

Am I entitled to help with Transport?

Additional information about the home to school transport policy, for parents applying for admission to secondary schools – including those with shared designated areas.

Transport to designated area schools

Transport assistance will not be provided for children if their home address is within safe walking distance of one of the designated area schools and they could have attended that school.

However, if none of the designated area schools is within safe walking distance of home, the local authority will provide transport to whichever designated area school your child attends (even if this is not the nearest one).

How do you define safe walking distance?

We measure the shortest walking route, which may include footpaths and pedestrian entrances to school sites. The route must be safe for your child to walk, accompanied if necessary. The law defines walking distance as up to 3 miles (2 miles for children who are eligible for free school meals, or whose families receive maximum working tax credit).

Examples – Transport to Designated Area Schools

- I live within walking distance of school X, which was my first preference. My child was offered a place at school Y, my second preference, which is beyond walking distance. (X and Y are both designated area schools). Would I get transport assistance?

Yes. Although school X is within walking distance of home, a place was not available to your child and so it does not count.

- I live within walking distance of the boys' school, and my daughter has been offered a place at one of the other designated schools. Will she get transport assistance?

Yes. As the boys' school is not available to your daughter, it does not count. If the school she attends is beyond walking distance then transport will be provided.

See also attached table for some further examples.

Transport to other schools

If you do not give your preference for designated area schools on your Common Application Form, your child will not normally qualify for free transport. If you do give your preference for designated area schools, but your child is not able to be offered a place at these, you may in such cases qualify for help with transport to another school.

- Can my child receive travel assistance to a school other than the designated area schools?

No, unless it is the nearest school to your home address (and not within safe walking distance). Strictly speaking, transport may be considered if it is the 'nearest available' school, but the availability of places at schools cannot be known for certain in advance of the admissions process for a particular year.

- Can I receive travel assistance to another school, on the grounds that it is more suitable for my child? For example, because of its particular subject specialism, because I prefer single-sex or co-educational schools, or its religious character?

No, all state funded schools are considered 'suitable'. Parents may exercise their preference and successfully obtain a place at a school other than the designated area schools, but are responsible for making any transport arrangements to enable their child to attend. (There is an exception for children entitled to free school meals or whose family is in receipt of maximum working tax credit, who may receive transport to the nearest school chosen on faith grounds, as described in the Parents' Guide.)

What about children with special needs?

All schools are expected to be able to meet a child's special educational needs, unless they have a statement of special needs which identifies a particular special school or school with a special resource unit, and is the nearest such school available. Some children may have special travel needs which mean that they cannot be expected to walk to school, in which case it may be necessary for them to be provided with transport assistance even though their school is within what would otherwise be safe walking distance. Where parents prefer a school other than their designated area schools, then they assume responsibility for making travel arrangements for their child to attend.

What about siblings?

As secondary school designated areas have changed, this affects how new applications for transport entitlement are assessed. Younger siblings could be entitled to transport assistance to different schools than an older sibling who transferred to secondary school in a previous year. Equally, the changes could mean that younger siblings will not be entitled to transport assistance to a particular school even though their older sibling did receive free transport.

All transport applications are assessed individually, with reference to the current admission arrangements and transport policy

HOME TO SCHOOL TRANSPORT EXAMPLES

In the following examples, School A and School B are **both** Designated Area schools for the home address

Example 1

NAME OF SCHOOL	PREFERENCE	MILEAGE/DISTANCE	safe walking distance?
SCHOOL A	first	1.5 miles	yes
SCHOOL B	second	3.2 miles	no

REASONS

If child is offered a place at school A (first preference) transport **will not** be provided.

within walking distance

If child is offered a place at school B (second preference), transport **will** be provided.

too far to walk, and the nearer school is full

Example 2

NAME OF SCHOOL	PREFERENCE	MILEAGE/DISTANCE	safe walking distance?
SCHOOL B	first	3.2 miles	no
SCHOOL A	second	1.5 miles	yes

Child offered a place at school B, **couldn't** have been allocated a place at school A, transport **will** be provided

too far to walk, could not have got into nearer school

Child offered a place at school B, **could** also have been allocated a place at school A, transport **will not** be provided

could have gone to school A, and been able to walk there

If child is given a place at school A (second preference), transport **will not** be provided

within walking distance.

Example 3

NAME OF SCHOOL	PREFERENCE	MILEAGE/DISTANCE	safe walking distance?
SCHOOL B	first	3.2 miles	no
SCHOOL A	second	1.5 miles	No – walking route judged unsafe

Child offered a place at school B, **couldn't** have been allocated a place at school A, transport **will** be provided

too far to walk, could not have got into nearer school

Child offered a place at school B, **could** also have been allocated a place at school A, transport **will** be provided

could have gone to nearer school, but would not have been able to walk there

Child offered a place at school A (second preference), transport **will** be provided

Although within walking distance, the route is unsafe..