

Home to School Travel Assistance Policy

Academic year 2026/2027

Education Travel Assistance for Children Aged 4 - 16 Years
(Reception through to end of Year 11)

Also includes information relating to:

SEN Travel Assistance Policy

Welcome

This booklet will help guide you through the process of applying for home to school travel assistance.

This booklet is only for parents of children living in Gloucestershire. If you do not live in Gloucestershire you must apply through your home local authority, even if the school is in Gloucestershire.

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Introduction

This policy is made by Gloucestershire County Council (GCC), the Local Authority (LA) for the County of Gloucestershire, for travel to school for children of compulsory school age Reception through to end of Year 11.

Note, home to school travel assistance does not apply beyond compulsory school age (see page 4) and there is a separate Home to School Travel Assistance Policy for children with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) (see page 5).

This policy sets out how the LA will meet its statutory duty and provides information about the categories of eligible children, the provision offered and circumstances when assistance is not provided.

The layout of this policy is aimed at helping parents find their way through it if they think they are entitled to travel assistance to school. It is also intended to support officers in making fair, transparent and consistent decisions regarding entitlement and provision of travel assistance.

The LA has a statutory duty to provide travel assistance to school to 'eligible children' of compulsory school age and is only able to provide assistance to children living within Gloucestershire and attending a maintained school or academy.

Eligible children are those:

- who attend their nearest suitable school and live more than the statutory walking distance from that school (see page 6)
- who reside in the designated transport area for the school (see page 8)
- who would not be able to walk to that school in reasonable safety, even if they were accompanied by their parent(s) (see page 8)

There are extended rights to travel assistance to school for children from low-income households (see page 6).

Assistance is not provided to children:

- whose main residence is not in the Gloucestershire County Council area
- are taught elsewhere than at the school at which they are on roll
- who were entitled but have moved out of the Gloucestershire County Council area
- attending an induction or taster day (where the child is not on roll)
- attending school trips
- attending an independent or boarding school
- who attend a school as part of a foreign exchange programme

There is no entitlement to a variation in the way travel assistance is provided for children who:

- attend school on a part-time basis
- attend work experience
- attend late school sessions or extra-curricular activities
- attend appointments and activities for medical or sports reasons
- attend breakfast or after school clubs

Where classes, year groups or children have a start or finish time that is different from most children at the school, it will not normally be possible for the LA to make separate travel arrangements. Schools may need to make arrangements to accommodate these children.

Where there is no entitlement, a parent may be able to purchase a spare seat on a LA contracted vehicle if one is available. A list of these operators, and full details of the Spare Seat Scheme, can be found using the following link: <https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/transport/school-transport/spare-seat-scheme/> These 'concessionary seats' may be withdrawn at short notice if they are required by a child who has an entitlement to travel assistance or the size of the vehicle changes.

The LA is responsible for making suitable arrangements for all eligible children to travel in reasonable safety and comfort, and without undue stress or difficulty, so they can benefit from their education. This is done by making sure that children do not have unnecessarily long journey times and that they are not expected to walk an unreasonably long distance to catch their vehicle.

Travel assistance will consist of one journey to and one journey from school each day, at the beginning and end of the school's day. Parents will be responsible for transport at any other time, such as for medical appointments or after-school activities.

Parents have a legal duty and a responsibility to make necessary arrangements to ensure that their statutory aged children attend school regularly. Most children are not eligible for travel assistance, and it is therefore very important that parents think carefully about transport when they choose the school, they would like their child to attend, what would happen if circumstances within the family changed, or if the arrangements were no longer available

Where the LA is not able to provide any travel assistance, parents must ensure they can meet the costs of transporting their child to and from school throughout their education. Many schools have their own travel plans, with special routes to make walking or cycling safer and have special facilities such as cycle shelters.

Key points:

- No travel assistance is provided automatically - parents must apply for assistance using the online form, available on the following link by clicking 'If you think you qualify - apply here' www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/transport/school-transport/apply-for-a-new-or-lost-school-bus-pass/
- The LA has clear criteria to decide whether travel assistance will be provided.
- The LA seeks to provide assistance in as cost-effective and efficient manner.
- There is an appeals process for individual circumstances to be considered for assistance beyond the statutory entitlement detailed in this policy.

The LA remains committed to ensuring that all children can access education and will continue to meet all its statutory duties which are outlined in the Education Act 1996, Education and Inspections Act 2006, the Home to School Travel and Transport Guidance and Home to School Travel for Pupils Requiring Special Arrangements Guidance.

This policy will be regularly reviewed and is subject to amendment.

Students aged 16-19 years

Home to school travel assistance does not apply beyond statutory school age and Post-16 students or their parents are responsible for making travel arrangements.

Where this is not possible due to the distance involved and the absence of suitable public transport alternatives, students attending a sixth form may have the option of purchasing a pass to use on a school bus contracted by the LA, where this is available, under LA's Spare Seat Scheme. A list of these operators, and full details of the Spare Seat Scheme, can be found using the following link: <https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/transport/school-transport/spare-seat-scheme/>

For other dedicated transport school services that are not controlled by LA, fares are set by the operator, and prices may vary for those routes.

Where parents are unable to make their own arrangements, it is their responsibility to approach the school or college for assistance.

The 16 to 19 Bursary Fund provides financial support to help students overcome specific barriers to participation so they can remain in education. Bursary funding is to help eligible students with costs such as travel to and from school or college, to buy essential books, equipment, or specialist clothing (e.g.

protective overalls) required for their study programme - items a student would otherwise need to pay for to participate. The amount a student may get will depend on the costs they have and what they need for the course.

There are two types of bursaries. A vulnerable bursary of up to £1,200 a year for students in one of the defined vulnerable groups and a discretionary bursary, which is controlled by the school or college, for students who meet the eligibility criteria.

Schools and colleges are responsible for managing both types of bursaries. Students who want to apply for support from the Bursary Fund should contact their chosen school or college to make an application.

Further information can be found at www.gov.uk/1619-bursary-fund and [Transport assistance for SEN pupils | Gloucestershire County Council](#)

Children with an EHCP

There is a separate Home to School Travel Assistance Policy for children with EHCPs and applications are assessed by the SEN Travel Enablement Team. Please click the following link for their webpage [Transport assistance for SEN pupils | Gloucestershire County Council](#) and [here](#) for the policy. The policy can also be found on the webpage under 'Downloads'.

If you wish to contact the SEN Travel Enablement Team, their contact details are 01452 425011 or sen.transport@gloucestershire.gov.uk

Suitable school

A suitable school for school travel purposes is a qualifying school that is suitable for the child's age, ability and aptitude. It should also be suitable for the child's sex, for example a girls' school could not be considered the nearest suitable school for a boy.

'Suitable school' does not mean the most suitable school for a child. Schools can meet a wide range of needs. The nearest secondary school to the home of a child of secondary school age, for example, will almost always be their nearest suitable school (provided it would be able to admit them).

Qualifying schools are:

- community schools, foundation schools, voluntary aided and voluntary controlled schools.
- academies
- alternative provision academies.
- pupil referral units.
- city technology colleges and city colleges for the technology of the arts.

Entitlement to travel assistance

The LA will provide travel assistance to and from school for children of statutory school age who meet the eligibility criteria published in this policy, and only for children whose main residence is in the Gloucestershire County Council area.

Travel assistance will be provided where a formal application has been made and entitlement has been established.

Entitlement may change due to a change in circumstances, such as of address, of school, to the length of the walking route, a measurement error coming to light or when a child reaches the age of 8.

Statutory walking distances

Children Living Outside the 'Statutory Walking Distance'

i) The LA will provide help to those **primary school** aged children:

- who attend the **nearest** primary school to their home address;
- **or**
- are placed with the agreement of the LA's Inclusion Service at an alternative provision setting following a permanent exclusion from school or because they are at risk of permanent exclusion and the alternative provision setting is, therefore, the nearest suitable school,
- **and**
- whose home to school walking distance is **two** miles or more for a child aged under 8, including the academic year in which they turn 8 years of age and **three** miles or more for a child aged 8 or over.

ii) The LA will provide help to those **secondary school** aged children who attend either:

- the nearest secondary school to their home address;
- **or**
- the nearest secondary school agreed by the LA to serve their home address (i.e., resident in the designated transport area for the school)
- **or**
- are placed with the agreement of the LA's Inclusion Service at an alternative provision setting following a permanent exclusion from school or because they are at risk of permanent exclusion and the alternative provision setting is, therefore, the nearest suitable school
- **and**
- whose home to school walking distance is **three** miles or more.

Travel assistance will not be provided if the home to school distance is less than the two/three-mile limit, unless the route has been assessed as unavailable, as detailed below.

Extended rights - entitlement on grounds of low income

From the beginning of the 2026/2027 academic year, there will be two categories of benefits-based free school meals (FSM):

- Targeted FSM - for children who are in households in receipt of Universal Credit with annual household earnings of £7,400 or less
- Expanded FSM - for children who do not qualify for Targeted FSM, but who are in households receiving Universal Credit.

Extended rights to travel assistance will apply to children eligible for Targeted FSM. Parents will be required to apply for FSM, **if their child is not already receiving them**, so that eligibility can be confirmed with the checking service provided by the Department for Education.

The list of benefits a parent would need to be in receipt of to receive them is detailed on 'Apply for Free School Meals' webpage. You can use the following link to check entitlement and make an application for FSM using the Citizen Portal [Apply for free school meals | Gloucestershire County Council](#)

i) The LA will provide help to low-income families with a child aged between 8-11 years attending a **primary school** where:

- they attend their nearest primary school,

or

- they have been placed with the agreement of the LA's Inclusion Service at an alternative provision setting following a permanent exclusion from school or because they are at risk of permanent exclusion and the alternative provision setting is, therefore, the nearest suitable school,

and

- their home to school walking distance is over **two** miles.

ii) The LA will provide help to low-income families with a child aged between 11-16 years attending a **secondary school** where:

- they attend one of their three nearest secondary schools,

or

- they have been placed with the agreement of the LA's Inclusion Service at an alternative provision setting following a permanent exclusion from school or because they are at risk of permanent exclusion and the alternative provision setting is, therefore, the nearest suitable school,

and

- their home to school distance is between **two** and **six** miles (see note ** below)

or

- they attend the nearest suitable school preferred on grounds of religion or belief, where they live more than **two** miles, but not more than **fifteen** miles from that school (see note ** below).

*** Note - the **two**-mile limit is measured along the nearest available walking route; the upper limits of **six** and **fifteen** miles are measured along road routes.*

How the walking distance measured

Distances are measured from the home entrance to the nearest school gate along the shortest **walking /pedestrian route** that would be taken to get to school and will include walking along maintained walkways. This is different to the distance measurements used for school admissions purposes, where places are prioritised according to a direct/straight line distance, and most driving routes.

The measurement of the statutory walking distance is not necessarily the shortest distance by road. It is measured by the shortest route along which a child, accompanied as necessary, may walk by road or suitable path in reasonable safety.

Our system uses the exact location of each property using a bespoke system which uses national planning data to identify the location of individual properties and Ordnance Survey data for road and path network

routes. This is often different to distances calculated using Google and other online tools as they use postcode areas and other less accurate measurements.

Parents are advised to contact the Travel Assistance & FSM Team on 01452 425390 or transportmainstream@gloucestershire.gov.uk for further advice, if they live in an area where there may be uncertainty when determining the nearest school for home to school travel assistance purposes.

Designated transport area

For children attending secondary schools, the LA has undertaken a mapping exercise across Gloucestershire to record the nearest secondary catchment school, where available, linked to residential properties.

This information has been used to create designated transport areas for some schools, and parents are advised to use the Find a School tool on the LA's website for an initial check on travel assistance eligibility - <https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/education-and-learning/find-a-school/>

Any further advice can be obtained from the Travel Assistance & FSM Team by telephone 01452 425390 or email transportmainstream@gloucestershire.gov.uk

Children unable to walk 'in reasonable safety'

If the nature of a walking route is such that a child cannot reasonably be expected to walk to school or to a pick-up point, even when accompanied, in reasonable safety, then the LA will deem it unavailable.

When assessing if a route can be walked in reasonable safety, the LA will consider the whole route, to include, for example, any sections that use footpath or bridleways, as well as sections that use roads. Routes are assessed by trained assessors, against set criteria recommended by Road Safety GB (ROSPA), including nature of footways and crossings, speed of traffic, sight lines and visibility for the pedestrian and motorist, road accident record, and risks such as canals, rivers and ditches. The assessment will always take place on a school day and at the same time as if a child were walking to or from school, at the start or end of the normal school day.

Where a child is attending their nearest school and the shortest route, they will have to walk from home to school is deemed unavailable, and there is no reasonable alternative route (under the statutory distance), the LA will provide assistance with travel. The nearest school for admissions purposes may not be the nearest for school travel assistance purposes.

Personal security does not form part of the assessment. The LA will assume the child will be accompanied as necessary by a responsible adult. There is no requirement for a route to be lit and temporary, occasional closures, such as road works or flooding, are not considered.

Unavailable routes are regularly reviewed, and the LA reserves the right to withdraw travel assistance from any child should the nature of the route change or be deemed available.

Journey times

Generally, the maximum journey time for primary school children is 45 minutes each way and 75 minutes each way for secondary school children, including any time taken to walk to and from pick-up and drop-off points.

There will be circumstances in which this is not possible, for example, in rural areas where children live in remote locations and when journey times are extended due to weather or traffic conditions.

Address to be used for travel assistance

The LA can only provide travel assistance from a child's permanent home address and travel assistance will not be approved to/from more than one location. It is therefore vital that the correct address is showing on our records and parents should ensure that the child's current school hold the correct address on their records.

Where there are dual living arrangements and parents do not agree on the home address, and in the absence of a Specific Issues Order from a court or a child arrangements order, the LA will consider the home address to be with the parent with primary day to day care and/or where the child lives at (i.e. sleeps at) for most term-time school nights (Sunday to Thursday). In reaching this decision, evidence may be requested to show the address to which any Child Benefit is paid and from which the child is registered with a medical GP.

For applications for phased transfers, those children who are starting Reception for the first time, transferring from an infant school to a Year 3 place in a dedicated junior school or transferring from a junior/primary school to secondary school, the address used to assess travel assistance will be the address used for admissions purposes. Unless there has been a permanent change of address, and the address has already been updated on the admissions record.

For applications outside of the phased transfer process, the address used to assess travel assistance applications will be the correspondence address we have on our records.

In instances where there has been a change of permanent residence, evidence of the new address may be required before the application will be assessed. Acceptable proof of address evidence would be:

- A copy of the signed tenancy agreement if the property is rented
- A copy of the completion of purchase letter from the solicitor if the property has been bought
- Current council tax bill, full page(s)

If a child changes address during the period they are entitled to travel assistance, a new application must be made so we can reassess entitlement.

Changing schools and in year applications

Due to differences in policy, a new application for travel assistance must be made when child's moves through their education, from infant to junior or junior/primary to secondary school, or if they change school after their phased transfer.

Types of travel provision

The LA will decide upon the most cost effective and appropriate means of travel for each child based on where they live. This includes public buses, contracted coaches and minibuses. Bus passes are the most common provision, and smart cards are being introduced on routes, replacing bus passes. Once a smart card has been issued to a child, the pass is valid for the entirety of the child's eligibility.

Bus companies and pick up points will be allocated according to routes and loading and will often include a section of the journey that a child will need to make on foot.

Alternative methods of transport, such as trains and taxis, will only be considered in exceptional circumstances. In cases where hired or public transport is difficult, the LA could help with travel costs in the form of an allowance, paid to the parents who will then arrange for transport independently.

Parents should not assume that their child will be picked up or dropped off at home. The LA will nominate pick-up and drop-off points and children are expected to make their way to these points, accompanied as necessary by a parent or other person nominated by the parent.

Journeys may involve a change of vehicle. Smaller, feeder vehicles may be used to link with larger contract vehicles or with public transport. A public transport route may involve children using more than one bus or a bus and train combination.

Siblings

Although travel assistance may have been offered as an exception to an older sibling attending a school that is not their nearest (for example, due the school being the nearest available school, a school closure, a fair access admission decision etc.), this does not mean other children in the family will also be entitled, either at the same time or in the future.

The statutory policy detailed above will apply to any sibling(s) enrolling at the same school - they will not be entitled to travel assistance to the further school solely on the grounds that the older child attends there.

Accompaniment

Where the LA determines that a child would be able to walk if they were accompanied, the expectation is that the parent will accompany them or make other suitable arrangements for their journey to and from school. A child will not normally be eligible solely because their parent's work commitments, or caring responsibilities, mean they are unable to accompany the child.

Reasons such as the parent's working pattern, or the fact they have children attending more than one school, will not normally be considered good reasons for a parent being unable to accompany their child. These reasons apply to many parents and in most circumstances, it is reasonable to expect the parent to make suitable arrangements to fulfil their various responsibilities (for example, their responsibilities as an employee and as a parent.)

School travel and school admissions

Parental preference for schools may affect entitlement to travel assistance. If a parent chooses to apply for a school further from their home, it may mean there will be no entitlement to travel assistance. Parents should consider this when applying for schools.

For phased transfers, this is where children are starting Reception for the first time, transferring to Junior School, transferring from Lower to Middle School and from Middle to High School or starting Year 7 in a Secondary School for the first time, parents must list all the nearer schools as preferences on the application so there will be entitlement to travel assistance to what will be the nearest available school. Outside of the phased transfer process, parents must apply to the nearer schools, even if they believe they are full.

Travel assistance may be offered, subject to the distance criteria detailed below, if a child has been refused admission to their nearest schools and therefore must attend the next nearest school with a place is available in the relevant year group.

For in year admissions evidence of the refusals will be required and the refusal letters for the nearest schools must be attached to the travel assistance application. Whilst it is appreciated that families may then wish younger siblings to attend the same school in the future, assistance with travel will not automatically be offered to them unless they have also been refused a place at all nearer schools.

To find the schools nearest to your home address, in distance order, please use the Find a School tool on the LA's website using this link - <https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/education-and-learning/find-a-school/>

Please note, the schools listed on the Find a School tool are prioritised according to a direct/straight line distance, not the shortest **walking /pedestrian route** - this is the measurement used to determine the nearest school for home to school travel assistance purposes.

Parents are advised to contact the Travel Assistance & FSM Team on 01452 425390 or transportmainstream@gloucestershire.gov.uk for further advice, if they live in an area where there may be uncertainty when determining the nearest school for home to school travel assistance purposes.

Application process

Parents must apply for travel assistance using the online form, available on the following link by clicking 'If you think you qualify - apply here' - www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/transport/school-transport/apply-for-a-new-or-lost-school-bus-pass/

For phased transfers parents should make an application to the LA as soon as they accept the school place in March/April. To ensure assistance will be arranged in time for the first day of the new school year, applications should be submitted by **30 April for assistance to secondary schools** and **by 31 May for assistance to infant/primary/junior schools**.

Parents of children that are entitled to assistance will normally receive information relating to the arranged transport provision within 10 school days. However, this is likely to take longer during the period between school places being allocated in March/April and the start of the new school year, in view of the high number of travel assistance applications received.

To qualify for home to school travel assistance, children must meet the eligibility requirements. In addition, travel assistance will only be considered if parents have submitted preferences for all the nearer schools as a higher preference than the allocated school.

For phased transfers preferences must have been made by the national closing date for applications - 31 October for secondary schools and 15 January for infant/primary/junior schools.

If an application is approved, details will be passed to the Integrated Transport Unit where the transport arrangements will be made, and parents will be notified of the arrangements before the start of the academic year, providing the travel assistance application was made on time.

Parents will be notified in writing if they not entitled to assistance and if they feel they have exceptional circumstances for consideration, they may appeal the decision.

Replacement bus pass

If a child loses their LA issued pass or it has been damaged, a fee will be charged. Parents can order a new pass and pay online using the following link: [Replacement School Bus Pass](#)

Appeals process

Parents may appeal against the decision of the LA regarding their child's eligibility for travel assistance to a particular school. Parents may appeal once per academic year. Government guidance on the grounds for challenge is available on the Department for Education website - [Home-to-school travel - GOV.UK](#)

Officer review

Parents have 20 working days from receipt of the LA's decision to refuse travel assistance to make a written request asking for a review of the decision. Forms are 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 travel assistance policy. The form **MUST** be accompanied by specific evidence to prove the exceptional circumstances.

Within 30 working days of receipt of the written request, a senior officer review panel considers the family circumstances and sends the parent(s) a written response setting out the decision reached, the rationale for that decision and information about the member appeal process. If relevant, the letter should make reference to any queries raised by the parent(s) regarding the assessment process.

Senior officer review forms can be requested by contacting the Travel Assistance & FSM Team by telephone 01452 425390 or email transportmainstream@gloucestershire.gov.uk

Member appeal

Following receipt of the LA's senior officer review decision, the parent(s) can request that their case is considered by an appeal panel made up of three county councillors. This request must be made within 20 working days of the date of the written response from officers.

The appeal panel will consider the information previously submitted by the parent(s) for the officer review. The parent(s) and officers will have the opportunity to attend the hearing to make verbal representations. The parent(s) can have someone attend the hearing with them to offer support

The parent(s) and representing officer will be informed in writing of the decision reached and the rationale for that decision within 5 working days.

The LA must supply the clerk to the appeal panel and the appellant with all relevant documents needed to conduct the hearing in a fair and transparent manner and in accordance with the specified timetable.

The LA will advise the clerk of any appeal requests as soon as they are lodged. This will give time for the clerk to ensure the panel has no conflict of interests and allow scheduling of appeals to dates.

The clerk will publish the agenda and despatch the papers required for the members of the panel at least 5 clearing working days before the date of the hearing.

The full LA Appeals Code can be viewed on the website, under 'Refusal of travel assistance', using this link - [New, lost or damaged school bus pass applications | Gloucestershire County Council](#)

Local Government Ombudsman

There is no further right of appeal for parents. They may, however, make a complaint to the Local Government Ombudsman if they believe there has been a case of maladministration. Maladministration covers issues such as failure to follow correct procedures or failure to act independently and fairly. It does not cover the merits of decisions that only the panel has the authority to make. Therefore, generally, the Ombudsman cannot consider whether the appeal panel was correct to uphold or dismiss the appeal.

The Ombudsman is not able to overturn the appeal panel's decision but, where they find there has been maladministration, they may make recommendations for a suitable remedy. For example, they may recommend that an appeal is reheard by a different panel and with a different clerk.

Code of Conduct for Pupils who use Home to School Transport

We want you and all other passengers to stay safe and travel in comfort. You must agree to the following code of conduct before we issue your bus pass. Your school and parents will be alerted if you do not keep to the code, and we may have to withdraw your transport assistance.

This code of conduct is for your safety and that of the other passengers and is based on Respect for others, please remember to be polite and courteous at all times and treat others as you would wish to be treated. You are representing yourself, your family, and your school. Don't let them down.

1. Your bus pass

- Carry your bus pass or smart card with you whenever you travel to and from school.

- Ensure that you show your smart card or bus pass to the driver. If you have a smart card, you must use it on the ticket machine to board where one is provided. If it cannot be produced or validated, the driver may refuse travel.
- Your pass is only valid on your allocated route.
- Do not use anyone else's pass or allow another person to use yours. It is your responsibility to protect your own bus pass, and it will be your responsibility to compensate the bus operator for any trips claimed fraudulently under your name.
- You may only possess one bus pass at any time. If you find a lost bus pass that you have since replaced, you must destroy the older pass.
- Our bus operators reserve the right to refuse any passenger who attempts to board their service using a defaced or damaged card.
 - If you lose your pass, you can obtain a replacement one for a fee by Selecting "Order a replacement pass" from the Gloucestershire County Council website - [New, lost or damaged school bus pass applications | Gloucestershire County Council](#)

2. Your pick-up point

- You are responsible for getting to your bus's pick-up point.
- Arrive at the pick-up point 5 minutes before your bus is due. The bus will run to a timetable and will not wait if you are late.
- If a bus is late, be prepared to wait at the pick-up point for 20 minutes but no longer. Agree with your parents what to do if the bus does not arrive or if you fail to catch it. (e.g., return home or go to a friend's house to organise alternative transport).
- You may only board the bus from the pick-up point you have been assigned. If there are extenuating circumstances, please contact the Integrated Transport Unit to agree an alternative.
- In times of inclement weather transport may be unable to operate; please ensure you have a contingency plan for these occasions.

3. Disruption to services

There may be occasions (e.g., road closures) where you may be assigned a temporary pick-up point. In extreme situations, (e.g. weather) the service may be unable to operate at all. We will communicate this disruption and any alterations with as much notice as possible. In some cases, we may be unable to make alternative arrangements.

4. Keeping safe when getting on and off the bus

- Queue sensibly, well away from the edge of the road.
- Allow passengers to leave the bus before you board.
- Get on and off the bus in an orderly way in single file so you do not hurt yourself or other passengers.
- If you need to cross the road once you have left the bus, wait for the bus to drive away so you can see other vehicles and their drivers can see you.

5. On the bus

- Stay in your seat once you are on the bus; you must wear a seatbelt if one is provided.
- Do not distract the driver unless there is an emergency.
- Do not stand in front of the driver, in the aisle or on the stairwell.
- Do not use emergency exits or doors unless the driver instructs you to or there is a genuine emergency.
- Do not eat, drink or smoke (including e-cigarettes) on the bus.
- Do not leave litter on the bus - take it with you and place it in a bin.
- Foul, abusive language and bullying will not be tolerated, and no distinction will be made between bullying and "banter". Light-hearted misbehaviour is no less dangerous or distracting.
- Physical aggression of any kind will not be tolerated.
- You must not engage in behaviours that may cause direct harm to other passengers.

- You must not engage in behaviours that will make other passengers feel unsafe or uncomfortable.
- Do not use mobile phones or digital devices to produce images, videos or audio recordings of the driver, other passengers or any other road or transport user.
- You must not deliberately jeopardise your own safety or the safety of other passengers.
- You must not encourage, coerce, or equip other passengers to do anything that may jeopardise their own safety or that of other passengers.
- Do not carry real or replica weapons.
- Do not throw items.
- Do not destroy, deface, or deliberately soil any part of the bus. If damage is caused not only will the police be contacted, but you will be liable for the full costs of repair and any fees incurred in recovering such costs. A ban will remain in place until full payment for damages is received, ad potentially longer.
- If the bus breaks down or is involved in an accident, follow the driver's instructions.

Please be aware that many transport operators use CCTV for the safety and security of passengers and other road users. CCTV footage may be used as evidence to investigate incidents that may occur on school transport.

Sanctions for unacceptable behaviour

From time to time it is necessary to impose sanctions on children and young people who fail to conform to an acceptable standard of behaviour.

A parent must take responsibility for their children's behaviour on the way to and from school. It is their duty to ensure that their children understand why it is essential to behave properly in the transport provided. Young people over the age of 16 are responsible for their own behaviour and we expect them to adhere to the code of conduct independently. Children and young people must understand that poor behaviour, especially which puts at risk the safety of any other passenger, driver, or road user, will lead to a ban on use of the transport provided. In that case, the responsibility of transporting their child to school will transfer to the parent without any financial support from LA.

In return, we will ensure that contracts are monitored to ensure compliance with the law and the contract offered. We will investigate any complaint received from any other party and be seen to act against anyone who contravenes the policies and agreements entered into. We recognise that the decision as to whether or not to carry a child or young person is for the operator, although we will encourage that operator not to take such a step before discussing any proposed action with LA and the head teacher of the school involved.

As part of its commitment to providing a safe environment for the transport of children and young people to and from school, we have determined a procedure for dealing with cases of poor behaviour reported to us and have adopted the following list of sanctions that may be applied in certain circumstances. This is not an exhaustive list, nor is it a definitive statement that in every case the sanction indicated will be applied regardless of other circumstances. Each case will be considered on its individual merits, in consultation with the school and operator. The sanction will be applied jointly by the Review Officer and Lead Officer, Integrated Transport Unit/Travel Assistance Team. Any appeal will be considered jointly by the Admissions & Travel Assistance Manager and Transport Operations Manager, whose decision will be final.

Guidelines for first offences

The table below is just an example of the length of bans that can be given for incidents, although each incident is looked at individually. LA reserves the right to apply sanctions depending on the situation, i.e. a permanent ban may be used for serious misconduct or repeated incidences of misconduct.

TYPE OF BEHAVIOUR	EXAMPLES	SANCTION
Unhygienic Behaviour	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Consuming or spilling food or drink</i>• <i>Littering</i>	1 Day Ban
Dangerous or Anti-Social Behaviour	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Distracting the driver</i>• <i>Spitting</i>• <i>Misuse of the bell</i>• <i>Not wearing a seat (where seatbelts are available)</i>• <i>Leaving the seat when the vehicle is moving</i>	1 Week Ban
Severe Behaviour	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Distracting the driver</i>• <i>Bullying other passengers</i>• <i>Misuse of emergency exit</i>• <i>Chronic and on-going poor behaviour</i>	1 Month Ban
Critical Behaviour	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Assault of driver or another passenger</i>• <i>Possession of drugs</i>• <i>Any form of damage to the vehicle</i>• <i>Using or intending to use weaponry</i>	1 Term Ban

Criminal offences

Any criminal offences that result in a ban may also be reported to the police. The following behaviours are likely to result in criminal investigation.

- Damage to vehicle, e.g. graffiti, vandalism.
- Gaining fraudulent access to the vehicle (using an expired pass, another pupil's pass, etc.)
- Possession or use of drugs.
- Possession or use of offensive weapons (including replicas).
- Assault on driver, LA pass holders or other fare paying passengers.

Notification of unacceptable behaviour

Operators will report any unacceptable behaviour to the County Council who will investigate the incident, including the recovery of any CCTV footage. The County Council will enforce an appropriate ban as outlined above, if warranted. Parents will be notified of this action by letter, or where an instant ban is justified, by telephone and later confirmed in writing. It is the responsibility of the parent to transport the child to school whilst the ban is in place.

Reporting unacceptable behaviour

The Code of Conduct exists to ensure that pupils feel safe on-board transport provided by LA, so it is important to us that if you have a concern about behaviour on one of our services you can easily report it.

If you are concerned about behaviour on your (or your child's) school bus, please send your report to the e-mail address mainstream@gloucestershire.gov.uk Your report should include:

The name of the school
The name of the operator
The date and time of the journey on which the incident occurred
Your child's name

Please note that although LA does co-operate with the school to investigate reports of poor behaviour, transport bans are at LA's exclusive discretion. Reports submitted to your child's school do not always reach us for investigation, so it is important that you communicate directly with us.

All reports will remain anonymous; the name of the complainant will not be disclosed to other transport users.

Updates to the Code of Conduct

The Code of Conduct is a live document and will be updated routinely over the course of a school year. Updates will usually be issued in June and December but may be published at any point. It is the responsibility of each transport user to ensure they have read and understand the most recent copy of the code before travelling. The latest edition will always be available via our website - visit www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/h2score

If you would like to withdraw from home-to-school transport following an update to our terms, please contact mainstream@gloucestershire.gov.uk

Submitting an appeal

If your child has been banned under the code of conduct and you feel it has been applied unfairly or incorrectly, you can submit an appeal by e-mailing mainstream@gloucestershire.gov.uk

Contacts:

Travel Assistance & FSM Team:

Enquiries relating to entitlement to assistance with transport for children aged 4-16 and Free School Meals:

Tel: 01452 425390

Email: transportmainstream@gloucestershire.gov.uk

Integrated Transport Unit:

Enquiries relating to transport arrangements, routes, replacement bus passes, and purchasing bus passes via the Spare Seat Scheme:

Tel: 01452 425387

Email: mainstream@gloucestershire.gov.uk

SEN Travel Enablement Team

Enquiries relating to entitlement to assistance with transport for children aged 16+ and children with special educational needs:

Tel: 01452 426770

Email: sen.transport@gloucestershire.gov.uk

Co-ordinated Admissions Team

Enquiries relating to phased transfers:

Tel: 01452 425407

Email: school.admissions@gloucestershire.gov.uk

In Year Admissions Team

Enquiries relating to applying for school places during the school year:

Tel: 01452 426015

Email: inyear.admissions@gloucestershire.gov.uk

Department for Education

Tel: 0370 000 2288

Website: <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-education>

Explanation of terms

Academic year	The period commencing with 1 September and ending the following 31 August.
Belief	Defined by section 509AD (3) of the Education Act 1996 as any religious or philosophical belief.
Compulsory school age	<p>Set out in Section 8 of the Education Act 1996 and The Education (Start of Compulsory School Age) Order 1998</p> <p>A child reaches compulsory school age on the prescribed day following their 5th birthday, or on their 5th birthday if it falls on a prescribed day. The prescribed days are 31 December, 31 March and 31 August.</p> <p>A child ceases to be of compulsory school age on the last Friday in June in the academic year in which they reach age 16.</p>
Dedicated transport	Transport which exclusively carries children and young people to and from their place of education and cannot be boarded by members of the public.
Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP)	An EHCP details the education, health and social care support that is to be provided to a child or young person who has special educational needs (SEN) or a disability.
Home	The place where a child is habitually and normally resident.
Parent	References to parent in this document includes birth parents, adoptive parents, foster parents, carers or legal guardians with parental responsibility.
Phased transfer	The period during which parents apply for school places. The deadlines for applications are 31 October for secondary school places and 15 January for primary places. Secondary National Offer Day is 1 March, or the next working day. Primary National Offer Day is 16 April, or the next working day.
Road route	A road passable by a motor vehicle.