

VERSION 0.1
SEPTEMBER 1, 2016



HOME TO SCHOOL TRANSPORT GUIDE

INFORMATION FOR PARENTS AND CARERS

2016 TO 2017

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GENERAL BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON SCHOOL TRANSPORT

What the law says

The law (Education Act 1996) puts a duty on Local Authorities (LAs) to make sure that children of school age are able to attend school and to make sure that suitable travel arrangements are in place so that children who are eligible, can go to school. The law says that no parent should be able to say their child wasn't able to attend school because the LA had not made suitable travel arrangements for them.

What the law says about home to school transport, who is eligible and distances from home

The law says that if a pupil lives more than the minimum number of miles from their home to the nearest school, then they are entitled to free school transport.

The distances are two miles for Years Reception – 3 and three miles for Years 4 – 11. Distances are worked out by taking the shortest available walking route from the centre of the pupil's home address to the centre of the school address. This distance is used to decide whether a pupil is entitled to free transport or not.

The Isle of Wight Local Authority uses a geographical information system to calculate the routes. This system uses information from Ordnance Survey, IOW Rights of Way, National Land and Property Gazeteer data.

The law (Education and Inspections Act 2006) put new duties on local authorities to provide free transport for pupils who receive free school meals or those from families who receive the maximum level of Working Tax Credit. Maximum distances do apply to this entitlement. To find out the free school meal eligibility criteria visit www.iwight.com.

Local Authorities also have to look at their transport policies to make sure that they provide the best and fairest service for the money they have (cost effective).

If you want to read more about the Government Transport guidance you can look at the ***Home to School Travel and Transport Guidance (July 2014)*** or the ***2010 Post-16 Transport Guidance (Feb 2014)***

Before applying for free home to school transport we strongly advise that you read the Isle of Wight Councils' Home to School Transport policy available to view at www.iwight.com/schooladmissions.

Types of school transport support that might be offered

The types of transport that may be offered can include:

- Parents taking their child to and from school and claiming money back for mileage.
- A place on a dedicated school bus
- A bus pass so your child can catch a public bus
- A seat on a taxi where more individual arrangements are needed.

Transport for young people post-16 (not of legal school age)

There is currently no legal requirement to offer the same transport services to post-16 students, that is offered to statutory age students. However, all local authorities must publish a post-16 transport policy every year. You can read the IWC policy by visiting www.iwight.com/schooladmissions.

Pupils who have a temporary change of address

Pupils who are entitled to free transport and have a temporary change of address (this could be staying with friends/relatives whilst parents are away or in hospital) will not have alternative transport arrangements provided for them.

Schools pupils need to attend to qualify for Free School Transport.

The Local Authority will only provide free school transport for pupils attending one of the following types of schools, providing they meet the qualifying criteria:

- Community, Foundation or Voluntary schools
- Community or Foundation Special Schools
- Non-maintained Special Schools (those which are not maintained by the local authority)
- Pupil Referral Units
- Academies, including Free Schools.

How often do I have to apply for free home-to-school transport?

Once you have been awarded free home-to-school transport to your requested school it will be secured until the end of your schooling at that school. However if you move address or school within this time transport will cease and a new application and assessment will need to be carried out.

Transport under the low income criteria is reviewed on an academic basis. If you have secured transport under the low income criteria and your entitlement can be confirmed with the DWP office at the time of renewal (between June – August) your transport will be extended for the next academic year. If we cannot confirm your entitlement School Admissions will write to you requesting evidence of your benefit claim to enable transport to be extended.

If you have any further questions regarding the policy or entitlement please contact School Admissions and Transport either via email on school.admissions@iow.gov.uk or via telephone on 01983 823455.

