



## **Secondary school transport**

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<https://www.devon.gov.uk/educationandfamilies/>



## **Introduction**

You can request a place at any school for your child, but your child may not necessarily be entitled to free school transport. It is very important that you check whether your child will be entitled. If they are not, you will need to think carefully about how your child is going to get to the school you prefer for the whole time they will be there. If your circumstances change and you can no longer get your child to school you will need to move your child to the nearest or designated school if you require transport assistance.

Your child will be entitled to free school transport to the nearest school to your home address, or the school designated to serve your home address, as long as it is more than three miles away from your home by the shortest walking route.

You can find out which school serves your home address at [School designated areas](#).

The below document was designed for printing purposes only, and with that in mind will not be fully accessible to someone using assistive technology such as a screen reader.

The information contained in this guide is also summarised in the [Transport for secondary school pupils leaflet](#).

## **Whose responsibility is it to get a child to school? -**

It is your responsibility to get your child to school for the whole time the child is there. We encourage you to consider the practicalities of sending your child to a school which is not in walking distance, unless it is the designated or nearest school.

## **How do I check if my child is eligible for free school transport? -**

If you apply for a place at the school designated to serve your home address and you live more than three miles away by the shortest walking route, your child will be entitled to free transport. You can [check which is the designated school to serve your home address here](#). Alternatively you can call us on [0345 155 1019](#).

Your child will also be entitled to free transport to the school nearest to your home, provided it is still over three miles from your home by the shortest walking route. This is usually the designated school, but not always.

We provide transport assistance from one permanent home address. If your child lives at two addresses you must nominate one address as permanent for transport even if both addresses are eligible for transport assistance. You must let us know if your child's permanent address changes and you may be asked to provide evidence of this if it affects entitlement to transport assistance. Transport is provided only at normal school times at the beginning and end of the day. Transport is **not** provided for foreign exchange students, work experience, or taster and induction days.

## **How are distances measured? -**

Walking distances (up to three miles) are measured using the shortest available walking route which may include roads and recognised footpaths. The measurement is made between the nearest entrance to your house (for example, a front gate) and the nearest entrance to the school grounds. Private driveways to homes and within schools are not included in the measurement. Distances over three miles are measured by road. Distances are measured using an electronic geographic information system (GIS)

## **What if I am on a low income? -**

The statutory right to free transport for secondary school pupils from low income families provides a choice to one of the three **nearest** schools to their home address. However, transport will only be provided if the school is between two and six miles of the home address, or to the **nearest** school preferred by a parent's religion or belief between two and

fifteen miles of the home address.

Distances of up to two miles are measured using the shortest available walking route, and distances of over two miles are measured by road. If your child is entitled to free school meals, or your family receives the **maximum** level of Working Tax Credit, then your family is considered to be on a low income. **Unless your child gets free school meals, you will need to give us current proof that you receive an appropriate means tested benefit. If so, please send a copy of your benefit evidence after completing the online form in the application section.**

To confirm that you receive the maximum amount of Working Tax Credit we need to see your new TC602 Tax Award Notice each year. However, if your financial circumstances have not changed since the previous financial year you will not have to complete the HMRC annual review and will not be sent a TC602 Tax Award Notice automatically. We advise you to request a copy of the TC602 Award Notice by phoning the Tax Credit Helpline on [0345 300 3900](tel:03453003900) and explain you need it as evidence for transport assistance for your child. Please do this as soon as possible as it can be several weeks before you receive the TC602 form.

## **What if my circumstances change? -**

Income assessed entitlement has to be reapplied for every year so you should not assume that you will continue to have support if your circumstances change – for example if your child no longer has free school meals, or your family no longer gets the maximum level of Working Tax Credit. **We advise you to consider whether you would be able to get your child to school if assistance was withdrawn because withdrawal of free transport is not considered sound grounds for an appeal, as you have been advised in advance that this could happen if your child ceases to be eligible.**

## **Transport to faith schools -**

Transport will not be provided on faith grounds unless the school is the nearest to your home address and you live more than three miles from the school.

However, if your child gets free school meals, or you get the maximum level of Working Tax Credit your child will be entitled to transport to the nearest faith school to your address provided;

- Your child is attending on faith grounds
- The school is over 2 miles and up to a maximum of 15 miles from your home

This entitlement is reviewed annually and transport provision may be withdrawn if your

circumstances have changed.

To confirm that you receive the maximum amount of Working Tax Credit we need to see your new TC602 Tax Award Notice each year. However, if your financial circumstances have not changed since the previous financial year you will not have to complete the HMRC annual review and will not be sent a TC602 Tax Award Notice automatically. We advise you to request a copy of the TC602 Award Notice by phoning the Tax Credit Helpline on 0345 300 3900 and explain you need it as evidence for transport assistance for your child. Please do this as soon as possible as it can be several weeks before you receive the TC602 form.

## **Transport to grammar schools -**

Transport will only be provided to grammar schools if the school is the nearest to your home address and you live more than three miles from the school, or you are on a [low income](#).

## **Code of conduct -**

We want all passengers to enjoy a safe and pleasant journey and more detailed information about the code of conduct can be found in the following link.

Secondary aged pupils are required to provide a photograph for their travel pass. By providing a photograph and accepting transport assistance students and parents are automatically agreeing that they/their child will behave appropriately on school transport and abide by the [code of conduct](#).

## **Applications -**

Please read this information carefully and if you would like to apply for free school transport for your child, [complete the secondary school transport application form](#). **An application form must be completed for each child who requires transport.**

If your child is starting school in September and is entitled to free school transport, we will endeavour to send you an email or letter during April or May with a link to the code of conduct and the online form which must be filled in by **1 June**. If you have not been contacted by the end of June, and you feel your child might qualify for free school transport, please complete the online application form.

**If you are applying for transport after the academic year has started then please complete the online application as soon as possible.**

If you think your child might qualify for free school transport on [low income](#) or [low income faith](#) grounds an online application form must be completed. If you are applying for transport on low income grounds you also need to send us your proof of receipt of an appropriate means-tested benefit unless your child receives free school meals.

## **Moving house -**

If you have changed address please [complete a new online application form](#) or email [schooltransportservicequeries-mailbox@devon.gov.uk](mailto:schooltransportservicequeries-mailbox@devon.gov.uk) so that we can assess your free school transport entitlement to ensure your child's entitlement is valid.

We would expect your child to move to the nearest or designated school for your new address. The only exception to this may be if your child is in year 10 or 11 and is studying for their GCSE examinations.

If this is the case we will consider your reasons for moving and take into account whether the move was voluntary or involuntary, how easily your child could move to the new school, your financial situation, whether you can transport your child to school yourself and the cost to the Local Authority of providing transport assistance.

You must allow at least two week's notice for transport to be changed.

## **Appeals -**

Please see our [guide to school transport appeals and complaints](#) for comprehensive guidance on the appeal process.

## **Route safety -**

### **Walking to school**

If you live under the statutory walking distance but feel the route to school is too dangerous to walk please call 0345 155 1019 and ask to speak to the transport officer for your child's school. The route may already have been checked and deemed to be "unavailable" and there may be transport in place. If not, the transport officer will send you a form to outline your concerns and a route walk will be organised at the same time as your child would walk to school. You will be contacted with the results of the route walk. However, it is important to understand that in a rural county such as Devon there are many lanes where there are no pavements or street lights, but this does not necessarily mean the road is unsafe to walk.

These factors will be taken into consideration as will the width of the road, the volume of traffic, the number of accidents recorded and poor visibility.

It is a parent's responsibility to accompany their child to and from school and therefore the assessment will be made as if the child is accompanied on the journey. This responsibility also applies if your child has to walk in the dark.

Please note that the following are not taken into account during a route safety walk:

- the parent's individual circumstances, for instance personal availability to walk with the child or that it may be necessary to walk with younger children or pram
- parental finances
- local weather conditions
- unusual events – such as, road closures, construction work, flooding
- lack of street lighting – the majority of roads in Devon do not have streetlights and lighting is not an issue all year round
- lack of pavements – the lack of a paved footpath is not necessarily a reason to assess a route as unsuitable
- the presence of uncut hedges
- difficult terrain and arduousness of the route
- practicality or the time taken to walk the route

## On the vehicle

We want everyone to stay safe and travel in comfort. Our [code of conduct](#) outlines the standard of behaviour that is expected as well as what to do in bad weather and if the bus is late.

If you become aware that there is bad behaviour or bullying on your child's vehicle please report the matter to the School Transport team by ringing [0345 155 1019](tel:03451551019). They will ask the contractor and school to investigate. The contractor will speak to the driver and the school should interview the pupils involved and also any witnesses. They will then report back to the School Transport team who will take the appropriate action. This can be a warning letter home to parents, a one or two week ban, or with serious or repeated incidents an indefinite ban can be imposed. If a child is banned from school transport it is the parent's responsibility to make arrangements to get him/her to school.