

Ceredigion County Council



Home to School/College Transport Policy

Approved: 18 May 2021

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Introduction

There is a statutory duty for Ceredigion County Council (as the Local Authority) to provide pupils of compulsory school age with free transport to their nearest suitable maintained school if they live over the statutory walking distance.

Free transport will be provided according to Ceredigion County Council's school transport policy as set out below. These arrangements apply to learners resident in Ceredigion or those deemed to be the responsibility of Ceredigion County Council.

Note: This information is correct at time of publication but may be subject to change as a result of changes in the law or County Council Policy.

Section 1: Transport for Primary and Secondary Aged Pupils

Transport will be provided free of charge for pupils of primary and secondary school age travelling over the statutory walking distance to/from the main entrance of their nearest suitable school.

The definition of nearest "suitable school" is where the "education or training provided is suitable having regard for the age, ability and aptitude of the learner and any learning difficulties he or she may have".

A pupil applying for assistance must be a Ceredigion resident. If he/she is attending the nearest suitable school and the distance between home and school by the shortest pedestrian route, is equal to or greater than the distances indicated below, they will normally be provided with free transport

- **Primary Aged Pupils (from 5 years of age)** - 2 miles or more from the school
- **Secondary Aged Pupils** - 3 miles or more from the school

Distance is measured by the shortest walking route between home and school. (From the nearest council maintained road to the property, to the nearest school entrance onto the school site).

The Local Authority can make discretionary arrangements for pupils who would not otherwise qualify for free home to school transport in exceptional circumstances.

Assistance may also be provided for pupils in certain circumstances on the grounds of:

- ✓ capacity
- ✓ closure of school
- ✓ re-organisation of school(s)
- ✓ safety
- ✓ medical
- ✓ statement of educational needs

- ✓ a change of residence in a final examination year
- ✓ continuation of an advanced course of study not being available at the nearest suitable school
- ✓ religious beliefs (within an 8 miles radius of the school)
- ✓ post 16 students

Appendix A – Application for School Transport

1.1 Schools at Capacity

Free school transport will be provided when the Local Authority is unable to make arrangements for a pupil to attend their nearest suitable school due to it being at or exceeding its capacity.

1.2 Closure of School

During consultation on the permanent closure of a school, the Authority will consult on the named suitable alternative school during the consultation process. Free transport for a specified period will be considered following the closure or a change in the status of a school.

1.3 Safety

The distance criteria whereby learners are entitled to free transport to and from their nearest suitable school is confirmed in Section 1. Distances below these thresholds for the purpose of this document are referred to as 'walking distances'.

The walking distance should be measured by the 'shortest available route'. A route is considered to be available if it is safe (as far as reasonably practicable) for a learner without a disability or learning difficulties to walk the route alone or with an accompanying adult if the learners age and levels of understanding requires this.

If a route is not 'available' and there is no alternative 'available' walking route within the respective distance threshold applicable to the learner's age, which can be used instead, the learner cannot be expected to walk to their nearest suitable school.

Local authorities are under a legal duty to assess the travel needs of learners who walk to school.

Free transport may be provided on the grounds of safety. Parents must apply, in writing, to the Chief Education Officer stating their reasons. The Authority will take into account the following when considering the application:

- age of pupil.
- nature of the route: is it dangerous and whether the child should be accompanied. It must be a route along which a child accompanied as necessary can walk, and walk with reasonable safety to school. (It does not fail to qualify as available because of

- dangers, which would arise if the child were unaccompanied).
- whether the pupil is registered at the nearest school
- the availability of public passenger services

1.4 Special Educational Needs / Additional Learning Needs

The majority of pupils with Special Educational Needs will not require assistance with home to school transport and should be travelling wherever possible with their peers. Home to school transport for pupils with SEN should be:

- **About ability and not disability** - their home to school transport should be supporting their independence and enabling rather than disabling. It is about providing transport in the least restrictive way.
- **Inclusive and encourage pupils** to develop educationally and socially - this includes working towards independent travel.
- **In safety and reasonable comfort and in a state that is conducive to study** - this means providing the right equipment, the right vehicle, at the right time, with appropriately trained staff.
- **As cost effective as possible** - this means not only making sure school transport provision is focused on those who need it most, but that it is provided in the most cost effective way.

I. General Information on Home to School Transport:

Where an entitlement to free transport due to needs exists and there is no existing school transport available, the Local Authority may offer a fuel allowance at a fixed rate to parents who are willing to drive their children to school.

The duty applies to home to school travel arrangements at the start of the school day, and or at the end of the school day according to need. It does not relate to travel between educational institutions during the school day or before and after school provision. Distance is measured by the shortest walking route between home and school (From the nearest council maintained road to the school site).

It is not always possible to arrange the routes of vehicles to pass close to the home of all pupils. Parents may therefore be required to make their own arrangements for their children to get to and from the nearest 'pick-up' point of the vehicle. Every effort is made to keep this distance to a minimum and it should not exceed 1.5 miles. In these instances the assistance of parents in escorting pupils safely to and from vehicles is sought.

Escorts may be provided on some vehicles. This will be determined following an initial travel needs application/assessment and risk assessment where necessary.

If you move house, you will need to re-apply for free school transport. This is because your eligibility depends on the distance between your home and your school and you will need to apply as soon as you can after your new address is confirmed. As long as your home address and the school attended do not change, there is no need to re-apply for school transport every year. Parents/Guardians need to reapply for transport for their children returning to education post 16 and all applications will be assessed by the Local Authority.

II. Eligibility criteria:

Transport assistance will be provided to pupils with additional learning needs and/or disabilities in the circumstances set out in this policy.

The Local Authority will provide support to students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities who attend the nearest suitable school or the school assessed by the Local Authority as being able to meet his/her individual educational needs. When determining whether a child is attending their nearest suitable school the Local Authority must take into account the suitability of the school by having regard to physical, medical and any learning difficulties the learner may have.

The majority of additional learning needs can be met in the nearest school and parents/carers will be responsible for getting their child to and from school.

If a child attends a preferred, alternative mainstream school i.e. not the nearest suitable school but an alternative school that has been chosen by the parent/guardian, then they will be responsible for getting their child to and from school.

Parents of pupils with additional learning needs who the Local Authority have admitted to a

specialist resource facility within mainstream schools may apply for home to school transport. Each application will be individually assessed.

III. Application/Assessment:

Each case will be individually assessed in relation to the pupils' school placement and **only** from the pupil's home address. The transport needs will be assessed by the Local Authority with advice, where necessary, from other appropriate professionals. Parents/Guardians will need to complete a transport needs application/assessment form and provide any additional evidence to support the application. Should the application be agreed it can take up to 10 working days for the arrangements to take effect.

The following will be taken into consideration when deciding if a pupil is to be allocated free home to school transport and the type of transport provided :-

- the pupil's individual needs, social, emotional, educational or medical.
- the severity of the pupil/ student's additional learning needs.
- whether the pupil/student has serious medical problems, short-term or long-term.
- whether the pupil/student has serious difficulty with walking or general mobility difficulties.
- the distance to the school/college/placement in relation to the criteria set out above.
- whether the journey is on a main bus route, which is accessible to the pupil/student.
- whether there are any severe family/personal circumstances which impact on the ability of pupil/student to attend school/college which should be taken into account.

IV. Medical condition:

Individual transport arrangements may be made where the medical condition of learners either prevents them from making use of the existing transport or the condition prevents them from walking the statutorily defined walking distances. All applications for assistance on medical grounds must be supported by a medical certificate or signed statement from a medical practitioner which must clearly state that the learner is incapable of walking the specified walking distance to school.

V. Parents/Guardians have responsibility for:

- getting their child to and from school where they are not eligible for free school transport;
- applying for free transport where their child is eligible;
- informing the Local Authority and the school of changed circumstances which may affect transport;
- notifying the Local Authority prior to a change of address;
- ensuring that their child is ready and waiting for transport at the appropriate time and agreed location;
- accompanying their child to and from the vehicle should their child require escorting;
- ensuring that their child's behaviour while using school transport is acceptable.

VI. Looked After Children:

Home to School transport for Looked After Children will be provided in-line with the "Ceredigion Protocol on Education of Looked After Children". Transport for Looked After

Children is the joint responsibility of Social Services and Schools Service.

Transport for Looked After Children will be reviewed on a termly basis, or following a change in home or school placement.

VII. Residential/Out of County Provision:

If it is agreed that a child should attend a residential special school/boarding school out of the county the Local Authority will ensure that suitable travel arrangements are made to facilitate the attendance of the child at the school, provided that there is no nearer school that is suitable to meet the child's special educational needs whether this be in county or out of county but nearer than the parental preference.

The suitable travel arrangements will be determined by an assessment of the travel needs of the individual child in conjunction with any risk assessment deemed necessary.

For all children a holistic approach will be taken involving liaison with health and other relevant agencies to ensure that any additional health, social, welfare or other needs such as contact with home and the family are taken into account.

VIII. Review of Transport Needs:

The travel arrangements of all children will be reviewed periodically by the Local Authority at its discretion and in any event annually to coincide with the annual review. A periodic review and the need to comply with tendering requirements may result in a change to the type of vehicle, the route or the contractor. Officers will always notify parents/carers of any changes in advance. The Local Authority have carried out checks on all the transport companies being used to ensure they meet our standards and they are all expected to maintain the same level of service.

Any concerns, comments or queries regarding eligibility and assessment regarding the provision of Additional Learning Needs transport should be submitted to:-

Email: sen@ceredigion.gov.uk
Telephone: 01970 633693
Post: **Special Educational Needs Team**
Schools Service
Canolfan Rheidol
Rhodfa Padarn
Llanbadarn Fawr
Aberystwyth
Ceredigion
SY23 3UE

1.5 Change of Address

The Authority may provide transport for pupils, following a change of address during the

final year of G.C.S.E or A level examinations, in order to ensure continuity of education. An application must be made to the Chief Education Officer. Such provision will not continue into Years 12 and 13 where pupils move in Year 11.

1.6 Transport to Denominational Schools

Under current school transport legislation, a learner is entitled to free transport to a denominational school if that school is considered by the local authority to be the learner's nearest suitable school, Local Authorities have the power to provide discretionary transport arrangements for learners who are not attending their suitable school because of denominational preference.

The Authority currently provides free transport for pupils of the minimum compulsory school age (i.e. 5) provided that they reside outside the statutory walking distance and not more than eight miles from the school.

1.7 Post 16 Transport

Free transport may be provided for students attending a college of further education on the same basis as 16-19 year olds attending school sixth forms if:

- I. a student between 16-19 years of age attends a full time course;
- II. the course is not available at a school or college nearer the student's home;
- III. the student qualifies for transport assistance according to the free transport criteria (distance).

Such provision may be made if the post 16 student: -

- ✓ is ordinarily resident in its area;
- ✓ attends the nearest school/or college (even if outside the Local Authority's Area);
- ✓ has special educational needs or other individual circumstances which made the provision of free transport necessary.

Assistance for both secondary and college students of the age group 16-19 may be provided "by the most efficient means" i.e. to include:-

- ✓ conveyance by contract vehicles;
- ✓ conveyance by public transport;
- ✓ payment of travelling expenses for conveyance by parent/own car.

Section 2: General

2.1 Parental Preference

The Council recognises its obligations to comply with parental preferences regarding choice of nearest suitable school.

However, parents/guardians choosing a school further away from their home than the nearest suitable school available will be responsible for transport costs and arrangements to and from that school

2.2 Seat Belts

All designated school transport vehicles are provided with seat belts. It should be noted that: -

- I. seat belts must be worn.
- II. it is the responsibility of each individual pupil to ensure that he/she is wearing a seat belt.

2.3 Behaviour

In the provision of a transport service, staff and service users can expect fair and equitable treatment. Harassment of any form will not be tolerated. Abuse and violence of/to staff and/or service users and damage to vehicles will not be accepted. Pupils' behaviour while in transit which results in any of the above may result in that pupil's transport being withdrawn (see document "School Transport – A guide for Parents/Guardians and Pupils") and/or charges for damage being passed on to the parents/guardians of those responsible. The Authority may refuse to transport pupils displaying aggressive or dangerous behaviour, other than where this is symptomatic of the pupils identified special needs.

2.4 Cameras

CCTV has been installed in certain contract vehicles. The aim of the exercise is to

- ensure the safety of passengers and drivers.
- identify individuals who by virtue of their unacceptable behaviour contravene the behaviour code of the Local Authority and possibly in the worst-case scenario endanger the lives of other passengers. Where such individuals are identified the action that could be taken by the Local Authority is set out the document "School Transport - A guide for Parents/Guardians and Pupils".

2.5 Complaints

All complaints regarding home to school transport from pupils, parents, members of the public, drivers, etc. will be investigated. Concerns can be raised through contacting the following or via the school. (This information is available in the handbook "School

<p>Complaints regarding pupil behaviour</p> <p>Complaints regarding drivers</p> <p>Complaints in relation to vehicles used for school transport</p> <p>Complaints/queries regarding Car Escorts</p>	<p>CLIC</p> <p>Ceredigion County Council</p> <p>Canolfan Rheidol</p> <p>Llanbadarn Fawr</p> <p>Aberystwyth</p> <p>Ceredigion</p> <p>SY23 3UE</p> <p>☎01545 570881</p> <p>✉ clic@ceredigion.gov.uk</p>
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2.6 Use of Public Transport

The majority of pupils entitled to assistance will be conveyed by vehicles specifically contracted to the Local Authority; however, use may also be made of public passenger transport.

2.7 Pick-up Point

Where contract or public passenger vehicles are used then it is not always possible to arrange the routes of vehicles to pass close to the home of all pupils. Parents may therefore be required to make their own arrangements for their children to get to and from the nearest 'pickup' point of the vehicle. Every effort is made to keep this distance to a minimum and it should not exceed 1.5 miles.

In these instances the assistance of parents in escorting pupils safely to and from vehicles is sought.

The handbook "School Transport - A Guide for Parents/Guardians and Pupils" is available from the Local Authority offering advice and guidance for pupils/students and parents on what they can do in order that the journey to and from school/college may be undertaken safely.

2.8 What help is available if walking routes are dangerous?

When learners live less than 2 miles (primary school) or 3 miles (secondary school) from the nearest school and, therefore are not entitled to free transport, but travel to school along a road that is considered by the Council to be especially dangerous, free transport is offered.

A dangerous road is defined whereby the nature of the road (which includes public footpaths) means that it is not reasonable to expect learners (considering their age and with an escort as needed) to be able to walk in a comparatively safe manner. In assessing the comparable safety of a road, the Council will undertake an assessment of the risks a learner could face along the determined road (including, for example, rivers, ditches, traffic

speed along the nearby road, history of accidents, overhanging trees or branches that could impair the ability of pedestrians or drivers to see, etc.).The assessment would be held at the time of day and days of the week that learners would be expected to use the road.

2.9 Appeals

Appeals Process

Parents may appeal against the decision of the local authority regarding their child's eligibility for transport to a particular school. The Corporate Passenger Transport Unit considers applications and issues decisions in accordance with the Council's policy, on behalf of the Chief Education Officer.

The appeal process is for parents who are not satisfied with a school transport decision.

How to Appeal

Parents have 20 working days from receipt of the local authority's decision to refuse transport assistance to make a written request asking for a review of the decision. A School Transport Appeal Form is available for this purpose which may be returned by post or email. The request should set out all the grounds for the challenge to the decision to refuse assistance; this must include the exceptional circumstances which are sufficiently compelling for a decision to be made outside the home to school transport policy. The form must be accompanied by specific evidence to prove the exceptional circumstances.

Within 20 working days of receipt of the parents' written request, a senior officer review panel with representation from Schools Service and Corporate Passenger Transport Unit considers the evidence presented. The parents will then receive a written response setting out the decision reached with the rationale for that decision.

Appendix B - School Transport Appeal Form

Member Appeal

Following receipt of the local authority's senior officer review decision, parents can request that their case is considered by an appeal panel made up of four Councillors. This request must be made within 20 working days of the date of the written response from officers and only if new evidence can be presented.


Parents and officers will have the opportunity to attend the hearing. The parents and representing officer will be informed in writing of the decision reached and the rationale for that decision within 5 working days.



Application for School Transport

To be returned to:	CLIC, Ceredigion County Council, Canolfan Rheidol, Llanbadarn Fawr, Aberystwyth, Ceredigion, SY23 3UE Tel: 01545 570881 email: clic@ceredigion.gov.uk
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Name of School to which transport is required:

	Photograph required for any new application for Secondary aged pupils, please write pupil's name on back of photograph.
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Surname			
First name (s)			
Address			
Post Code		Date of Birth	
Telephone Number		Mobile Number	
Parent Email address			

Transport will usually be provided from one address only, this must be the address registered with the School and the Admissions Unit at the County Council's Schools Service. This address **MUST** be in Ceredigion (i.e. Council Tax paid to Ceredigion County Council) – applications for transport from addresses in other Counties must be made to the relevant County Council.

Transport may sometimes be provided from more than one address where there are regular and permanent shared custody arrangements between parents. Please contact the Corporate Passenger Transport Unit to request a "Dual Residency Application Form".

Date transport is required:	
If known, School bus route and contractor:	
Pick up point:	
Names of siblings currently travelling in taxi/on bus:	

Reason for applying: **(please tick appropriate box)**

<input type="checkbox"/>	Pupil receiving primary education (from 5 years of age) living 2 miles or more from their nearest suitable school
<input type="checkbox"/>	Pupil receiving secondary education living 3 miles or more from their nearest suitable school

<input type="checkbox"/>	New starter, not yet attending school or moving schools
<input type="checkbox"/>	Change of address (please provide old details)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Current pass lost or damaged (£2 charge made payable to Ceredigion County Council)

Additional information

Agreement

I have read the Welsh Government Travel Behaviour Code (available on www.ceredigion.gov.uk) and understand that unacceptable behaviour may result in the withdrawal of my entitlement to transport. NB – only pupils in Years 6-13 need sign below.

Pupil signature		Date	
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I confirm that I have read the Welsh Government Travel Behaviour Code (available on www.ceredigion.gov.uk) and understand that unacceptable behaviour by my child may result in the withdrawal of their entitlement to transport. I agree that information contained in this form may be passed to the transport operator. I accept that the vehicle that my child will travel on may have a CCTV system in operation and that any footage recorded may be used as evidence. The CCTV footage is confidential and will only be viewed by designated persons that have been approved through the Disclosure and Barring Service process.

I also confirm that the above information is, to the best of my knowledge correct.

Parent/ Guardian signature		Date	
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OFFICE USE:

Date received		Entitled:	Non Entitled:
Transport commencement date		Confirmation sent to school/home	



School Transport Appeal Form



To be returned to:	CLIC, Ceredigion County Council, Canolfan Rheidol, Llanbadarn Fawr, Aberystwyth, Ceredigion, SY23 3UE Tel: 01545 570881 email: clic@ceredigion.gov.uk
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Name of School to which transport is required:

Surname			
First name (s)			
Address			
Post Code		Date of Birth	
Parent's/Guardian Name		Relationship to Pupil	
Address		Postcode	
Telephone Number		Mobile Number	
Email address			

Grounds/reasons for submitting the appeal

Reason	Tick
<p>The appropriate walking route to school exceeds the statutory two or three miles distance.</p> <p><i>If you wish to appeal against the distance, it is measured by the shortest walking route between home and school from the nearest council maintained road to the property, to the nearest school entrance onto the school site</i></p>	
<p>The appropriate walking route is unsafe for a child accompanied by an adult.</p> <p><i>If you wish to appeal against the safety of the walking route to school, officers will, where deemed necessary, seek a professional and/or independent assessment of the route.</i></p>	
<p>My child has medical needs that mean travel assistance is needed.</p> <p><i>If your reason for the appeal is the medical and health condition of your child, written evidence from a hospital or doctor is required.</i></p>	
<p>My child has special needs that travel assistance is needed.</p> <p><i>Please explain if your child has special needs that will affect your child's ability to travel to school</i></p>	
Other	

Details of appeal:

Additional information/supporting evidence:

I confirm that the above information is, to the best of my knowledge correct.

Parent/ Guardian signature		Date	
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