Safer Communities

Transport Services

School Transport: Information Leaflet

FREE SCHOOL TRANSPORT

Free School Transport Entitlement

East Ayrshire Council policy provides entitlement to **free** school transport under the following criteria:

- **Walking Distance** – where pupils live 1½ miles or more from their catchment primary school following a suitable walking route, or 3 miles or more from their catchment secondary school following a suitable walking route.

- **Road Safety Assessment –** where it is assessed by the Road Safety Officer that there is no suitable walking route or the suitable walking route is longer than the walking distance above. The Road Safety Assessment is based on the national guidelines provided by Road Safety GB.

- **Medical Reasons** – where a pupil has a medical condition which may prevent them from either walking or travelling on existing transport and where a recommendation has been made by a designated medical officer and is supported by a doctor's letter *(this assistance will only continue while the medical condition limits the child's ability to access other means of transport)*

- **Additional Support Needs** – where a pupil attends a specialist school out with the local catchment area to meet his/her additional support needs or where the Additional Support Needs assessment, involving staff from Education Services, recommend appropriate transport arrangements for your child. Children within mainstream schools may also require access to transport as a result of an assessed need (ASN). If transport is approved it will become part of the review cycle, within the school or centre, and be included in the child's assessment so that this support is always proportionate and appropriate to the child's assessed need.
  In these cases approval must be sought from the Strategic Education Group Manager or Strategic Education Manager: Inclusion

- **Pick up and Drop off** - Free transport is based on **<u>one</u>** designated pick up and drop off address for a pupil. This may not always be the pupil's home address depending on circumstances. There are occasions where families request alternative pickup and drop off points (PUDOS). Where these alternative pickup and drop offs are part of the typical route between home and school, and can be achieved with no additional costs to the transport contract arrangement, this will be acceptable. Otherwise, it is the responsibility of parents/carers to make alternative arrangements.

- **Travel Alone** - There can be rare occasions where a pupil requires a period of travelling alone. Where there is such a circumstance all attempts to assess and understand the difficulties leading to any issues should be undertaken. This will involve collaboration between Facilities Management staff, designated staff in establishments, and families. If following assessment, and appropriate supports or interventions, a period of travelling alone is deemed necessary a request can then be made. **In these cases approval must be sought from Strategic Education Manager: Inclusion**

- **Motability Vehicles**: Where a family has access to a Motability vehicle or accesses additional funding to enable transportation of their child to and from school, this will require to be taken into account in determining the most appropriate method of transporting your child to school and level of support provided by the Council as part of the Additional Support Needs Assessment.

- **Looked After and Accommodated**: A pupil who is considered to be 'Looked After and Accommodated' is entitled to free school transport through the Education Service for an initial 28 days where there is a need for a change of residence in order to support continuity of access to education. **In these cases approval must be sought from Strategic Education Manager: Inclusion**

- **Parental Disability**: The Disability Discrimination Act provides for disability by association where the disability of a pupil's parent/s may cause the child difficulties in getting to school. This circumstance should be considered for free school transport where a recommendation has been received from a designated medical officer or the request is supported through the claim of a disability living allowance.
  In these cases approval must be sought from Strategic Education Manager: Inclusion

- **Catchment Waiting List** – where a pupil is unable to attend their catchment school due to oversubscription and is placed in a school where the suitable walking route is 1½ miles or more from the allocated primary school or 3 miles from the allocated secondary school. *(This assistance will continue until a place becomes available at the catchment school whether or not this place is accepted)*

- **Critical Stage** - where a pupil moves address outwith their catchment school during a critical stage of their education - primary 7 or 4th, 5th or 6th year of secondary education – and wish to complete that year's education at their present school, where the suitable walking route from their new address is 1½ miles or more for primary schools and 3 miles for secondary schools. *(This assistance will only continue to the end of the academic year in which the move takes place. Support will be provided using the most economical means of transport. Provision is not extended to cover children who move from one Council area to another.)*

  Pupils who attend school by means of a placing request are not entitled to free school transport.

School Transport Provision

Various arrangements are in place to transport children to and from school. The mode of transport chosen depends on a variety of factors and is decided by the Safer Communities Department after taking all circumstances into account.

Transport will be provided by one of the following modes:

- Dedicated school contract bus (service solely for pupils)
- Bus pass on local service bus (timetabled services carrying members of the public)
- Taxi or private hire car or minibus

Strathclyde Partnership for Transport (SPT) arranges school transport for primary and secondary pupils on behalf of East Ayrshire Council.

School transport and passes provide one journey to school in the morning and one return journey from school in the afternoon.

Application Process

If you believe you meet the qualifying criteria for free school transport you need to complete an application form. Free School transport will only be provided following a successful application.

How to Apply

For transport from August 2020 all applications should be made on the East Ayrshire School Online Transport Application Form which is available on East Ayrshire Council's website.

Once this has been submitted online you will receive a confirmation e-mail which will give you a unique application reference number for your application.

If you have any issues completing this form online please contact your school in the first instance or e-mail school-transport@east-transport.gov.uk. Your application will be checked and you will receive confirmation via e-mail that transport has been approved. If your application is declined reasons will be given in the e-mail which you have the right to appeal the decision

Where a child is assessed for free school transport as part of the Additional Support Needs Assessment a request for School Transport will be made by the Head Teacher on behalf of the family following the appropriate approval by the *Strategic Education Group Manager or Strategic Education Manager: Inclusion*.

When to Apply for Free School Transport

All applications should be submitted as early as possible, to ensure transport arrangements are put in place to meet the needs of all children at the school. There may be a delay in setting up transport arrangements for the start of term for any applications made after 30 June.

Applications for Free School Transport only require to be submitted once for each school that your child attends, as it will cover the full period that your child attends that school.

To ensure transport is arranged for the start of each school term:

- You should apply for your child starting primary school when you enrol them for school
- You should apply for your child starting secondary school during transition in primary 7
- You should apply at least 2 weeks prior to any change in circumstances, e.g. moving house

What Happens After I Apply

You will be notified in writing via e-mail of the outcome of your application prior to the start of the school year or within 2 weeks if your application is an amendment during the school term.

The Transport Section will notify SPT of the children entitled to free school transport and local arrangements will be made direct via the transport provider. Any queries regarding pick up locations and times can be clarified by contacting the provider or SPT. For the new term in August this will not available until July.

The operator is responsible for the issue of bus passes to all children entitled to free school transport, if required. These will normally be distributed to your child through the school at the start of the school year.

If your child loses their bus pass you must contact the operator to arrange a replacement. Please note that the operator may charge you for this.

Subsidised School Transport

If your child does not qualify for the Free School Transport, they may be able to apply for membership of the Subsidised Transport service at Secondary School or a Privilege Seat. Leaflets and further information is available on East Ayrshire Council's website.

If you are Dissatisfied

How to Appeal

If you are unhappy about a decision regarding your child's entitlement to free school transport, you should write to the Contract Manager for Transport at the School Transport Section. You have the right to appeal any decision to the Head of Education.

How to Make a Complaint

Concerns or complaints regarding any aspect of the provision of school transport operated by the contracted provider will be dealt with by SPT. Parents/guardians should raise concerns directly with their child's school by telephone giving details that will then be recorded and submitted to SPT using a complaints postcard system.

Parents/guardians may also complain direct to SPT in writing if they feel their concerns are serious or are not addressed by the provider. Where parents/guardians have contacted SPT direct, SPT will respond direct to parents/guardians and advise the school of the outcome of their investigations.

Concerns or complaints regarding child behaviour on school transport should be raised directly with the school.

Any concerns or complaints regarding the service provided by the school transport section should be made directly to the Contract Manager for Transport at the school transport section.

Complaints can be made by telephone or in writing to the relevant person.

Contact Information

East Ayrshire Council
School Transport Section
Transport Services
Opera House
8 John Finnie Street
Kilmarnock, KA1 1DD

Tel: 01563 576334

Email: school-transport@east-ayrshire.gov.uk

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Head of Education
East Ayrshire Council
Council Headquarters
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www.east-ayrshire.gov.uk

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