

Home-to-School Transport Policy – September 2025

1. Introduction

- 1.1. This policy has been produced by Bridgend County Borough Council to comply with the requirements of the Learner Travel (Wales) Measure 2008 (the Measure), to make available information about its policy and the arrangements it puts in place to transport pupils and other learners.
- 1.2. It is the intention of Bridgend County Borough Council to provide a reliable system of transportation that will seek to carry pupils and other learners safely, punctually and in reasonable comfort.
- 1.3. In all cases, the efficient use of resources will dictate the mode of transport provided.
- 1.4. Transport may be provided by means of contracted transport services such as bus, minibus, taxi, or existing public transport service, where appropriate.

2. Provision of free transport

- 2.1. There is a statutory duty placed upon the local authority to provide pupils and other learners with free transport to the nearest suitable school, or their approved place of education, if they reside beyond the statutory walking distance to that school. In Bridgend the term nearest suitable school applies to the local English-medium catchment school, or the nearest Welsh-medium or voluntary-aided (faith school).
- 2.2. Where, as a result of parental preference, pupils attend a school other than their English-medium catchment or their nearest Welsh-medium or voluntary-aided (faith) school, it must be understood that parents accept full responsibility for transport costs and arrangements.

3. Statutory walking distances

- 3.1. Welsh Government has defined the 'statutory walking distance' as two miles for primary school pupils and three miles for secondary school pupils of compulsory school age.
- 3.2. The local authority's policy is in line with Welsh Government's statutory distances.
- 3.3. Distances will be measured by the nearest available walking route from a pupil's home to their school. The local authority uses a dedicated geographical information system to measure these distances and ensure accuracy.

- 3.4. To ensure a newly assessed walked route to school is considered to be 'available' to a learner, the local authority must be satisfied that it meets the requirements outlined in the Learner Travel Statutory Provision and Operational Guidance 2014. As per the Measure and the aforementioned operational guidance, it is only the local authority that is able to identify whether a walked route is considered to be 'available'.
- 3.5. The local authority has undertaken formal assessments of the main arterial walking routes across Bridgend and has identified those that are available and unavailable. Routes that are considered to be part of the 'public realm' and have a long-standing history of being used by members of the public (for example, residential/estate streets and defined community footpaths/walkways) are considered as available unless assessed otherwise.
- 3.6. The policy summary is as follows:
- Primary school pupils (Reception to Year 6) will be provided with free home-to-school transport if they attend their catchment English-medium school or nearest Welsh-medium or faith school and live two miles or more from the school, or the walking route from the pupil's home is considered by the local authority to be unavailable.
 - Secondary school pupils (Year 7 to Year 11) will be provided with free home-to-school transport if they attend their catchment English-medium school or nearest Welsh-medium or faith school and live three miles or more from the school, or the walking route from the pupil's home to the school is considered by the local authority to be unavailable.
 - Nursery pupils will be provided with free home-to-school transport if they attend their nearest Welsh-medium or faith school and live 1.5 miles or more from the school, or the walking route from the pupil's home is considered by the local authority to be unavailable. There is no provision for pupils attending any English-medium schools.
 - Post-16 (sixth-form) pupils will be provided with free home-to-school transport if they attend their nearest Welsh-medium or faith secondary school and live three miles or more from the school, or the walking route from the pupil's home to that school is considered by the local authority to be unavailable. There will be no provision for pupils attending any English-medium school or any further education college.
- 3.7. Home-to-school transport will be arranged to coincide with the start and end of the normal school day and shall be provided during the term time only. No transport is provided for breakfast clubs, after school clubs, summer school or transitional visits.
- 3.8. Where the local authority has arranged for a pupil to attend an out-of-county residential school, transport will only be provided at the start and end of each half term.

- 3.9. Transport will normally be provided from pick-up points at approved bus stops, on the nearest public transport route to the pupil's home. For some pupils with additional learning needs (ALN), a door-to-door service may be provided.
- 3.10. It is not possible for the local authority to take into consideration any domestic situation relating to the timing of siblings utilising different transport vehicles to the same or different schools.

4. Nursery pupils

- 4.1. To ensure the safety of eligible Nursery pupils, they will travel on either dedicated Nursery transport, or mixed-age-group taxis or minibuses. Nursery pupils are unable to travel on large buses, even if older siblings are in attendance.
- 4.2. Where Nursery pupils attend on a full-time basis (Nursery two), they travel to school at the beginning of the school day and to home at the end of the afternoon session. However, where schools offer places on a part-time basis to 'rising three' Nursery pupils (Nursery one), it is the responsibility of parents to either collect their child at the end of the morning session or ensure their child is transported to school for the beginning of the afternoon session.

5. Available walking routes

- 5.1. In determining the comparative safety of a walking route to school, the local authority conducts assessments of the risks that pupils might encounter along the route between their home and school.
- 5.2. All assessments have followed the Learner Travel Statutory Provision and Operational Guidance June 2014. As routes are reviewed, provision may be withdrawn where for example, identified hazards have been mitigated against.
- 5.3. This will then be classed as an identified and available walking route.
- 5.4. Parents will be given at least one terms advance notice of the withdrawal of transport and any withdrawal will normally be implemented to coincide with the start of a new school year.

6. Pupils with Additional Learning Needs (ALN)/Disabilities

- 6.1. Free transport is provided for all pupils who attend special schools, pupil referral units and learning resource bases that are not located within their catchment school, in accordance with the local authority's agreed walking distances.
- 6.2. Pupils with ALN who attend mainstream schools, and who do not otherwise qualify for free home-to-school transport, may qualify for free transport if their application is accompanied by appropriate evidence which is confirmed by the local authority's Learner Support Service.

- 6.3. Pupils with disabilities (as defined by the Equality Act 2010) may be entitled to assistance with transport from home to an appropriate school even though the local authority's agreed criteria on walking distances are not met. Such provision is subject to approval by the local authority's Learner Support Service. Any such referrals must be supported by appropriate evidence.
- 6.4. Provision to a special school or other agreed place of education may include transport beyond the age of 16 if approved by the local authority.
- 6.5. The mode of transport provided will be dictated by the needs of the pupil.

7. Cross border arrangements

- 7.1. Transport may be provided to eligible pupils attending schools in neighbouring local authorities, where such attendance is consistent with the local authority's Admission Policy for the relevant year of admission.
- 7.2. However, there is no transport provision for pupils wishing to attend Welsh-medium schools in other local authorities.
- 7.3. Pupils seeking a Church-in-Wales faith-based education will be provided with transport to the Bishop of Llandaff Church in Wales High School subject to the statutory distances.
- 7.4. Pupils previously attending Abercerdin Primary School as their local English-medium catchment school, may attend Tonyrefail Community School and transport will be provided subject to the statutory distances.

8. Oversubscribed schools

- 8.1. If a pupil cannot be admitted to their English-medium catchment or nearest suitable Welsh-medium or faith school due to the relevant year group being oversubscribed, and as a result, has to attend another school beyond the walking distance from their home, then transport will only be provided to the next nearest suitable school and eligibility will be subject to the statutory distances. This may not be in accordance with the preferred school of the parent/carer.
- 8.2. If parents/carers exercise their right to send their child to a school not considered by the local authority to be their next nearest suitable school, the parents/carers will be responsible for transport costs and arrangements.

9. Special arrangements – discretionary applications

- 9.1. Parents/carers are advised that if they consider there are special circumstances regarding their child who normally would not be eligible for free home-to-school transport, they may make an application to the local authority to consider exercising its discretion to assist with the provision of transport for short periods of time.

- 9.2. The local authority is only able to consider applications to support the circumstances faced by the pupil. The local authority cannot accept any circumstances faced by parents/carers or other family members, in particular those relating to domestic or work-related arrangements.
- 9.3. Every application is considered on its own merits.
- 9.4. Where applications relate to medical issues faced by a pupil, transport to and from school or other place of education may be provided for short periods only. Such an application must be accompanied by a letter from a qualified medical practitioner and must explicitly recommend transport for a set period of time. Such evidence will be subject to scrutiny prior to any acceptance by the local authority. Where agreed, this provision will be subject to regular review and will last no longer than one school year.
- 9.5. An application for such an arrangement must be made to the local authority using the discretionary home-to-home transport application form.
- 9.6. Parents should email pupilservices@bridgend.gov.uk for further advice on how to make an application.

10. Paying places scheme

- 10.1. The local authority is unable to offer any spare places on bus (coach) transport due to the impact of the Public Service Vehicle Accessibility Regulations.
- 10.2. However, from time-to-time it is possible that the number of pupils to be carried by the local authority on some smaller vehicles such as taxis and minibuses will be below the capacity of the vehicle being used. In such cases, the local authority may be able to offer these spare places to other pupils.
- 10.3. It must be understood that the provision of this facility does not represent an obligation on the local authority and, being entirely dependent on the capacity of the vehicle used, may result in withdrawal of the facility at relatively short notice.
- 10.4. The local authority also reserves the right to withdraw a paying place in cases where the parent/carer refuses to pay the charge. The local authority will take into account a parent's/carer's previous payment record when considering a new application for a paying place. Where a parent/carer has refused/failed to pay in previous years, this may result in any new application being refused.
- 10.5. If the local authority determines it would be inappropriate to offer a paying place regardless of the availability of the spare places on any vehicle, then it reserves the right to do so.
- 10.6. Parents/carers are advised to contact the School Transport Team regarding the availability of paying places schooltransport@bridgend.gov.uk on taxis or minibuses.

11. Transferring to another school – home-to-school transport arrangements

- 11.1. Where a pupil moves house and their school is no longer considered by the local authority to be their catchment school or their nearest suitable Welsh-medium or faith school, they will no longer be provided with free school transport if that move takes place during the pupil's primary education, or in Years 7, 8 or 9 of secondary education.
- 11.2. For pupils who move house after the October half-term of Year 10 or in Year 11, 12 or 13, eligibility for free home-to-school transport will be considered on a case-by-case basis. If approved, a public service bus pass would normally be provided.

12. Monitoring and complaints procedure

- 12.1. Any complaints received by the local authority from parents/carers concerning home-to-school transport services, will be immediately investigated. In the event of the complaint being upheld, the necessary and appropriate steps against school transport operators or transport vehicle staff, will be taken in accordance with the contract terms and conditions, as a matter of priority.
- 12.2. Parents/carers must put their complaint in writing and send this to schooltransport@bridgend.gov.uk

13. Home-to-college transport

- 13.1. There is no eligibility for free transport for any further education college students.

14. Behaviour on school transport vehicles

- 14.1. The local authority operates a 'zero tolerance' approach to poor behaviour on dedicated local authority provided home-to-school transport.
- 14.2. Parents/carers and pupils should familiarise themselves with the Travel Behaviour Code. It encourages safe school travel, and notes pupils' expected behavioural standards.
- 14.3. If pupils do not follow the code, the local authority can take action against them for their own safety and the safety of others. In circumstances where a pupil's behaviour has met this threshold, the local authority will advise parents that their child's right to school transport will be withdrawn for a duration to be determined by the local authority. In such a situation, it will be the responsibility of parents to transport their child to school.
- 14.4. It is important that pupil, parents and carers understand that poor behaviour on home-to-school transport may also lead to fixed-term exclusion, or in the most significant cases, permanent exclusion from school.

15.No-pass, no-travel scheme

15.1. All pupils using local authority provided school buses are provided with a dedicated bus pass. Only pupils eligible to travel may do so. Any pupil attempting to board a school bus without a current bus pass will be refused access.

15.2. In the event of a pass being lost, stolen or damaged, parents/carers will need to contact the school reception, who will provide further advice on what to do.

15.3. There is a £10 charge for replacement bus passes.

15.4. Bus passes can only be used on the route identified on the pass.