

School Transport Helpful Tips and Frequently Asked Questions

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Home to School Transport Assistance for students UNDER 16 with or without an EHCP

What are the criteria for free Home to School Transport Assistance?

The basic criteria are:

- The child should be attending their nearest appropriate school with spaces available,
- The child should live more than 2 miles away (if they are under 8 years of age) or 3 miles away (if they are aged 8 to 16) from their nearest appropriate school, measured by the shortest available safe walking route.

There are some differences if the child is from a 'low income' family, if they have Special Educational Needs (SEN) or if they are over 16 years of age.

How do I apply for Home to School Transport Assistance?

You should complete the relevant application form at [School Transport Applications Web Pages](#)

What information do I need when I apply for Home to School Transport Assistance?

You will know all the information you need to make an application, the only documents you may need are:

- Evidence of being a 'low income' family,
- Evidence of any medical conditions your child may have.

If you do not attach documents to your application we will not be able to take the circumstances into account when assessing your child's entitlement to transport assistance.

My child had Home to School Transport Assistance this year, do I need to apply again for this September?

Usually Home to School Transport Assistance is approved until your child changes school or reaches 16 years of age, unless they were granted Home to School Transport Assistance under the 'low income' family criteria or extenuating circumstances.

When you were told your child's application had been successful the notification usually tells you when the Home to School Transport Assistance was granted until.

If you move home or your child changes school you will need to make a new application.

If your child was granted Home to School Transport Assistance under the 'low income' family criteria or extenuating circumstances you will need to make a new application each year.

What happens once I submit my application?

You will receive an automatic confirmation email message saying your form has been received and a reference number. You may need to check your spam or junk email in case your email provider has filtered the message off.

If you don't receive an email message your application has not been accepted. Please check your application and resubmit.

If you still don't receive a confirmation message please email transport.applications@achievingforchildren.org.uk

How long will it take before I know the decision?

We aim to make a decision on applications for transport to start in September within 20-25 working days from when we receive the application.

At other times of the year, when we receive fewer applications, we aim to make decisions within 10-15 working days.

If we need any additional information from you we will contact you; if there is a delay in receiving the information from you this will delay our ability to make the final decision.

How do you let me know the decision?

Decisions are sent by email to the address given on the application, as well as being added to the application case itself. You may need to check your spam or junk email in case your email provider has filtered the message off; alternatively you can log in to the application system (if you created an account and logged in before submitting your application) to see any progress or messages we have sent you, as well as the final decision.

The Customer Contact Centre can also look up cases and give you any updates that have been added to the case if you have the application reference number.

I am not able to apply on line, what do I do?

The application forms can be access via a smartphone, alternatively, if you need further assistance you can use the computers in the libraries throughout the borough. Library staff are unable to offer a one-to-one

service for form filling, but can guide and help with things such as adding attachments and scanning documents.

Can you tell me now if I will receive free Home to School Transport Assistance?

As each application is assessed individually against the criteria in the Home to School Transport Policy, we are unable to give a decision over the phone or by email; you should submit an application and give as much information as you can to help us make a decision.

What happens if my application is refused?

There are 2 stages of appeal if your application is refused. Information about making an appeal is sent with the refusal letter, and can also be found on the website at [School Transport Appeals Web Pages](#)

My child is not entitled to Home to School Transport Assistance, how do I get them to school?

If your child is not entitled to free Home to School Transport Assistance you may be able to purchase a pass for them to use on one of our home to school transport services, if spare places are available. Alternatively, you may be able to purchase a pass for your child to use on a public bus route. Further information is usually given in the refusal letter.

To plan a journey by public transport please go to the [Traveline Web site](#)

When can I make an application for Home to School Transport Assistance?

You can make an application for Home to School Transport Assistance as soon as you know the school your child will be attending.

Applications for transport to start in September should be submitted by 1 August; we cannot guarantee applications made after this date will be assessed by the start of the new school year in September.

What happens if I apply late for September?

We will assess your application and let you know the decision as soon as possible, but you will should make your own arrangements for your child's journey to and from school until you receive the decision.

We aim to make a decision on applications for transport to start in September within 20-25 working days from when we receive the application.

At other times of the year, when we receive fewer applications, we aim to make decisions within 10-15 working days.

When will I receive my bus or train pass?

We usually send out bus passes in mid August. Some passes are created and posted by our operators, and we send them orders regularly throughout the year.

What happens if my child loses their pass?

You can apply for a replacement pass at [School Transport Applications Web Pages](#) There is a charge for a replacement pass.

What do I do if I move home?

If you move home your child may not be eligible to continue receiving free Home to School Transport Assistance; you will need to make a new application so we can reassess their eligibility.

Whilst you are waiting to hear the decision you will need to make your own arrangements for your child's journey to and from school.

What do I do if my child changes school?

If your child changes school during the school year they may not be eligible to receive free Home to School Transport Assistance; you will need to make a new application so we can reassess their eligibility.

Whilst you are waiting to hear the decision you will need to make your own arrangements for your child's journey to and from school.

What if there are no places for my child at their nearest school?

If a school does not have a space available for your child then it is disregarded when we assess their application for free Home to School Transport Assistance and the next nearest school becomes the nearest appropriate school for purposes of assessing their application.

What if the walking route to school is not safe?

Walking routes are assessed in accordance with the Road Safety GB guidance, if a route is assessed as not being safe it is not used in the assessment of an application.

How to do you assess the distance to school?

The distance between the home address and school is measured using the shortest available safe walking route from the closest pedestrian entrance to both the home and school. The measurement is made using

our electronic mapping system, and may be checked by other methods, including physical measurement on the ground.

As the route is measured along walking routes, it is not always the same distance as if you were driving from home to school.

What if my child has Special Educational Needs (SEN)?

If your child has an EHCP (Education and Health Care Plan, which has replaced Statements) you will be asked to provide further information as part of the application. When we assess applications for Home to School Transport Assistance for students with SEN we will check with the CYPDS (Children and Young Peoples Disability Service) to make sure we assess their application in line with their individual needs and abilities.

How is a 'low income' family defined?

For the purposes of Home to School Transport Assistance, the law defines a 'low income' family as one that either:

- Receives the maximum level of Working Tax Credits
- Where the child is eligible to receive Free School Meals

Home to School Transport Assistance for students OVER 16

My child is still in school, can I still apply for free Home to School Transport Assistance?

No. Free school transport is only available for children up to the age of 16.

The Royal Borough offers concessionary bus passes on certain school routes. Further information can be found on our 'Pay for transport' pages at: [School Transport Applications Web Pages](#)

The government said my child had to stay at school, why can't they get free Home to School Transport Assistance?

The Education and Skills Act 2008 says that a young person should remain in education or training until they reach 18 years of age, however, it did not increase the legal age a young person can leave school. This means that there is no legal right to free Home to School Transport Assistance once a young person is over 16 years of age.

Can I purchase a railcard?

Yes. National Rail have a 16-17 Saver Scheme and the 16-25 Railcard. Both schemes are administered by National Rail.

Students aged 16-17 can apply for the **16-17 Saver Scheme** which enables a student to purchase a child fare, (Season, Anytime, Off-Peak and Advance) on any rail network (excluding ScotRail or Caledonian Sleeper services), which is valid for one year or until the student's 18th birthday (whichever is sooner).

Students aged 16-25, or a full time student aged 26 or over can apply for a **16-25 Railcard**, which offers 30% off most standard class rail fares.

Further information regarding National Rail schemes for students of all ages can be found at: [16-17 Saver Eligibility](#)

My child can't get to school by rail, what other options are there?

If your child is not able to travel to their school/college by rail you may be able to purchase a pass for them to use on one of our home to school transport services, if spare places are available. Further information can be found on our 'Pay for transport' pages at [School Transport Applications Web Pages](#)

Alternatively, you may be able to purchase a pass for your child to use on a public bus route. To plan a journey by public transport please go to the [Traveline Web site](#)

I am not able to apply on line, what do I do?

The application forms can be access via a smartphone, alternatively, if you need further assistance you can use the computers in the libraries throughout the borough. Library staff are unable to offer a one-to-one service for form filling, but can guide and help with things such has adding attachments and scanning documents.

What happens if I apply late for September?

We know there is very little time between places at school/college being confirmed and the start of the new school year, so we encourage applications as soon as you know where your child will be studying.

What happens if my child loses their pass?

If your child has a 16-17 Saver card you will need to contact National Rail for a replacement. Details of how to get a replacement can be found on their website at [16-17 Saver Refunds and Replacements](#)

If your child has a pass to use on one of our home to school transport services you can apply for a replacement pass at [School Transport Applications Web Pages](#). There is a charge for a replacement pass.

What if my child has Special Educational Needs (SEN)?

If your child has an EHCP (Education and Health Care Plan, which has replaced Statements) there is a different application for travel after they have reached 16 years of age. Free Home to School Transport Assistance is no longer provided for SEN students over 16 years of age. Students may be able to purchase a seat use on one of our home to school transport services, if spare places are available. Further information can be found on our 'Pay for transport' pages at [School Transport Applications Web Pages](#). If students qualify under the 'low income' criteria the cost of the pass is reduced by 50%.

Applications for Home to School Transport Assistance for young people over 16 years of age who have SEN can be made at [School Transport Applications Web Pages](#).

How is a 'low income' family defined?

For the purposes of Home to School Transport Assistance for young people over 16 years of age, the law defines a 'low income' family as one that either:

- Receives the maximum level of Working Tax Credits
- Where the parent/guardian OR the young person receives ESA (Employment Support Allowance) or IS (income Support)