



Compass PRU

School Transport Policy 2020-2021

Governors' Committee responsible	Teaching & Learning Committee
Link Senior Governor	Chair of Committee
Link SLT	School Business Manager
Date Reviewed	February 2020
Next Review Date	February 2021
Linked Policies	Dorset Council School Transport Policy

Our aim is to help all our learners unlock their potential in life and work

CM Ree

28.02.2020

Alison Glazier

28.02.2020

..... Signed & date
Chair of Compass Governing Board

..... Signed & date
Head teacher

Equality Impact Assessment – initial screening record

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What area of work is being considered? Upon whom will this impact? 	School Transport Policy Students (Curriculum & Finance)																																				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How would the work impact upon groups, are they included and considered? <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>The Equality Strands</th> <th>Negative Impact</th> <th>Positive Impact</th> <th>No impact</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr><td>Minority ethnic groups</td><td></td><td>✓</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>Gender</td><td></td><td>✓</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>Disability</td><td></td><td>✓</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>Religion, Faith or Belief</td><td></td><td>✓</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>Sexual Orientation</td><td></td><td>✓</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>Transgender</td><td></td><td>✓</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>Age</td><td></td><td>✓</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>Rurality</td><td></td><td>✓</td><td></td></tr> </tbody> </table>		The Equality Strands	Negative Impact	Positive Impact	No impact	Minority ethnic groups		✓		Gender		✓		Disability		✓		Religion, Faith or Belief		✓		Sexual Orientation		✓		Transgender		✓		Age		✓		Rurality		✓	
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Do you consider that a full Equality Impact Assessment is required? No																																					
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Comment by Headteacher: Date: 28.02.2020 <i>Alison Glazier</i>																																					

Home to school transport policy 2020 to 2021 - Dorset Council

This policy describes how we, Dorset Council, will support parents and carers to get their children to school and the type of support we will consider, if it's needed.

We will work with parents and carers to make sure children achieve their potential. This policy is in line with our:

- aim of promoting independence to prepare children for adulthood
- aim to give parents and carers a range of flexible options for them to make the best decisions for their children

We've designed this policy to help us achieve our vision for children and young people in Dorset with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), as set out in [our SEND strategy](#).

We will work together to give children and young people with SEND in Dorset the best chance to succeed, enjoy family life and go to school as close to home as possible" and that "together, we support children and young people with SEND ... prepare well for adulthood."

We've made a commitment to deliver a seamless pathway to adulthood and independence. All the decisions we make will support this commitment. It's each parent's responsibility to make sure their child receives a good education and that their child arrives at school ready to learn.

We will provide support if a parent needs help getting their child to school and they meet certain eligibility criteria. We'll clearly show the order of preference for this support which is linked to its aim of promoting independence and maximising flexibility for parents.

1. Eligibility and non-eligibility guidelines for transport

1.1 Children of statutory school age

The Education & Inspections Act 2006 (Section 508B) means that local authorities have to make sure that suitable travel arrangements for 'eligible children' in their area are made to help them attend 'qualifying schools'.

1.1.1 Eligible children and young people

'Eligible children' means the age of the child.

'Qualifying schools' means the school that the child attends (including cross-border schools) and the distance between the child's home address and the school measured by the shortest available walking route (which may include rights of way). Walking routes are from where the property meets the adopted road to the nearest available entrance to school grounds as measured using the Dorset GIS system. This GIS system measures the distance from home to school according to the shortest available walking routes available.

'Parent' means any person responsible for the child. Transport eligibility (free provision) is provided to the end of the respective educational year in the following cases:

- if the child is in reception year to year 4 (aged between 4 and 9) and lives 2 miles or more from the catchment area or nearest school
- if the child is in year 5 to year 11 (aged between 9 and 16) and lives 3 miles or more from the catchment area or nearest school

1.1.2 Catchment or nearest school or 'nearest suitable school with places available considering efficient use of resources'

Your postal address will define your catchment school. If another school is the 'nearest', this may also qualify for transport eligibility. These schools may be:

- community
- voluntary controlled
- voluntary aided
- foundation or trust
- academy
- free school

[See section 1.1.15 of this policy](#) if you're applying to a school on denominational grounds.

We currently provide eligible transport to the nearest, nearest catchment or catchment area school where the child meets the qualifying criteria. These agreed areas remain the same, but schools will continue to have eligible transport provided by us. If any school* (including where this affects a relevant pyramid or network area) chooses to alter their catchment area or admissions policy, they will need to consult on their arrangements with us as we're only legally required to provide transport to the nearest appropriate school. If schools change their arrangements, it will be their responsibility to inform parents.

*This refers to all types of schooling including:

- maintained schools
- voluntary controlled (VC)
- voluntary aided (VA)
- trusts
- academies
- free schools (studio schools and university technical colleges included)

If the catchment and nearest school don't have places available you may be offered transport to the 'nearest suitable school with places available considering efficient use of resources'. This will be decided by identifying the transport options, routes and timings see section 1.6.6. Contact the admissions team to find out which school in the area would qualify under this category.

'Nearest school' is assessed on the basis of a straight-line distance between the home address and the school using the Dorset GIS system, using the eastings and northings for each location.

Children who have an education, health and care (EHC) plan will only be eligible for transport if they fulfil criteria for [eligibility](#) and [additional criteria](#) and they're attending:

- their catchment or nearest mainstream school, or
- the closest appropriate base provision, or
- their closest appropriate special school

Having a school named on an EHC plan does not automatically make that child or young person eligible for free transport to that education setting.

1.1.3 Area specific rules

Where there are joint primary catchments, we'll only provide eligible transport to the nearest catchment school and the child is eligible within the terms of [eligibility](#) or [additional criteria](#). This applies to schools in:

- Gillingham
- Blandford
- Verwood
- Weymouth

Dorset Studio School on the Kingston Maurward Campus moved to a year 7 point of entry from September 2019. This means a young person will be eligible to transport if the Studio School is the nearest school providing KS4 provision (years 10 and 11).

For Thomas Hardy School a young person will be eligible if the school is the nearest or catchment school and you are eligible within terms of [age and distance](#) or [additional criteria](#).

For Swanage School, we will recognise a transport priority area that is consistent with the size of the combined local primary schools' yearly cohort capacity and within the Pupil Admissions Number (PAN) of the Swanage School. The transport priority (catchment area) for determining eligibility for transport (subject to [eligibility](#) or [additional criteria](#)) will be the catchment areas of:

- Swanage Primary School
- St. Mark's CE VA Primary School Swanage
- St. Georges Langton Matravers Primary School

Children and young people who are outside of this transport priority area may still be eligible for transport support under [nearest school grounds](#), or ' [one of the 3 nearest schools' criteria](#).

For The Purbeck School a young person will be eligible if the school is the nearest or catchment school and you are [eligible](#) or you meet the [additional criteria](#).

1.1.4 Additional criteria

Additional criteria apply to children from low income families. We will confirm transport eligibility if families receive maximum Working Tax Credit, or the child is eligible for free school meals:

- for children in years 5 and 6 (aged 9 to 11) where the distance between home and their catchment area or nearest school is more than 2 miles (shortest available walking route)
- for children in year 7 to year 11 (aged 11 -16) to one of their 3 nearest qualifying schools (which includes schools in neighbouring authorities) with places available at the time of the original application by the parent, where the distance between home and the school is more than 2 miles (shortest available walking route) and less than 6 miles (shortest available driven route)

For children who are for any reason being educated outside their normal year group we will assess their transport eligibility according to the year group that they're in.

We will only send parents or carers a pass when they've confirmed that they wish to accept the transport provision offered. Parents and carers who don't take up the offer of a pass at the beginning of the academic year can still apply for one at any time, if their personal circumstances change.

In some cases, the most appropriate transport may be a public bus route. We will give you a season ticket if this is the case.

It may be more cost effective for parents to buy the ticket directly from the bus operator. We will ask parents to buy the ticket and we will provide a refund. Dorset Travel will endeavour to give the refund as soon as possible.

1.1.5 Universal Credit eligibility

There is no statutory duty on local authorities to count receiving Universal Credit as eligibility for extended rights to home to school transport under [additional criteria](#).

Pupils from families who currently receive any level of Universal Credit are eligible for free school meals. It's this eligibility for free school meals specifically that entitles them to extended rights to free home to school transport under [additional criteria](#).

If you transfer from maximum Working Tax Credit to Universal Credit you will keep your eligibility for extended rights (subject to [criteria in eligibility section](#)) as they will automatically become eligible to free school meals. You need to apply for free school meals. [Find out if you're eligible for claim free school meals](#).

We review eligibility under Universal Credit whenever we get guidance from the Department for Education.

1.1.6 Parental preference

We're not obliged to provide transport if your child is attending a school on parental preference grounds. This means the school you applied for is not the catchment or nearest school, or one of the 3 nearest eligible schools in the case of [additional criteria](#). You are responsible for your own arrangements.

You're not eligible for free transport if your child or young person has an EHC plan and attends a mainstream school other than their catchment or nearest due to parental preference having that school named on their EHC plan.

1.1.7 Transport support if the year group is full

We may provide transport to the nearest suitable school if your on-time application for a place at your catchment school (or nearest school) with places available in a normal year of entry is refused due to oversubscription (referred to as year group full). We will look at using resources efficiently in line with your [child's age and distance from school](#).

When we consider a school unsuitable

We will only consider a school to be unsuitable if there's a physical reason that your child could not attend.

Reasons for this include:

- a boy attending a girl's school
- a secondary-aged child attending a primary school

- a child attending a private school that we don't provide transport for

Late application for a school place

You are responsible for arranging and providing school transport if you applied late for a school place in the normal year of entry and an alternative school has to be provided on the grounds of year group full.

If your child has been attending a school that we nominated (because the year group at the school you chose was full, for example), they are only eligible for their transport support to continue when they move up to the next stage of school (primary to secondary, for example) if your child's catchment school doesn't operate the same age of transfer (3 tier school system, instead of 2 tier, for example), or they wouldn't have been able to offer a place.

We have a duty to offer an alternative school place we can't offer a preferred, catchment or nearest school. We won't provide transport to the alternative Dorset school if there's a closer school in a neighbouring authority which is under the qualifying distance. In this case we'll inform parents of the space/s available in closer neighbouring school(s).

We will normally provide transport for all children in a family if one child in that family is eligible for transport to a specific school, other than the catchment/nearest, and remains on roll. The transport for all children in the family will be to that same school (until the standard age of transfer or a change in circumstance).

1.1.8 Moving house and transport support

We advise parents to check availability of school places before moving house, as there are no guarantees places will be available at the new catchment or nearest school. We will consider any request for a child to stay at their existing school following a house move as parental preference. This means families will be responsible for making their own transport arrangements. The only exception to this will be if nearer schools don't have places available in the relevant year group.

Transport support provided on exceptional grounds will normally stop if a family move to an area served by a school with places available in the relevant year group.

We won't provide transport support for children who have been displaced from their home because of family related issues (for example, family disagreements).

1.1.9 Temporary housing

Occasionally, families have to move from their established home address against their will to alternative accommodation on a temporary basis. We may consider transport support to a child's existing school for a maximum period of 2 school terms when a family has had to be temporarily re-housed.

Our agreement to transport support will depend on:

- the location of the temporary housing
- the age/distance criteria
- the basis of the original application (this means was the place secured on in area or parental preference grounds)
- the cost of transport
- satisfactory reasons for the loss of the registered accommodation

Transport support from the temporary address will stop at the end of the 2 school terms period (unless the cost of providing transport support to an alternative school is greater) or when you return to the original property or permanent re-housing, whichever comes first.

We won't provide transport support to those families whose main residence is located in another authority's area but who have to move to a Dorset-based location on a temporary basis. It is assumed that the home authority will meet transport support needs if proven.

1.1.10 Transport support when changing school for other reasons

We won't approve applications for transport support following a parents' decision to change schools (whether or not the decision is supported/encouraged by the existing or receiving school) unless:

- the school they transfer to is the catchment/nearest school and/or
- all avenues of support at the current school have been pursued and
- the move is supported by the Alternative Provision Team or the School Attendance Team or other professional where the request for support may be considered

1.1.11 Transport support from year 11

If you move house when your child is in year 11, we may provide transport support if it means your child can stay at their existing school, if the following circumstances apply:

- the existing school remains the catchment area/nearest (subject to age/distance criteria) or the most appropriate alternative school with places available
- where exceptional circumstances apply, unavoidable reasons for move or the school(s) that serves the area where the new property is located is/are inappropriate

1.1.12 Transport support for children and young people with special educational needs and disability (SEND) and medical needs

Children and young people with SEND or medical needs may be eligible for travel assistance even if they don't qualify on the distance criteria because they're unable to walk to school even if they're accompanied by an adult.

We will always need supporting evidence through a professional assessment. We will also take family circumstances into account, but an employment commitment is not in itself a reason to approve transport support.

We may provide additional assistance when a child has a need or disability that would prevent them from making the usual type of accompanied journey made by other children of their age. The conditions for this assistance may include:

- long-term severely restricted mobility, for example, circumstances that mean you have to use significant physical aids every day such as a wheelchair
- a long-term medical condition resulting in severely restricted mobility due to pain and/or extreme tiredness, for example, juvenile arthritis
- a long-term medical condition resulting in restrictive mobility leading to serious health and safety risks, for example, epilepsy or life threatening heart defects

- a sensory impairment resulting in severely restricted mobility, for example, where a child is effectively blind
- a child has a disability leading to significant social, and/or emotional immaturity in comparison with other children of their age. This may mean a child's behaviour leaves them extremely vulnerable in social settings, for example, a child with ASD who has very little awareness of personal danger
- a child with severe learning difficulties who has an inability to manage the complexity of the process with safety or demonstrates constant challenging behaviour suggesting that this child cannot make an accompanied journey

All professional assessments have to be in the form of a written statement from a relevant medical professional who is treating the young person.

We would need professional advice and evidence to provide very specific transport that may operate to suit a reduced timetable.

[Contact your SEN Planning Coordinator](#) if your child has an EHC plan. They can discuss how you can get your child to school and if we can give you any assistance.

[Apply for free school transport](#) if your child doesn't have an EHC plan.

Siblings of children who have transport support because of SEND or a medical need

There's no guarantee that siblings of a child with transport provided on these grounds will be eligible to transport. You should apply for siblings to travel with your eligible child in the usual way.

If the sibling is not eligible but receives a surplus seat place on the same vehicle, this transport will not automatically continue after the transport requirements for the child with the additional needs leaves, or run if this child is ill or excluded from school. If the seat on an available vehicle is required by another eligible child, we may withdraw the surplus seat at short notice.

If a child is attending school on parental preference grounds, we won't provide transport support, even if the school is named on the EHC plan.

1.1.13 Transport support and young carers

We may consider alternative methods of transport for children who are registered carers and receive transport support. This is if the normal arrangements mean that the child has to be away from home for an unreasonable length of time. They would need to have support from Young Carers Association and health care professionals.

1.1.14 Transport support and exceptional circumstances

There may be exceptions to the general criteria we've set out and we consider these on a case-by-case basis.

If a Family Partnership Zone has identified a family who needs transport support to support their needs, the zone lead needs to confirm this to the Dorset Travel team, identifying the reasons and any relevant time scale.

If we could offer a place in the catchment or nearest school and there would be no cost, alternative transport should only be considered on a temporary basis for a maximum of a year. In all cases there will be at least termly reviews.

The Family Partnership Zone will liaise directly with Dorset Travel to commission transport under exceptional circumstances.

We may consider transport support where a temporary, part-time timetable is agreed due to medical needs or reintegration programme. We would need evidence and the views of professionals to support these cases.

1.1.15 Transport provided on religious or belief grounds: secondary year 7 to year 11 (aged 11 to 16)

Your child is eligible to free transport to the nearest denominational secondary school if you receive the maximum Working Tax Credit/ Universal Credit, or your child is eligible to free school meals, if the distance is between 2 miles shortest available walking route and 15 miles shortest available driven route.

We need to be convinced of the genuine nature of your religious or philosophical belief. As the parents, you need to provide evidence of any religion or belief.

Examples of acceptable evidence are:

- a baptismal certificate
- a statement of atheism
- a statement of adherence to a particular faith
- a letter of support from a priest or equivalent religious leader stating that the child belongs to a particular congregation

We normally need 2 pieces of evidence. We may check this evidence with your child's school.

We only send you a denominational pass when you've confirmed you wish to accept the transport provision we're offering. If you don't take up the offer of a pass at the beginning of the academic year, you can still apply for one at any time if your personal circumstances change.

1.1.16 Transport support: distribution of passes

Once we've confirmed that your child is eligible for school transport, you can apply online where you can confirm that you wish to receive school transport. Dorset Travel will then process the application and will send passes to your child's home address by mid August.

[Find details of the routes and contractors in Dorset.](#)

You should receive passes for children starting or moving school in September by the end of the previous academic year. We won't issue bus passes until you've confirmed that you wish to take up your transport eligibility.

1.2 Transport support and children of non-statutory school age (including post 16)

1.2.1 Transport for children attending pre-school settings

We don't provide transport for children attending pre-school settings, nurseries or playgroups. It's your responsibility to make your own transport arrangements. If there are places available on school transport vehicles, you can apply for a place through the [Surplus Seat Travel scheme](#).

1.2.2 Post 16 transport provision

[Find out more about our post 16 transport provision.](#)

If you attend a post 16 education placement you can apply for a place under the [Surplus Seat travel Scheme](#).

1.3 Surplus Seat Travel Scheme (SSTS)

1.3.1 Availability

Children who aren't eligible for free transport can use available spare seats on any of [our Dorset Council contract routes](#) (excluding local public services and One School One Operator Routes).

We allocate surplus seats under the following terms and conditions:

- the surplus seat travel scheme is only applicable on Dorset Council contract vehicles where spare spaces are available
- this scheme does not apply to public service routes or where operators have commissioned additional vehicles to meet the demand
- where a single operator has been identified for a specific school, families or young people will need to contact that service provider to secure a bus pass on services to that school. Find more information about the operators on these [One School One Operator \(OSOO\) routes](#)
- the commercial operator sets the cost of these passes is set by the commercial operator.

1.3.2 Surplus Seat Travel Scheme (SSTS) charges: £715

These costs only apply to passes on buses provided directly by us, Dorset Council. You can get a schedule of costs on the One School One Operator routes through the relevant operator.

An annual charge is levied which will apply to all SSTS users whether or not they have siblings already using a surplus seat.

The price for a surplus seat for 2019 to 2020 will be £715.

We review this annually. You can pay in instalments.

We may withdraw any seats we provide at short notice under the following circumstances:

- we need the seats for children who are eligible to free transport (we will give you a proportional refund)
 - if the process of re-tendering or re-planning reduces the number of surplus seats
 - if we don't get your payment or you don't meet their direct debit payments the pass will be withdrawn and we'll only issue any future passes if we get full payment in advance
 - if the pass holder's behaviour affects the safety of the vehicle and/or its passengers
 - if we change the transport policy
 - if the route is no longer needed to take eligible passengers

- where passes are not being used (or are being abused) Dorset Travel reserves the right to withdraw the pass and offer the seat to another SSTS passenger
- the bus or taxi may only stop at listed pickups; you can get details the Dorset Travel team. You must make any requests for a new stop in writing to Dorset Travel. We can't make any diversion of route for an SSTS passenger
- you need to apply each year
- we will contact existing holders of surplus seats to check if your circumstances have changed and if you still need a seat for the following academic year
- if none of the eligible pupils need the transport (for example, for staff training days or other school closures), the bus will not run
- students should not attempt to travel unless authorised to do so
- the price for a surplus seat under this scheme is £715 per year irrespective of use, as partial use (for example, one way journeys or irregular attendance during study leave) means that the seat isn't available for others to use

1.3.3 Priority for the allocation of surplus seats on DC routes (not applicable to OSOO routes)

You must make applications to purchase a surplus seat online before the academic year that you need the seat for. Even though we will try to confirm the allocation of surplus seats as soon as possible, we may not finalise a surplus seat allocation until after the October half term, once we've placed all eligible children on routes. We will assess the information supplied.

After this, we'll allocate any surplus seats using the following priority:

- children and young people who are in any of the following categories which significantly impacts on their ability to travel to school independently, but do not qualify for 'transport eligibility'. Children who:
 - are a child in care or previously in care
 - have special educational needs and disabilities (those with an EHC plan)
 - are registered disabled
 - have a medical condition (supporting evidence from the school and/or appropriate medical officer will always be necessary)
 - are Young Carers
 - are vulnerable or living with a parent registered as disabled
- children and young people who are attending their catchment school or for whom the school is the nearest appropriate school (including 'year group full' placements), but don't qualify for 'transport eligibility'
- children and young people whose parents applied for the school on parental preference' and receive the maximum Working Tax Credit, or the child is eligible for free school meals and so don't qualify for 'transport eligibility'

- children and young people whose parents applied for the school on 'parental preference' and so don't qualify for 'transport eligibility'

If there are insufficient places within any of the above criteria, those who travel the furthest distance will be given priority based on the shortest available walking route. Any applications we receive during the academic year will be offered a seat if available or placed on the waiting list.

1.4 What happens with transport support for out of school activities and work experience

We will provide transport support to and from the allocated school at the beginning and end of the normal school day only. You are responsible for supplying transport for your child when they're:

- involved in work experience programmes
- attending before school activities such as breakfast clubs
- attending after school activities, such as sports clubs

We may be able to change transport times if your child is travelling on their own. You need to make these arrangements before the time they're needed. All parties need to agree to the transport arrangements and it couldn't cost any more than your current arrangement.

We may change transport times back to the usual school opening and closing times if other students then join the transport.

1.4.1 Extended schools

We are not responsible for supporting transport for children to attend:

- before school activities such as breakfast clubs
- after school activities, such as sports clubs

We may be able to change transport times if your child is travelling on their own. You need to make these arrangements before the time they're needed. All parties need to agree to the transport arrangements and it couldn't cost any more than your current arrangement.

Your child's school may be able to work with us to amend transport times and/or routes to help your child attend before or after school activities. We may change transport times back to the usual school opening and closing times if other students then join the transport.

1.4.2 Childcare arrangements

We only provide transport support to and from your child's school at the beginning and end of the normal school day to a nominated stop relevant to the home address.

If surplus spaces are available, and a childcare provider is on an established route, children may use school transport to transfer to and/or from the provider at the beginning and/or end of the school day by arrangement under the terms of [SSTS](#) and [priority for the allocation of surplus seats on DC routes](#).

1.5 Examples of when we won't provide transport support

1.5.1 Exceptions

This list shows cases where mainstream and SEND transport support (defined as transport which is provided, or commissioned by the council, such as taxis and minibuses) would not normally be provided and where you as parents would be expected to make your own arrangements (unless there are exceptional circumstances):

We won't normally provide mainstream or SEND transport support (defined as transport which is provided, or commissioned by us, such as taxis and minibuses) for these journeys (apart from in exceptional circumstances):

- journeys to and from breakfast or after school clubs
- trips and journeys during the school day which are in the curriculum
- to or from a venue that isn't your normal home address, for example the address of a childcare provider or a short break placement (unless there's a legal order in place or a statutory care plan agreed by us)
- if your child is unwell and has to be collected from school during a school day
- if your child is excluded during a school day
- medical appointments or other approved activities which affect the start or end of and during the school day
- if a child has missed the contracted transport
- transitional/integration placements in schools/colleges
- attendance at work experience programmes
- to/from childcare addresses where they're not on an established route
- to fall in line with childcare arrangements where they are off recognised transport routes
- if a child is withdrawn from school by their family and placed in an alternative education setting
- other family members travelling in the same direction
- to support working arrangements for parents and/or children
- where parents of children and young people receive the higher mobility component (HRMC) of the Disability Living Allowance (DLA). This is the gateway to the Motability Scheme that supplies vehicles, adapted or not, in return for the DLA, usually on contract hire terms. If a child is the HRMC recipient and the family obtains a vehicle through the Motability scheme, then the vehicle is expected to be used for the benefit of the disabled child and we will offer contributions to petrol wear and tear to allow the family to use that vehicle to take their child to and from school. This will be part of a discussion with the parent or carer around travel assistance and will include options for a [Personal Travel Budget \(PTB\)](#).

1.6 Transport support clarification points

It's ultimately your responsibility to find information about schools and transport provision and/or arrangements. Lack of awareness is not a reason for us to provide transport support, if the case does meet the criteria identified in this policy.

A school place can only be based on one address; the home address identified by whoever receives Child Benefit for the child. If a child has split residency between 2 parents we will provide transport support from the nominated home address, subject to meeting the criteria for transport support to be provided as identified above. Where this is unclear, disputed, or care is split equally and there is no agreement between the parents, we will consider the application made by the parent at the address identified on the child's registered general practitioner (GP) record.

1.6.1 Transport support decisions made in error

If we approve an application for transport support in error, we will withdraw the transport support:

- if the child is in year 11 and has finished the academic year
- if the transport support hasn't started when we discover the error
- at the end of the half term we find the error

We try to offer a surplus seat (if there's one available) when we've withdrawn free transport.

1.6.2 Cost

In this policy we regularly refer to efficient use of resources. Where a child is eligible to transport support then we will meet those requirements. We will always offer the most cost effective solution on a case by case basis, bearing all factors in mind. We won't authorise alternative transport provision if you (as the parent of an eligible child) reject the type of transport support we're offering.

Dorset Travel or their contracted operator is responsible for the assessment and provision of transport support considering best use of resources. We won't contribute the costs of the approved transport provision to a proposed alternative.

We will only consider transport support under exceptional circumstances if the cost does not exceed £35 per child per day and other factors covered by this policy have also be taken into account. We may need to exceed this amount in exceptional circumstances, for example where we have to consider infant class size legislation. You, as the applicant, have the right of appeal against any decision to refuse transport support. This also applies where cost is the only factor which results in a decision to reject transport support.

You have to pay a charge of £15 if you lose your contract vehicle bus pass. This is to cover administration for the replacement. The charge increases to £25 if you lose it again. We review this charge regularly. This charge may be different if your pass is provided directly by the bus company charges may differ.

We will be liable for the cost of transport from 2 weeks after we've confirmed the authorisation is confirmed with you as the parent or carer or the date of the appeal hearing or road safety audit (whichever's earliest). This is where transport is agreed through either:

- School Admissions
- SEN
- Transport Appeal
- on the basis of a safety audit

Any costs previously incurred by the parent will not be subject to a refund.

Read our [Transport Appeal process](#) if you're experiencing financial hardship.

1.6.3 Measurement of routes

We consider all transport using routes measured from our geographical information system (GIS) which are a final result of the measurement to ensure consistency. We won't consider measurements from other systems outside our own.

The system follows the shortest, safest, practicable walking route. We assessed this using appropriate:

- roads
- pavements
- footpaths
- bridleways

We measure from an appropriate point from the home to the nearest approved access to the school. The GIS maps follows information provided by Ordnance Survey and represents the position at the beginning of the Annual admission cycle which is the September in the year before admission.

We won't take into consideration any footpaths or roads added after this time. We will look at them the following September. We can give you a map showing the measured route if you request it.

1.6.4 Safety of the route between home and school

You can ask for an audit on the safety of a route between home and school. We take the criteria ruling all road safety assessments from national guidance. We will disregard a route if it's deemed unsafe for a child to walk accompanied by an adult. Find more information about [the safety of walked routed between home and school](#).

2. Transport arrangements

2.1 Methods of transport

Once you're eligible, Dorset Travel and the SEN Travel Team will normally decide the most appropriate means of supporting children to travel to and from school. We will discuss methods of travel support in a clear order, linked to the our aim of maintaining flexibility and promoting independence, while ensuring cost efficiency.

The order we consider the travel support is as follows:

- use of public bus and train networks, supported by independent travel training, if needed. Independent travel training gives children and young people the essential skills needed to travel independently either on foot or by public transport)
- [Personal Travel Budgets \(PTBs\)](#): these are only applicable to children and young people with an EHC plan. As parents you can use PTBs in any reasonable way to get your child to school
- contract bus or council fleet
- minibus
- taxi

- vehicle used by other council directorates
- fuel contribution, if it's shown to be a cost effective solution. Families should be prepared to use their own vehicle where there are no suitable or appropriate alternative arrangements in place. The rate paid to families, is for the shortest available driven route only (13p per mile x return journey/s)

While Dorset Travel tries hard to make sure there's continuity for the children, they can't guarantee that your child will have the same driver for the entire time they need the transport.

We don't provide passenger assistants. In exceptional cases we may commission a passenger assistant if the SEND Team suggests that unaccompanied travel in a vehicle would put the child, the driver or other road users at risk. Or there is a specific medical reason that the child needs a passenger assistant to safeguard them during the journey. All professional assessments have to be in the form of a written statement from a relevant medical professional who is treating the young person.

Where a passenger assistant is provided for an individual child on shared transport, that passenger assistant will only be responsible for that child. Parents are responsible for getting their own children on and off the vehicle at the pickup/drop-off points.

2.2 Journey times

The maximum journey times are from 'gate to gate' for travelling to and from school. They follow these government guidelines:

- the maximum each way length of journey for a child of primary school age is 45 minutes
- the maximum each way length of journey for a child of secondary school age is 75 minutes

'Gate to gate' means where the property meets public paths and roads. For those families living on islands in Poole Harbour, this will be an appropriate point on the mainland.

Most schools have staff on duty to receive and hand over children 10-15 minutes before and after the school day. It is expected that school transport will arrive/depart within that timeframe. Schools need to make special arrangements where this is not possible.

We recommend that children arrive at their stop 10 minutes before the departure time.

Children should be ready 10 minutes before their transport is due to arrive if they're being picked up from their home address.

2.3 Pickup and drop off points

We make every effort for children to be collected and dropped at a point close to their home. Some pupils may have to walk a reasonable distance to and from their home/school to meet the vehicle. Where this is not possible we may arrange transport to and from the pick-up/drop off points if:

- a primary aged child (aged between 4 and 11) lives more than 0.75 miles from the nearest point

- a secondary aged child (aged between 11 and 16) lives more than 1 mile from the nearest point.

Parents and children are responsible for being at the pick-up point in good time to access the service.

Parents are responsible for their children's safety in getting to and from the notified pick up/drop off points (including awaiting or leaving transport) or to and from the vehicle, if they are picked up at home. Younger children should be accompanied and parents must make sure that they carry their bus passes (if applicable).

2.4 Accompanied children

We may make bus passes available for adults who wish to accompany their children to and from school on local public bus services. This applies to primary-aged children only, which means up to the end of year 6.

We don't provide bus passes for adults who want to accompany secondary age children to school.

Transport support is not available for adults if their children (of any age) use local authority contract vehicles (bus/taxi).

We may restrict bus passes for parents accompanying primary-aged children (up to end of year 6) to Home to School return journeys on school days only, term time only.

2.5 Personal luggage

It may not be possible to carry large amounts of personal luggage for individuals. This depends on the capacity of the vehicle. The driver reserves the right to refuse to carry excessive luggage or personal belongings.

3. Advice on health, safety and behaviour on vehicles

3.1 Advice for parents

3.1.1 Safety belts

Your child must wear a seatbelt if they're fitted in the vehicle.

We could withdraw transport if your child continues to travel without using the seatbelt.

3.1.2 Behaviour

Schools have a key role in making sure pupils behave in an acceptable manner when travelling to and from school on transport we've arranged and organised. The school should initially deal with unacceptable behaviour by pupils when travelling as part of their discipline policy.

Families and schools are expected to take whatever steps are necessary to ensure appropriate behaviour on LA provided transport. They should take necessary action when incidents of unacceptable behaviour are reported. Behaviour that endangers others will not be tolerated. Parents will be responsible for the cost of any wilful damage to the vehicle or property of other passengers caused by their child.

Schools have a legal right to impose reasonable sanctions if a pupil misbehaves. Incidents of serious or persistent bad behaviour can lead to us suspending transport

support for your child. Dorset Travel will inform parents in writing of any such incidents, outlining any action they need to take. In such cases it will be the responsibility of parents to make sure their child attends school.

3.1.2 Medication

We will not normally be responsible for administering medication to children while they're using LA arranged transport to and from school. If a specific medical need does arise, we would ask for guidance from the Senior Advisor for Physical and Medical Needs.

3.1.4 Passenger assistants

We don't provide passenger assistants on transport unless there are exceptional circumstances for doing so. We may submit a transport request if a child has a significant disability, medical or special educational need, and can't travel on their own. We will consider information from the school and the appropriate health professionals and recommend whether or not we should provide a passenger assistant.

[Contact your SEN Planning Coordinator](#) if your child has an EHC plan. They will be able to discuss how you can get your child to school and if we can give you any assistance.

[Apply for free school transport](#) if your child doesn't have an EHC plan.

3.2 Advice for children and young people

All students should behave in a way that is respectful of other transport users.

Students must not:

- play at the bus stop
- go near the bus wheels
- go near the bus before it stops
- cross the road in front of the bus
- eat or drink on the bus
- distract the bus driver

When children are on the bus they should always stay in their seat with the seat belt on (if provided).

Children must not wilfully damage or abuse the vehicle in any way. If this happens, we will send the parents the bill for the repairs.

The school can discipline children who misbehave on the bus, or reported to the LA. They can be banned from using the bus.

4. Transport provision relating to reorganisations and other admissions-related protocols

4.1 School reorganisations or catchment area changes

Area or individual school reorganisations may mean moving children from one school or site to another. In these circumstances, we'll make sure transport eligibility for

children whose education has been disrupted continues or is introduced for a period of 3 years after the date of implementation.

In addition, the Director of Children's Services will agree the minimum distance at which transport eligibility will be confirmed on a case by case basis. They will do this after consultation with the Cabinet Member for Children's Services.

On occasion we may decide to change a school's catchment area. This means you may find that the area where you is served by a different school. In these cases children who attend the previous catchment area school and get transport support will continue to get that support to that school for a period of up to 6 years following the date of implementation.

4.2 Children in care

Admission authorities are required to give Children in Care (CiC) the highest priority and agree which school best meets the child's needs and also act in the best interests of the child. In accordance with the normal admission allocations process, transport eligibility arrangements for CiC will be the same as for all other children.

We consider transport support for in year applications using the following principles:

- successful applications for catchment/nearest/parental preference schools will reflect the arrangements that apply to all other children
- where a school admits on the recommendation of the Child in Care (Looked After Children) Education Manager (subject to the age/distance criteria) irrespective of the location of and space availability at other schools
- the family or young person is still subject to the stipulations in [section 1.1.2](#)

4.3 In year fair access

We will consider transport support for applications considered under the LA's (In Year) Fair Access protocol following these principles:

- successful applications for catchment/nearest/parental preference schools will reflect the arrangements that apply to all other children
- where a place is allocated by the panel for an alternative (to the applicants preferred/catchment/nearest) school, transport support may be provided (subject to the age/distance criteria) irrespective of the location of and space availability at other schools

4.4 Traveller children and young people

In recognition of the need for greater stability and consistency in the provision of education for traveller children, we provide transport support in accordance with a separate Traveller Transport Protocol.

4.5 Children with an EHC plan

Eligibility for children with a statement or EHC plan will be the same as for all other children.

We always provide travel assistance suitable to a child's needs and review arrangements every year. This could mean that a child's type of travel support may change or that longer term plans are discussed and agreed during a review so that a child can gradually increase their level of independence over the medium to long term.

5. Complaints and appeals procedures

5.1 Complaints

The School Admissions Team provides information relating to queries and complaints about transport eligibility.

[Contact School Admissions Team.](#)

Dorset Travel provides information relating to queries and complaints about:

- the method of transport
- vehicles
- contractors
- drivers
- bus passes
- costs and/or charges
- behaviour
- safety

[Contact Dorset Direct.](#)

Operators will provide information about routine operational matters if the school is within the One School One Operator Model.

The SEN Team can answer queries and complaints about transport eligibility for children who have an EHC plan.

5.2 Transport appeals

Due to exceptional circumstances, it may be necessary to consider a case on its individual circumstance. If you've been refused transport assistance you have the right of appeal against the decision only under the following grounds:

- you're asking for your child to be considered as an 'eligible' child or for dispensation due to special circumstances
- you would have received either an eligible or surplus seat if the application had been processed correctly
- you're appealing on route safety grounds

Stage 1 of the appeal process

Applicants can submit a [Transport Appeal form](#) with full supporting evidence. You must submit this within 20 days of receiving the letter from us, advising you that you're not eligible to school transport assistance. Senior managers in the council will review the evidence to confirm:

- there are no grounds for exceptional circumstances
- the application for transport has been processed in accordance with the Home to School Transport Policy

- there are no road safety issues that suggest an incorrect decision has been made

We will notify the family or young person in writing within 20 days of the result of the appeal review. If you're still not satisfied with the outcome of this review you have 20 days to request that your appeal moves to Stage 2 of the appeal process. Stage 2 is where the evidence is reviewed by the Children's and Adult Services Appeal Panel.

A copy of the Transport Appeal form together with the Local Authority's statement justifying the reasons for the decision, the original application and other supporting documents will be submitted to the Committee.

If an appeal goes ahead, the applicant can attend to present the case and may be accompanied at the hearing. The Committee's decisions are binding on all parties (but do not necessarily set precedence) but if you feel there's been an error in the way the Committee made its decision, you may make a complaint to the Local Government Ombudsman.

Transport appeals will only be heard for Dorset resident pupils. If you live in a neighbouring authority you will need to appeal to your home authority. Only one transport appeal for the same journey is permitted in each academic year.

Dorset Travel Team

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[Full contact details for Dorset Travel Team](#)

School admissions team

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