Nottinghamshire County Council

UNDER–16 HOME TO SCHOOL TRANSPORT POLICY

2026/27 ACADEMIC YEAR

July 2026

CONTENTS

1 **INTRODUCTION**

2 **TRAVEL ASSISTANCE TO QUALIFYING SCHOOLS**
2.1 Entitlements to home to school transport
2.2 Summary of entitlements
2.2.1 Pupils aged 4 years old in full-time education
2.2.2 Pupils aged 5–7 years
2.2.3 Pupils aged 8–11 years
2.2.4 Pupils aged 11–16 years
2.2.5 Pupils aged 8–11 years in low-income groups
2.2.6 Pupils aged 11–16 years in low-income groups
2.2.7 Pupils aged 5–11 years in low-income groups attending school on grounds of religion or belief
2.2.8 Pupils aged 11–16 years in low-income groups attending school on grounds of religion or belief
2.2.9 Transport eligibility for accelerated progress or when a school year is repeated
2.2.10 Travel assistance to catchment and preferred schools
2.2.11 Travel assistance assessment – normal school admissions round
2.3 Cases where travel assistance will not be provided
2.4 Single parents/carers and dual parental homes

3 ADDITIONAL TRAVEL ARRANGEMENTS AND ENTITLEMENTS
3.1 Pupils with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities
3.2 Children Looked After by Nottinghamshire County Council
3.3 Children Looked After by Another Local Authority
3.4 Pupils attending Education Other Than at School (EOTAS)
3.5 Long fixed term exclusions
3.6 Moving home and temporary accommodation
3.7 Managed moves

4 **PROVISION OF TRAVEL ARRANGEMENTS**
4.1 Measuring the statutory distances
4.2 Walking distance exemptions
4.2.1 Special transport needs
4.2.2 Temporary medical grounds
4.2.3 Disability of parents/carers
4.2.4 Exceptional circumstances
4.3 Home to bus stop/bus stop to school walking distance
4.4 Parents/carers who are working at the time their children travel to and from school
4.5 Types of travel assistance
4.5.1 Free pass
4.5.2 Parent Mileage
4.6 Travel assistance for pupils attending a school on grounds of religion or belief
4.7 Reviews of transport arrangements

5 APPLYING FOR TRAVEL ASSISTANCE
5.1 Applying for under-16 travel assistance
5.2 Replacement passes
5.3 Lost/stolen passes
5.4 Provision and organisation of school transport services
5.4.1 Provision of services
5.4.2 Transport requirements
5.5 Information to schools, colleges, and transport operators
5.6 Discipline on school transport services and misuse of travel passes
5.6.1 Guidance
5.6.2 Procedures
5.6.3 Misuse of passes

6 REVIEW OF TRANSPORT DECISIONS
6.1 Stage One: Senior Officer review
6.2 Stage Two: Review by an independent appeal panel

7 **DEFINITIONS**
7.1 Qualifying schools
7.2 Suitable school
7.3 Catchment area schools
7.4 Coterminous and overlapping catchment areas
7.5 Designated schools
7.6 Preferred schools
7.7 Schools attended on grounds of parents/carers religion or belief
7.8 Walking routes and availability of walking routes
7.9 Measurement of distances
7.10 Low income

Appendix A Special Educational Needs and Disability Travel Policy

Appendix B Pupils attending Education Other Than at School (EOTAS)

ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

EHCP – Education, Health and Care Plan
ITT – Independent Travel Training
LA – Local Authority
Parents/carers – includes single parent/carer and child guardian(s)
SEN – Special Educational Needs
SEND – Special Educational Needs and Disability
TTS – Nottinghamshire Transport and Travel Services
FAP – Fair Access Protocol
EOTAS – Education Other Than at School
CLA – Children Looked After
DTAP – Direct Travel Assistance Payment

1 INTRODUCTION

This policy sets out Nottinghamshire County Council's provision of school transport services and travel assistance for school aged pupils living in the county of Nottinghamshire. It sets out the criteria for eligibility for travel assistance, how parents/carers may apply, how decisions are made, the type of assistance that may be available and how parents/carers may appeal against decisions with which they are unhappy.

The Home to School Transport policy of Nottinghamshire County Council will operate within the aims and objectives of the County Council's Strategic Plan and the Children and Young People's Departmental Strategy and ensures that the Council fulfils its statutory obligations for transporting pupils to school. However, it is still the legal responsibility of parents/carers to ensure their children who are of compulsory school age attend school.

The aim of the policy is to provide a quality transport service as efficiently and economically as possible, to ensure that pupils get to school within a reasonable time and travel in a safe and stress-free environment. The policy will have regard to the school admission arrangements within the County.

This policy can be viewed in conjunction with the following:

- The Nottinghamshire Plan 2021-2031
https://plan.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/

- Nottinghamshire Sustainable School Travel Strategy 2015
sustainable-school-travel-strategy.pdf (nottinghamshire.gov.uk)

- Nottinghamshire Post-16 Transport Policy Statement 2026/27 academic year
Travel to schools | Nottinghamshire County Council

- DfE Statutory Guidance - Travel to school for children of compulsory school age May 2026
Travel to school for children of compulsory school age

- DfE Statutory Guidance – Local Authorities' recoupment of education costs of looked after children
Local authorities' recoupment of the education costs of looked after children - GOV.UK

This policy is compliant with the duties and powers of local authorities set out in the Education Act 1996 and the Education and Inspections Act 2006. It applies to all admissions to schools on and after 1 September 2026.

2 TRAVEL ASSISTANCE TO QUALIFYING SCHOOLS

2.1 Entitlements to Home to School Transport

The offer of a school place does not give a guarantee of home to school travel assistance from the Council. Parents/carers have a right to express a preference for a school, however this does not automatically carry with it the right to home to school travel assistance.

In Nottinghamshire, provision is made for eligible pupils attending their nearest available school or catchment. In addition to this, the Council provides additional support to low-income families. Schedule 35B of the Education Act 1996 (inserted by the Education and Inspections Act 2006) includes an extension of rights to free school travel arrangements for pupils in low-income groups.

2.2 Summary of entitlements

2.2.1 Pupils aged 4 years old in full-time education

Pupils aged 4 years old in full-time statutory education are entitled to free transport to their nearest suitable school from the start of the academic year in which they become 5, if that school is 2 miles or more from home.

2.2.2 Pupils Aged 5–7 years

Pupils of compulsory school age who are under the age of 8 are entitled to free transport to their nearest suitable school if it is 2 miles or more from home.

2.2.3 Pupils aged 8–11 years

Pupils aged between 8 and 11 are entitled to free transport to their nearest suitable school if it is 3 miles or more from home.

2.2.4 Pupils aged 11–16 years

Pupils of secondary school age 11–16 are entitled to free transport to their nearest suitable school if that school is 3 miles or more from home.

2.2.5 Pupils aged 8–11 years in low-income groups

Pupils aged between 8 and 11 from low-income families are entitled to free transport to their nearest suitable school if that school is 2 miles or more from home.

2.2.6 Pupils aged 11 – 16 years in low-income groups

Pupils of secondary school age from low-income families are entitled to free transport if the school is between 2 and 6 miles and there are not 3 or more suitable nearer schools.

2.2.7 Pupils aged 5 – 11 in low-income groups attending schools on grounds of religion or belief

Pupils of primary school age from low-income families attending the nearest suitable school preferred on grounds of religion or belief are eligible for free transport where the school is between 2 and 20 miles from their home (see section 4.6 for details).

From September 2027 the travel assistance provisions for pupils attending schools on the grounds of religion or belief will change. The revised provisions are detailed in the Home to School Transport Policy 2027/2028 which is available on the Nottinghamshire County Council website.

2.2.8 Pupils aged 11 – 16 in low-income groups attending schools on grounds of religion or belief

Pupils of secondary school age from low-income families attending the nearest suitable school preferred on grounds of religion or belief are eligible for free transport where the school is between 2 and 25 miles from their home (see section 4.6 for details).

From September 2027 the travel assistance provisions for pupils attending schools on the grounds of religion or belief will change. The revised provisions are detailed in the Home to School Transport Policy 2027/2028 which is available on the Nottinghamshire County Council website.

2.2.9 Transport eligibility for accelerated admission or when a school year repeated

Where it is agreed that a child is admitted to a school outside their normal age group their entitlement to travel assistance is the same as any other child. i.e. they will need to be attending the nearest suitable school to the home address and live over the statutory walking distance for their age group to be eligible for travel assistance. Where parents/carers preference a school that is not their nearest suitable school travel assistance will not be provided.

Pupils who would ordinarily be eligible for transport support and who repeat a year in school will retain that transport eligibility whilst in that particular phase of education.

2.2.10 Travel Assistance to catchment schools and preferred schools

In Nottinghamshire your home address may be in a catchment area for a school which is recognised by the County Council. (see section 7.3 for details)

Where a pupil attends the nearest catchment school for their home address, they will be entitled to travel assistance in accordance with the distance criteria for their age. (see section 7.3 and 7.4 for details)

Parents/carers have the right to express a preference for a school other than the nearest suitable or catchment school. This is known as a ‘preferred school’.

School age pupils up to 7 years of age attending a preferred school will be eligible for free transport if that school is the nearest available school and is two miles or more from home.

Pupils aged 8–16 attending a preferred school will be eligible for free transport if that school is the nearest available school and is three miles or more from home.

The Home to School Transport Policy does not make any additional free travel provision for pupils to attend preferred schools.

2.2.11 Travel Assistance assessment – normal school admissions round

During the normal school admissions round, eligibility for travel assistance will be assessed primarily against the school preferences that parent/carers have identified on their application for a school place.

If parent/carers choose to apply for a school place that is not the nearest or catchment school as their first preference and instead apply for another preferred school, then their child will not normally be entitled to travel assistance. This is on the basis that space would normally be available at the nearest or catchment school at the time of school place allocations and there would have been a reasonable opportunity to secure a place had parents/carers made this their first preference.

If an application for a place at the nearest or catchment is refused, transport may then be provided to the next nearest school with space. However, in order to qualify for travel assistance parents will need to have preferenced the nearest schools to the home address and be over the qualifying distance.

If no school place has been secured on National Offer Day and parents have used all their preferences and preferenced their nearest schools, then travel assistance may be provided to the school designated by the Council.

For late and in-year school place applications, travel assistance will be assessed to the nearest available school at the point of the admission into the school.

2.3 Cases where travel assistance will not be provided

Home to School Transport will only be provided at the standard start and finish times of the school/learning establishment, term time only, and does not cater for part day arrangements or for extended school opportunities or extended school provision.

Travel assistance will not be provided:

- To and from temporary addresses including family, friends and child minders where these arrangements are made by the family

- At times to suit the convenience of family arrangements including work commitments and when other siblings in the family must be taken to other schools
- For late arrival or early departure, for example due to illness or medical appointments
- To and from medical appointments
- Following detention
- To access breakfast or after-school clubs including out of school activities
- To work experience, taster or open days
- To provision off the school site organised by the school
- To provision off the school site as part of a transition programme to a new education setting
- For transfers between educational establishments during the school day
- For shorter than normal days e.g. during the exam season
- For pupils who are registered as being elective home educated
- For a child whose level of attendance is a cause of concern, but for whom no eligibility criteria are met
- For students on exchange visits
- Where the behaviour of a young person is not acceptable or places other travellers at risk

In these circumstances' parents will be required to make alternative arrangements.

2.4 Single parents/carers and dual parental homes

No exemptions from the standard assessment criteria will be given to children with only one parent/carer or children residing at more than one address.

For children whose parents/carers no longer live at the same address, eligibility for travel assistance will be determined to the address that the child spends more than 50% of their time during the school week. This will normally be at the address at which the child spends three or more school nights (Sunday–Thursday) and will usually be the home address used for school admission.

Where a child spends an equal amount of time during the school week at both addresses it must be decided by the parents/carers which home is their chosen address for travel assistance purposes. Assistance to both homes will not be provided and where this is disputed by parents/carers, eligibility for travel assistance will be determined to the address used for school admission. If this address is no longer one of the home addresses the Council will use the address of the person receiving Child Benefit for the child.

The Council may ask parent/carers to provide documentary evidence to support their application.

3 ADDITIONAL TRAVEL ARRANGEMENTS AND ENTITLEMENTS

3.1 Pupils with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities

See Appendix A

3.2 Children Looked After by Nottinghamshire County Council

Looked after children sometimes experience changes of foster placement at short notice. The Council aims to maintain a child's school placement wherever possible in order to minimise disruption to their schooling.

If a looked after child moves foster placement, their travel assistance entitlement will be assessed in accordance with the normal home to school eligibility criteria set out in section 2 of this policy.

If a NCC looked after child is not entitled to travel assistance under the home to school policy, the Council expects that carers should make travel arrangements as part of their duties under the foster placement. Transport should normally be provided by foster carers or residential staff and funded out of the carer's allowance. If appropriate, a bus pass will be arranged. If neither of these is possible transport will be arranged, the cost of which may be shared between Children's Social Care and the Home to School Transport budget.

Where shared cost travel assistance is agreed this will be limited to a period of up to 6 months and subject to maximum distance of 25 miles or a travelling time of 75 minutes. These criteria will be waived if the child moves in the last two years of their compulsory secondary education or an education placement is named in their EHCP which is not deemed to be parental preference.

Children looked after by Nottinghamshire who are living in another local authority (Providing Authority) area may be entitled to travel assistance from the Providing Authority. Where a child is not eligible and travel assistance is still required this will need to be arranged, usually through the Providing Authority, and funded by Nottinghamshire County Council Childrens Social Care.

Children subject to a Special Guardianship Order (SGO) are not entitled to the same transport rights as looked after children. Applications for transport for these children will be assessed in accordance with the Home to School Transport Policy.

3.3 Children Looked After by Another Local Authority

Local Authorities have corporate parental responsibilities for children in their legal care (Children Looked After (CLA)). This is known as the "Home" Authority.

It is not uncommon for a CLA to be resident in a 2nd Authority's geographical area and either attend a school in that area or in another area. This is known as the "Providing" Authority.

It is the responsibility of the Providing Authority to arrange suitable Travel to School assistance in line with statutory obligations.

Under The Inter-Authority Recoupment (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2026, which come into force on 1st September 2026, the Providing Authority may recoup the costs of Travel to School assistance from the home authority, providing that:

1. the child has an EHC plan, or
2. attends a special school

With effect from the 1st September 2026, Nottinghamshire County Council (NCC) will seek to recoup the costs of travel assistance provided for a CLA and which falls under these regulations.

When procuring such travel assistance NCC will communicate with the Home Authority, in advance of any contract being awarded, to advise them of, and seek agreement to payment of, the associated costs. As part of this agreement NCC will include the route in their programme of monitoring and inspection and will be responsible for the contract management and compliance of the contracted service.

Where a Home Authority is not prepared to accept the costs that have been offered as part of the tendering process, the Home Authority may make their own arrangements for the provision of Travel to School assistance. NCC would be happy to direct such Home Authorities to local service providers where required, however NCC will accept no responsibility for the monitoring or inspection of routes contracted directly by the Home Authority.

After agreement, NCC will request a purchase order or limit order for the whole or remainder of the academic year from the Home Authority, no transport will be procured until this has been received. NCC will then commission transport and raise monthly invoices for the recoupment of these costs, providing necessary evidence of cost.

Where NCC has provided travel assistance in a previous academic year and this is to continue, NCC will communicate with the Home Authority, to advise them of, and seek agreement to payment of, the associated costs. If no agreement is reached and no purchase order or limit order is received by 1st December, transport will be cancelled or suspended after the Autumn Term and the Home Authority advised. Where a Home Authority lapses in payments for agreed costs, NCC will exercise its rights under these regulations to raise a claim for payment. Failure to secure payment after a 6-month period may result in travel to school assistance provision being cancelled or suspended.

3.4 Pupils attending Education Other Than at School (EOTAS)

See Appendix B

3.5 Long fixed term exclusions

For fixed period exclusions beyond five days the school governing body is responsible for arranging full-time education provision. The County Council is responsible for meeting any resulting transport costs, e.g., if the pupil receives education at an alternative school site/learning centre.

3.6 Moving home and temporary accommodation

A pupil attending the qualifying secondary school who moves address in the last two years of their compulsory secondary education will be eligible for assistance if they remain at this school. Assistance will be based on the standard mileage and age criteria (see section 2) but will be restricted to a maximum travelling distance of 8 miles and travelling time of 45 minutes.

Where parents/carers insist on a child attending a school to which the journey time exceeds these limits, the Council will not be responsible for making, or meeting, the cost of travel arrangements.

The last year(s) of education will be deemed to begin on 1 September of the year in question. Therefore, those who move during the summer holidays before 1 September will not receive assistance.

Children of families who have to move into temporary accommodation for reasons outside their control may be eligible for travel assistance to the original qualifying school for up to a maximum of 6 months from the time of the move. Assistance will be restricted to a maximum travelling distance of 25 miles and travelling time of 75 minutes.

Assistance is not provided where parents/carers go abroad for extended periods and whose children are cared for at an alternative address.

3.7 Managed moves

Where a pupil is admitted to an alternative school following a managed move by the County Council, then, subject to the advice of the County Council authorising officer, the school shall be regarded as the designated suitable school for determining travel assistance. In normal circumstances, the County Council authorising officer should pursue placement at the nearest suitable school to the home address.

Where a pupil is placed at a new school without the authorisation of the Council then it is the responsibility of parents/carers and the pupil's current school to make appropriate travel arrangements and fund where necessary.

In exceptional circumstances transport assistance may be considered by the Council and will be determined on a case by case.

4 PROVISION OF TRAVEL ARRANGEMENTS

4.1 Measuring the statutory distances

In most cases distances are measured from the home address to school, gate to gate, using the shortest available walking route. Walking routes and availability of walking routes are defined in section 7.8.

In the case of families who meet the low-income criteria the minimum statutory distances are measured by using the shortest available walking route. Distances above that are measured by using the nearest route accessible by a vehicle.

Where there is a change to the walking route (i.e. the building of a new road or path), which brings the home to school distance within the prescribed distance, pupils will no longer be entitled to free transport. This change will affect all children after parents/carers have been provided with a reasonable period of notice, which is normally one term.

4.2 Walking distance exemptions

In some circumstances pupils living within the available walking distance limits and attending the qualifying school may be eligible for free travel. The circumstances in which free travel may be considered are:

4.2.1 Special Transport Needs

See Appendix A

4.2.2 Temporary Medical Grounds

Transport may be provided for pupils who meet the eligibility criteria in Section 2 of this policy and who are temporarily incapacitated and unable to walk to or from school.

Parents/carers should apply for medical transport via the County Council's website with a certificate or letter from the medical professional stating that the pupil requires the provision of transport to enable them to access school. The authorisation should state specifically why the child is unable to travel to school accompanied by their parent/carer and for how long the assistance is required.

4.2.3 Disability of parents/carers

Parents/carers are expected to take reasonable steps to ensure their child gets to school. Travel assistance may be considered where the parent/carer has a disability which prevents them from doing this where the pupil meets the eligibility criteria in Section 2. Parents/carers should obtain a certificate or letter from a medical professional stating specifically why they are unable to accompany their child to school.

4.2.4 Exceptional Circumstances

Exceptional circumstances will be determined on a case-by-case basis by Transport and Travel Services.

4.3 Home to bus stop/bus stop to school walking distance

Pick-up and set-down points are made as near to home and school as possible bearing in mind road safety issues and the length/time of the journey. Pupils are expected to walk up to one mile from door to bus stop or from bus stop to school, or a combination of distances totalling not more than one mile in either direction each day. Pupils may be exempted from this on the recommendation of an appropriate medical professional or educational specialist.

4.4 Parents/carers who are working at the time their children travel to and from school

No dispensation will be made for parents/carers who are working at the time their children travel to and from school. Parents/carers are expected to make other suitable arrangements for someone else to accompany their children as necessary.

4.5 Types of travel assistance

The aim of the policy is to achieve best value in providing a quality transport service as efficiently and economically as possible, to ensure that pupils get to school within a reasonable time and travel in a safe and stress-free environment.

The County Council provides for a return journey to/from home to school/college at the beginning and end of each official school/college day. Section 2.3 sets out instances when transport will not normally be provided.

Arrangements for travel assistance may take one of the following forms:

4.5.1 Free pass

A free travel pass will be issued where pupils qualify for free travel as detailed in Section 2. The pass will allow one return journey on school days only, on specified services between specified points.

4.5.2 Parent Mileage

Where there are no suitable transport services to the qualifying school, a parent mileage grant is available where pupils qualify for free travel as detailed in Section 2.

- The parent mileage grant is based on the distance of two return trips per day using the 'public transport rate' as the basis of calculation. Distance is measured along the shortest route taken by the vehicle.
- The parent mileage grant is provided on a monthly reimbursement basis when attendance data has been confirmed with the school/education provider.
- The parent mileage grant will only be backdated to the start of the academic year in which the application is made.
- The parent mileage grant will be given to only one member of a family at any one time, where a sibling is attending the same school or site. Where a sibling is attending a different school on a different site, a parent mileage grant will be paid for the total mileage.

Eligible pupils will be allocated either a free pass or a parent mileage grant, they will not be entitled to both.

4.6 Travel assistance for pupils attending a school on the grounds of religion or belief

Travel assistance will be by means of a travel pass at a subsidised rate to the nearest suitable school on payment of the appropriate contribution from parents/carers. These charges are subject to annual review.

The following detailed criteria will apply:

- The pupil must be admitted to the school on grounds of religion or belief. In the case of admission on denominational grounds, Transport and Travel Services (TTS) will request confirmation of this from the school. In cases where the application is on grounds of other philosophy or belief (see section 7.7) the application will be assessed based on the supporting evidence provided.

- The pupil meets the appropriate distance criteria in parts 2.2.7 or 2.2.8 of this policy.

- Using the available transport services, the pupil can travel within the maximum travelling time criteria of 45 minutes for primary pupils and 75 minutes for secondary pupils. Journey time is assessed by calculating the door-to-door time by use of public transport or the equivalent time it would have taken where no public transport exists and includes any journey time to a pick-up point, waiting time for connections and walking time from set down point to school.

Children from low-income families meeting the criteria above are exempted from charges if they are entitled to free school meals..

Where a family has 3 or more siblings attending the nearest suitable schools on denominational grounds (up to age 16) only the two youngest children will be subject to a charge. Free travel for older siblings will be on the condition that the family are paying the appropriate charge for the 2 youngest siblings. Passes will be withdrawn if this ceases to be the case.

From September 2027 the travel assistance provisions for pupils attending schools on the grounds of religion or belief will change. The revised provisions are detailed in the Home to School Transport Policy 2027/2028 which is available on the Nottinghamshire County Council website.

4.7 Reviews of transport arrangements

Transport arrangements are subject to regular review to take account of pupils joining and leaving schools. In addition, there is a legal obligation that transport contracts are periodically re-tendered to achieve best value.

5 APPLYING FOR TRAVEL ASSISTANCE

5.1 Applying for under–16 travel assistance

The quickest way to apply for travel assistance is to apply online.

https://www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/education/travel-to-schools

If you are unable to complete the form online, you can contact our Customer Service Centre on 0300 500 80 80 who will complete a mediated form for you.

It must be stressed that applications for travel assistance made on behalf of secondary age pupils must be accompanied by a current photograph, as this is necessary for the travel pass.

If assistance is being sought on the grounds of religion or belief the form must indicate this. The Council will verify with the school the grounds under which pupil has been admitted before travel assistance is approved.

Whilst an application is being processed, the family will be responsible for their travel arrangements, the Council will not refund any costs incurred. Processing an application may take up to 10 working days following receipt of a completed form, with any necessary supporting documents. These time limits cannot be guaranteed for applications received for the start of the new academic year. 10 working days must then be allowed after the date of payment for the dispatch of a travel pass or confirmation of travel arrangements. Passes and transport details will be sent by 2nd class post.

Outcome of applications will be emailed to the parent/carer. Parents/carers of successful applicants will be sent details of the relevant transport arrangements.

5.2 Replacement passes

Where you require a pass to be changed to enable use on a different vehicle / boarding point please contact TTS who will advise you whether this is possible. Where agreed the replacement pass will be subject to an administration fee. Current administration fees are published on the County Council's website.

Where the current pass contains incorrect information, the new pass will be issued free of charge

Replacement passes | Nottinghamshire County Council

5.3 Lost/stolen passes

Passes that have been lost or stolen can be replaced on payment of an administration fee. Current administration fees are published on the County Council's Website.

In the case of pupils eligible for free travel, a temporary pass is available. For the replacement of passes not issued by TTS the full cost of replacement must be borne by the parents/carers, unless a locally arranged alternative scheme exists.

Replacement passes | Nottinghamshire County Council

5.4 Provision and organisation of school transport services

5.4.1 Provision of Services

The arrangements for providing transport will be made in accordance with the requirements of the Education Acts 1996, 2002, the Education and Inspections Act 2006 and the Transport Acts 1985 and 2000.

The County Council will endeavour to ensure the safe movement of pupils and will coordinate exclusive school transport journeys and local bus services to ensure best value for money is achieved, in particular with respect to efficiency, effectiveness and economy (Transport Act 2000 s152).

5.4.2 Transport requirements

TTS will determine the level of service, vehicle type and seating capacity requirements. A continuing review of the services provided will be made to ensure that the travel needs of pupils are adequately met. Services will be organised as appropriate allowing for:

- The regulations relating to the provision of passenger transport services.

- The school or college session times, provided that the appropriate statutory procedures required have been followed. Head teachers, Principals and Governing Bodies are requested to consult with TTS as soon as possible on proposed changes to session times, so that the effect of any change can be assessed. Advice will be given on whether the change can be accommodated within the transport network, the likely cost implications, and any subsequent effects on other establishments and the local community as a result of the change.

- The fact that it is desirable in the interests of safety and comfort to provide a seat for each pupil. Legislation permits children under 14 to be seated three to each double seat on buses not equipped with seat belts. This arrangement will only be used to cope with a marginal excess of numbers above the available seating capacity. Children who reach the age of 14 during a school year are deemed to be less than 14 years of age until the last day of August following their 14th birthday.

- The need to give appropriate notice to head teachers, parents/carers and other interested parties regarding proposed changes to the transport network.

- The need to monitor the services and deal with complaints as soon as possible to ensure that an efficient and reliable service is provided.

- Environmental and sustainability issues.

- Equal opportunities and social inclusion.

5.5 Information to schools, colleges and transport operators

When appropriate, TTS will issue notes of guidance to all head teachers, regarding school transport services, which will provide information relating to school closures, accidents and poor operation. The guidance will also include information relating to transport operations for pupils with special educational needs.

When appropriate, notes of guidance will be issued to all transport operators by TTS to assist them in the operation of school transport services and the procedures for checking of travel passes and dealing with emergencies and behaviour.

5.6 Discipline on school transport services and misuse of travel passes

5.6.1 Guidance

The County Council, schools and transport operators work closely together to encourage appropriate behaviour on transport to school and minimise travel problems.

Guidance notes to parents/carers and pupils are published on the County Council website

https://www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/education/travel-to-schools/under-16-travel-assistance

5.6.2 Procedures

Except for serious incidents of indiscipline (which will be dealt with on an individual basis) the following procedures will normally apply:

- TTS, after consultation with the head teacher will advise parents/carers of the incident which occurred and issue a warning.

- If the problem continues the travel pass will be suspended for a set period or withdrawn permanently, depending on the seriousness of the incident(s). If, after reinstatement following a period of suspension, the difficulties continue, the travel pass (including free pass) or transport facility may be withdrawn permanently.

- In the event of suspension or withdrawal of a pass, parents/carers will be required to make their own transport arrangements. The transport operator will be informed of the action taken.

5.6.3 Misuse of passes including non-payment for season passes

If a pass is withdrawn by an operator because of misuse including the use of out-of-date passes, the incident will be investigated, and a report sought from the school or college. Pupils will be responsible for the payment of fares during the period a travel pass is withheld because of misuse or non-payment. At the same time a letter will be sent by TTS informing parents/carers of the actions of the County Council.

6 REVIEW OF TRANSPORT DECISIONS

A parent/carer has the right to a review of a decision if they believe that the County Council has assessed their entitlement to free travel incorrectly.

Parents/carers should complete an appeal form and specify precisely the nature of the appeal. Appeals regarding travel and transport decisions will be considered from one or more of the following categories:

- a child's eligibility – must identify which part of the policy the eligibility relates to
- the distance measurement in relation to the statutory walking distances as specified in Section 2 and Section 7.9 of the Policy
- the safety of the route as specified in Section 7.8 of the Policy
- the transport arrangements
- exceptional circumstances – corroborated by appropriate documentation or evidence to be included when making the appeal

The appeals process will not commence or be considered until a fully completed form and appropriate documentation is received.

The County Council will not consider appeals where:

- a child is not resident in Nottinghamshire (travel applications should be made to the local authority in which you reside)
- a parent/carer disagrees with the cost of transport OR the reimbursement rates which have been agreed by the Council following due process
- a parent/carer has previously appealed against a decision and there have been no changes to the details of the appeal

6.1 Stage One: Senior Officer review

Parents/carers have 20 working days from receipt of the home to school transport decision to make a written request asking for a review of the decision. The written request should detail why the parent/carer believes the decision should be reviewed and give details of any personal and/or family circumstances they believe should be considered when the decision is reviewed.

Within 20 working days of receipt of the written request a senior officer will review the original decision and send the parent/carer a detailed written notification of the outcome of the review. This will explain the rationale for the decision reached and

explain how, if they wish to do so, request their case to be taken to stage two of the appeal process.

6.2 Stage Two: Review by an independent appeal panel

A parent/carer has 20 working days from receipt of the local authority's stage one written decision notification to make a written request for their case to be taken to stage two of the review process.

Stage two appeals will be considered within 40 working days of receipt. The independent appeal panel will consider both written and verbal representations from both parent/carer and officers involved in the case. A detailed written notification of the outcome will be sent to the parent/carer within five working days of the appeal panel.

The appeal panel members will be independent of the original decision-making process.

If a stage two appeal is unsuccessful, there is no further right of appeal within Nottinghamshire County Council. However, if a parent/carer is dissatisfied with the way the appeal has been conducted they may complain to the Local Government Ombudsman. The Local Government Ombudsman has no statutory power to overturn the decision of the Panel but can draw the County Council's attention to any misadministration leading to injustice.

If the parent/carer believes that the decision of the independent panel to be flawed on public law grounds, they may also apply for a judicial review.

Should a review find in the parents/carers favour, free travel will be backdated to when the original application was received by TTS or the start of the academic year in which the application is made, whichever is the later.

7 DEFINITIONS

7.1 Qualifying schools

- Community, foundation, or voluntary schools
- Community or foundation special schools
- Academies
- Free Schools
- Independent non-maintained special schools

7.2 'Suitable' school

Suitable school is defined as the nearest qualifying school to the family home with places available that provides education appropriate to the age, ability and aptitude of the child, and any special educational needs that the child may have.

Please see parts 7.8 and 7.9 for information about how the distance between home and school is defined and measured.

7.3 Catchment area schools

In Nottinghamshire your home address may be in a catchment area, recognised by the local authority. It is worth noting that some own admission authority schools no longer recognise catchment areas in their admissions policy and therefore some home addresses will no longer have a catchment area school at secondary and /or primary.

Information about identifying your catchment school can be downloaded from the Nottinghamshire County Council Web Site, link given below:

http://www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/findmynearest

7.4 Coterminous and overlapping catchment areas

In the event of two or more schools having a coterminous or overlapping catchment area the nearest of the schools to the home address will be regarded as the designated catchment school for transport purposes.

7.5 Designated schools

Nottinghamshire County Council may designate a school other than the catchment or nearest school as the qualifying school. This may be done either through an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) or by an authorising officer of the County Council.

7.6 Preferred schools

Parents/carers have the right to express a preference for a school other than their nearest suitable qualifying school and this is known as a 'preferred school'.

7.7 Schools attended on the grounds of parents/carers religion or belief

'Religion' means any religion, and 'belief' means any religious or philosophical belief. References to religion or belief include references to lack of religion or belief. It therefore follows that this duty covers all religions and denominations, as well as philosophical beliefs.

7.8 Walking routes and availability of walking routes

The walking route is defined as the shortest available walking route between the home boundary gate and the nearest school gate. To be treated as a walking route the route must be available to be walked (accompanied as necessary by an adult) with reasonable safety – considering highway conditions only. Personal safety is a parental responsibility. TTS measures the distance involved and assesses availability against set criteria. Where statutory free travel is not automatically awarded, an appeal process exists, and the case can be reviewed (see Section 6)

7.9 Measurement of distances

All distance measurements are undertaken using the Council's approved specialist mapping tool. In order to determine which school is the nearest to a home address, the shortest available walking route between the home boundary gate and the nearest school gate is measured. Distances beyond the statutory walking distance or where there is no available walking route are measured by the shortest road route, i.e., a route passable by a motor vehicle. Road routes are measured from the centre line of the public highway immediately outside the home address to the nearest school or college pedestrian entrance.

Once the nearest school has been identified, to establish a child's transport eligibility, statutory walking distances (2 miles for primary aged children and 3 miles for secondary aged children) will be measured by the shortest available walking route from the boundary gate of the home address to the nearest school or college pedestrian entrance. The route measured may include footpaths, bridleways, and other pathways, as well as recognised roads where these are assessed to be available.

7.10 Low income

The Education and Inspections Act 2006 place a duty on local authorities to provide free transport for some of the most disadvantaged children. Low-income is defined by reference to eligibility for benefits-based free school meals (FSM). From the beginning of the 2026/27 academic year, there will be two categories of benefits-based free school meals:

- Targeted FSM – for pupils who are in households in receipt of Universal Credit with annual household earnings of no more than £7,400.
- Expanded FSM – for pupils who do not qualify for Targeted FSM, but who are in households receiving Universal Credit.

Extended rights to free travel for low-income families continues to apply to children eligible for Targeted FSM. This reflects Nottinghamshire County Council's current

policy prior to the 2026/2027 academic year, with updated terminology. The Department for Education's eligibility checking service will be used to determine whether a child meets the criteria for Targeted FSM and so is eligible for extended rights travel.

Where a child qualified for, and was receiving, extended rights travel on 31 March 2025 and continues to meet the eligibility criteria in paragraph 35, the Department for Education expects local authorities to continue providing free travel until the end of their current phase of education or until they leave their current school, whichever is sooner. This is because those children would have continued to be eligible until this point under transitional protection arrangements that applied prior to the expansion of free school meals and parents may have based their choice of school on this.

APPENDIX A

Special Educational Needs and Disability Travel Policy

1 Legal Requirements and general responsibilities

1.1 The legal requirements relating to the general duty of a Local Authority to provide transport from home to school are contained within Section 509 of the Education Act 1996. The duty to consider the provision of free or assisted travel applies equally to pupils with or without Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND).

1.2 Some pupils with SEND may require assistance with their travel to school. Wherever possible and appropriate, pupils with SEND should be treated in the same way as those without, i.e., in general, they should walk to school, travel on public transport or be taken by their parents/carers. They should develop independent travel skills, which should be assessed at each annual review.

1.3 The County Council will determine the appropriate travel assistance provided in accordance with the eligibility criteria in Section 2 of the Home to School Transport Policy and the County Council's aim to provide best value.

1.4 Where pupils attend a school other than the nearest suitable or catchment school as the qualifying (designated) school, travel assistance will be determined in accordance with Section 2 of the Home to School Transport Policy.

1.5 Where parents/carers choose to send their children to a preferred school, Section 2 of the Home to School Transport Policy will apply.

1.6 Travel assistance may be provided for a pre-school age child who has an Education, Health, and Care Plan (EHCP). In such cases, assistance may be provided to nursery schools, nursery classes or units and pre-school playgroups.

1.7 Whilst an application for travel assistance is being processed, the family will be responsible for their own travel arrangements, the Council will not refund any costs incurred. Processing an application may take up to 10 working days following receipt of a completed form, with any necessary supporting documents. These time limits cannot be guaranteed for applications received in July and August for the start of the new academic year.

1.8 Travel applications for the start of the academic year 2026-27 must be received by the 1st July 2026. Any applications for travel assistance received after this date may not processed in time for transport to commence at the beginning of term in September. The Council will not reimburse any costs incurred by parents/carers while travel assistance is being arranged.

1.9 Where special transport is agreed this will normally take up to 20 working days to arrange from the date that eligibility is agreed. The County Council

will not reimburse any costs incurred by parents/carers taking their child to the establishment while special transport is being arranged.

1.10 Where a child requires medical intervention on transport, a transport care plan will need to be provided by the parent/carer before the application is assessed and progressed. The requirements in the transport care plan will define the travel assistance procured and may require a parent/carer to accompany their child to school if the medical needs exceed those provided by the procured transport provision. This transport may take longer than 20 days to procure once agreed due to the complexity of the provision required.

1.11 If travel assistance is approved, this will normally take the form of one of the following:

- Provision of a Direct Travel Assistance Payment (DTAP)
- Parental mileage allowance
- Provision of special/medical transport

1.12 Where special transport is provided this will normally be to and from a designated collection/drop off point located within one mile of the home address. A pick-up and/or drop off at home will only be provided in exceptional circumstances; additional medical information may be required to support the request.

1.13 Where special transport is provided, it will normally be in the form of a shared vehicle. Individual transport will only be provided in exceptional circumstances: additional information may be required to support the request.

1.14 Parents/carers are responsible for escorting their child to and from the vehicle at the designated collection/drop-off point. Where a parent/carer consistently fails to deliver/receive their child at the pick-up/drop-off point at the agreed time, the provision of transport will be reviewed and may be withdrawn.

1.15 Where a child is not attending a provision for a period of time exceeding four weeks, transport may be withdrawn depending on circumstances. To reinstate transport 20 working days' notice will need to be given to the Council. The transport provided may be with a different transport contractor and/or a different transport crew and if there are medical needs a new transport care plan may be required before transport commences.

1.16 Except in exceptional circumstances, home to school transport will only be provided at the beginning and end of the normal school day during the normal school week (Monday to Friday), term time only.

2 Qualification by walking distance

The distance criteria described in Section 2 of the Home to School Transport Policy apply equally to pupils with and without SEN and disabilities. There are, however, a number of walking distance exemptions. Pupils living within the appropriate walking distance limits and attending the qualifying/designated school may be eligible for travel assistance if:

- The pupil has a special transport need that requires the provision of transport for them to access and attend school. The special transport need is assessed by the County Council, drawing upon medical and other professional advice, as required. A special transport need may arise where the pupil:

    - lives within the walking distance but is unable to walk/travel safely to school when accompanied by a parent/carer

    - is unable to use public transport when accompanied by a parent/carer

There may be exceptional circumstances which require the provision of special transport. Transport and Travel Services Team (TTS) will consider any exceptional circumstances in individual cases.

3 Escorts

TTS will utilise the advice received from education and medical professionals to determine whether it is necessary to provide an escort or other facilities.

4 Independent Travel Training (ITT)

The County Council operates an Independent Travel Training Programme, details can be obtained from:

www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/travelling/travel/itt/

Pupils/students will be enabled to undertake independent travel training unless they are assessed by an officer of the Council and school/college as being unlikely to benefit from such training.

Special transport provided by the County Council will not be available for pupils/students who are able but choose not to participate in the travel training programme.

Pupils/students who have successfully completed the ITT programme will be enabled to make the journey to school/college independently. Special transport will not be provided for these pupils/students unless their circumstances change significantly.

5 Residential Special Schools

5.1 Where the County Council has placed a pupil in a residential special school which is over the statutory walking distance from their home, parents/carers may be reimbursed at public transport rate or allocated a DTAP to transport their children to and from the school. Where parents/carers do not have access to transport, or where it is more cost effective, transport will be provided by the County Council.

5.2 Weekly borders will be entitled to travel assistance at the beginning and end of the school week.

5.3 Termly borders will be entitled to travel assistance at mid and full-term holidays, or as determined by the pupil's EHCP.

5.4 Where pupils attend a residential special school on a 52-week placement, transport is not provided. If assistance with transport is required, the social care worker allocated to the family should be contacted.

6 Pupils Aged 16 and Under Attending Colleges or Alternative Provision

For pupils aged 16 and under who attend college or other alternative educational provision on a full-time basis, eligibility for travel assistance will be assessed as follows:

- If the placement has been made by a Council officer, then travel assistance will be in accordance with Section 2 of the Home to School Transport Policy.

- If the placement is a parental choice, it is the responsibility of the parent/carer to provide transport.

- If the pupil's designated school has arranged educational provision off-site, the school will be responsible for arranging and funding any necessary travel.

7 Cases where there will not normally be an entitlement to transport

- To and from temporary addresses including family, friends and child minders where these arrangements are made by the family
- At times to suit the convenience of family arrangements
- At times when other siblings in the family must to be taken to other schools
- For late arrival or early departure, for example due to illness or medical appointments
- To and from medical appointments
- Following detention
- To access breakfast or after-school clubs including out of school activities
- To work experience, taster or open days
- To provision off the school site organised by the school
- To provision off the school site as part of a transition programme to a new education setting
- For transfers between educational establishments during the school day
- For shorter than normal days e.g. during the exam season
- For pupils who are registered as being elective home educated
- For a child whose level of attendance is a cause of concern, but for whom no eligibility criteria are met
- For students on exchange visits
- Where the behaviour of a young person is not acceptable or places other travellers at risk

8 Short Breaks/Respite Care

This is not covered by the Home to School Transport Policy. Transport requests should be made to Children's Social Care and Health.

9 Review of Transport Provision

Transport provision will be reviewed annually to determine whether the basis for entitlement has changed and whether the travel assistance provided remains appropriate.

10 Review of Transport Decisions

A parent/carer has the right to a review of a decision if they believe that the County Council has assessed their entitlement to free transport incorrectly. Please see Section 6 of Home to School Transport Policy for details.

APPENDIX B

Pupils attending Education Other Than at School (EOTAS)

1 Home to School Transport in Nottinghamshire is provided for eligible pupils who meet the criteria as laid out in the Home to School Transport Policy. The policy sets out the Council's statutory duty to provide home to school transport to eligible pupils.

2 Pupils of statutory school age not on a school roll, whose education is the responsibility of the County Council either through a permanent exclusion or other circumstances, will have an alternative provision placement commissioned by the Council. In these cases, the placement will be classed as their designated school.

3 Where the placement at an alternative education provider is commissioned by a school, the parent/carer and school must have agreed how the young person is going to get there. Under normal circumstances there is no entitlement under the Home to School Transport Policy to provide travel assistance to an establishment other than to the one that the young person is on roll at. However, if the placement has been agreed in conjunction with a Council officer, then travel assistance may be given.

4 Travel assistance will be awarded in accordance with the Home to School Transport Policy and parents/carers will be expected to complete the same application forms and provide medical/professional evidence where required.

5 Some pupils may require special transport arrangements however where possible and appropriate, pupils should be treated in the same way as those attending a school i.e. in general, they should walk to the establishment, travel on public transport or be taken by their parents/carers.

6 Inter-site transport during the day

6.1 Where an educational establishment arranges for pupils to attend different establishments during the school day it will be the responsibility of the establishment and parent/carer to arrange and fund transport.

6.2 Where a pupil receives home to school transport this will only be to one site and therefore any arrangements made by the establishment must take this into account, i.e. a pupil will not be picked up from a different establishment in the evening to the one at which they were dropped off in the morning.

6.3 Home to School transport is only provided at the beginning and end of a normal school day. No dispensation will be made for pupils not ready to be collected at the end of the school day.

7 Admission of pupils aged under 16 to Colleges of Further Education (CFE)

For pupils aged 16 and under who attend a college of Further Education on a full-time basis, eligibility for travel assistance will be assessed as follows:

- If the placement has been made by a Council officer, then travel assistance will be in accordance with Section 2 of the Home to School Transport Policy.
- If the placement is a parental preference, it is the responsibility of the parents/carers to provide transport.
- If the pupil's designated school has arranged educational provision off-site, the school will be responsible for arranging and funding any necessary travel.