give children and young people the skills they need to improve their ability to travel independently, if it is considered this would be of benefit to them.

If successful this will mean that some children and young people who previously required highly individualised transport to travel to school or college would be able to take public transport, school buses, or even walk.

Although the system is already being commissioned, the Council proposes that this system should be guaranteed by making it a fundamental part of the home-to-school transport policy.

**Independent Travel Training will be implemented during the 2017/18 Academic Year.**

## Proposal Seven:

### Special Educational Needs Transport – Post 19

Warwickshire County Council provides transport assistance for students aged 19-25 with an EHCP or statement or for those with learning difficulties / disabilities. At the moment, all students have to pay for transport.

To bring us in line with legislation, a small number of 19-25 year olds would be eligible for free transport to sixth form/college if they meet specific criteria. Those who do not meet the criteria would be required to make their own arrangements.

Full details can be found in section 11 of the proposed policy and in the document titled 'Post SEN Eligibility Criteria' at [warwickshire.gov.uk/ask](http://warwickshire.gov.uk/ask)

This change would take effect for new applicants from September 2018.



# Tell us what you think.

## Online

By taking the consultation survey and leaving comments at: [warwickshire.gov.uk/ask](https://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/ask)

## In writing

### Email

[transportconsultation@warwickshire.gov.uk](mailto:transportconsultation@warwickshire.gov.uk)

### Post

Please send your correspondence to:

*Education Transport Consultation,  
Warwickshire County Council,  
Saltisford Office Park,  
Ansell Way,  
Warwick,  
CV34 4UL*

You can request a paper copy of the survey by using the email address above or by calling 01926 412929 (opt 1).

## In person

Attend the public consultation events listed below:

### **Coleshill Town Hall**

Wednesday 13th September  
4–7pm

### **Round Oak School, Warwick**

Thursday 14th September  
11am–2pm

### **Hatters Space, Nuneaton**

Tuesday 19th September  
3–6pm

### **District Activity**

#### **Centre, Tamworth**

Friday 22nd September  
4–7pm

### **The Arnold House, Rugby**

Wednesday 27th September  
2–5pm

### **Shire Hall, Warwick**

Wednesday 4th October  
3–5.30pm

### **Welcombe Hills School, Stratford**

Wednesday 11th October  
3–6pm

### **Coleshill Town Hall**

Thursday 12th October  
11am–2pm

### **Hatton Park Village Hall**

Monday 16th October  
4–7pm

### **Discovery Academy, Nuneaton**

Friday 20th October  
2–5pm

# Proposed Implementation Deadlines:

Proposal	Who It Will Affect	Proposed Date
Nearest Qualifying School	All new applicants and those who have a change of circumstances (such as a house move)	1 Sept 2019
Unsafe Walking Route	All new applicants and those who have a change of circumstances (such as a house move)	1 Sept 2019
SEN Transport Criteria	All new applicants and those who have a change of circumstances (such as a house move)	1 Sept 2019
Medical Transport Ages 16-19	All new applicants	1 Sept 2018
Passenger Assistants	All primary-aged pupils accessing WCC transport	From Sept 2018 onwards
Independent Travel Training	Secondary-aged students with an EHCP/Statement	From Oct 2017
SEN Transport Ages 19-25	All new applicants	1 Sept 2018

# Further Information:

Information you provide in any additional correspondence to our surveys and consultations, including personal information, may be disclosed in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and the Data Protection Act 1998. If you want the information that you provide to be treated as confidential, including your contact details, please tell us why, but be aware that, under the Freedom of Information Act, Warwickshire County Council cannot always guarantee confidentiality.

The closing date for responses to the consultation is midnight on Thursday 2nd November 2017.



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