

Frequently Asked Questions

Definition of a Pupil's Qualifying School (refer to paragraph 2.3 of the draft policy)

At the moment, a pupil's qualifying school is defined by Warwickshire County Council 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). This may not be the priority area school (sometimes referred to as 'catchment school') but will be the one physically closest to the student's home address.

The County Council are proposing to change the definition of the qualifying school for a pupil to mean either the closest qualifying school (see paragraph 2.2 of the draft policy) to the pupil's home address, with places available, that provides education appropriate to the age, ability, and aptitude of the pupil and takes into account any special educational needs that the pupil may have, **or** the priority area school in which the pupil resides. This means that some children will have two qualifying schools.

Low-income families would continue to benefit from extended rights eligibility criteria.

The definition for the qualifying school for a pupil will continue to take into account any special educational needs that the pupil may have.

For those pupils who have achieved the relevant entry criteria for a selective school, the policy remains unchanged and that school will only be considered as their qualifying school if it is the closest qualifying school to the pupil's home address and there are no nearer non-selective schools capable of educating the child.

Similarly, transport to faith schools will only be provided if it is the closest qualifying school to the child's home, taking into account all relevant schools. The exception to this will be when the pupil is of secondary school age and qualifies under the extended eligibility criteria (see section 3.3).

Subject to approval following consultation, it is proposed that this change would be effective from the date the new policy is published (anticipated September/October 2020).

Q – My child currently receives free transport to school, will this affect me?

A – No, not unless your child’s circumstances change, such as a change in address, and you reapply for transport on or after the publication of the new policy. The assessment of your application would be against the new policy.

Q – My child has an EHCP and attends a special school, will these proposals affect me?

No, transport will continue to be provided to the nearest suitable school as named on the EHCP or as identified by SENDAR.

Q – What about transport to selective schools?

Currently, transport is not automatically provided to those attending a grammar school. It must be the closest qualifying school to the home address, and non-selective schools are taken into consideration when assessing what the closest qualifying school is for each pupil. Under the new proposal this will not change.

Q- Would you consider an out of county school to be my child’s qualifying school?

We wouldn’t ordinarily consider out of county schools during the assessment process, however if your child has gained a place at a school outside of Warwickshire then we would provide transport to this school if it was the closest qualifying school to your child’s home address.

Q – My child is due to start school in September 2021, does this change apply to them?

A – Yes, this policy change could be applicable if transport assistance is required to your child’s school

Q- What if I can’t get my child into the closest school?

A - If your closest school has no spaces then we would consider the next nearest school with spaces to be your closest qualifying school.

Q – What happens if I move house after the publication of the new policy?

A – Anyone who has a change in circumstances on or after the publication of the new policy (such as a house move) would be subject to a re-assessment. Therefore, if the school your child attends is no longer considered to be the closest school with space available or your new address is not located in your child’s school priority area then free transport would cease.

