

SCHOOL AND POST 16 TRAVEL POLICIES FOR SEPTEMBER 2019

There is a new school travel policy statement following significant pre-engagement and consultation in the school year 2017-2018 and decision making by Suffolk County Council (SCC) at its cabinet meeting on 19 June 2018. The changes will be phased in from September 2019 over a 7-year period. Those already at school aged up to 16 will not be affected until they have left that school unless they turn 8 years of age and live between 2 and 3 miles from their current primary school, or if they move address.

What this means:

Policy with effect from September 2019:	What this means:
Providing children aged 5-16 years old with transport to their nearest suitable school with an available place, but phasing in the policy from September 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This would only apply to children starting a new school in September 2019, or moving home, and would be based on the current minimum distance criteria (over 2 miles for those under 8 years old and 3 miles or over for 8-16 year olds). • The School Travel Policy applies to children living in Suffolk who are of statutory school age (5-16 years old). • From September 2019 under SCC's new policy, there will be no Transport Priority Areas (areas where children would receive funded school travel to a particular school over and above the statutory minimum).
Providing transport where there is no safe route	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SCC funded school travel will be provided for children attending their nearest suitable school, which is less than the statutory walking distance, if it is considered unsafe for the child, accompanied as necessary, to walk to school. • This entitlement will continue as long as the route remains unsafe.
Low income extended rights	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children will qualify for SCC funded school travel if their parents are in receipt of the maximum Working Tax Credit or the child is entitled to Free School Meals due to low income, if they are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ aged 8 to 10 and the school is at least 2 miles away; ○ aged 11 to 16 and the school is 2 to 6 miles away – as long as there are not three or more suitable schools nearer to home; ○ aged 11 to 16 and the school is 2 to 15 miles away – if it is their nearest school preferred on the grounds of the parent's religion or belief.
Special Educational Needs (SEN) and Disabilities and Mobility difficulties (including temporary medical conditions)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children are entitled to SCC funded school travel however far they live from their school if they cannot reasonably be expected to walk to school (or other place where they might be receiving education under section 19(1) Education Act 1996), accompanied as necessary, because of their SEN, a disability or mobility problem.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The entitlement for children with special educational needs and disabilities or mobility difficulties is assessed against the statutory School Travel Policy except where exceptionally, a child's Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) expressly states that travel should be provided.
The other agreed changes are:	
Note (D) indicates a discretionary part of SCC's Travel Policy	
Giving priority to Suffolk schools (D)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allowing those whose nearest school is over the county boundary the option to choose SCC funded school travel to their nearest Suffolk school if they live over the statutory walking distance, measured according to the policy statement.
Measurement of distance definition to include Public Rights of Way	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We will use Public Rights of Way when measuring distance from home to school for eligibility purposes. Public Rights of Way are usually available all year round; but if they are not accessible, parents can appeal. Distances are measured by the shortest available route along which a child, accompanied as necessary, may walk with reasonable safety. Routes are calculated using a network comprised of the Ordnance Survey Integrated Transport Network (ITN), which includes all roads and urban paths, and Public Rights of Way as shown on the Definitive Map. Distances are measured from the point of the network that is closest to the address point of the child's home to the gate or access to the school or college.
Providing travel for 4 year olds (D)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Suffolk School Travel Policy also applies to Rising 5 year olds.
The new policy requires parents whose children qualify for SCC funded school travel to opt in each year	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For children starting in Reception Year or transferring to a new school in Years 3, 5, 7 or 9 in September 2019, we will inform them of their eligibility to SCC funded school travel. If a child is starting Year 7 or Year 9 in September 2019 and the family have not heard from us by 30 April 2019, but they think their child is eligible for SCC funded school travel they can contact the Customer Service Team on 0345 606 6173 or email them at customer.services@suffolk.gov.uk. If a child is starting in the Reception Year in the School Year 2019-2020 and the family have not heard from us by 14 May 2019, but they think their child is eligible for SCC funded school travel they can contact us as soon as possible after this date if they think they might be eligible. This also applies to the other groups within the primary admissions round (infant, junior and middle schools).

	<p>OPT IN:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All children eligible for SCC funded school travel will be required once they are eligible, regardless of year group (Reception Year to Year 6, or Year 7 to Year 11) to opt in on an annual basis. • We would only allocate a seat to an eligible child if the parent requests this.
Offering pupils whose nearest school is a three-tier school the option of travel to the nearest two-tier school in the Bury St Edmunds area (D)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For the Bury St Edmunds area, in addition to providing SCC funded school travel to the nearest suitable school, SCC funded school travel will also be provided to the nearest two-tier school (even if it is not the nearest suitable school) if it is located more than the statutory walking distance from the home address.
Split Site - St Benedict's School (D)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where one of the St Benedict's Catholic School sites is the nearest suitable school to a child's home, SCC will provide funded school travel for the whole secondary phase up to age 16 to St Benedict's Catholic School, providing the child lives more than three miles from the site which they are attending at the time. • If they live more than three miles from one site but not the other, SCC funded school travel will only be provided to the site which is located more than three miles from their home. • Where one of the St Benedict's Catholic School sites is the nearest suitable school to a child's home, SCC funded school travel would also be offered to the next nearest two-tier secondary school provided that the child lives more than three miles from this school. <p>* This discretionary part of the SCC funded school travel policy will only continue while St Benedict's Catholic School remains on two sites.</p>
Retain the current Post-16 Travel policy (D)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This policy statement provides SCC subsidised travel to those attending their nearest provision where the distance is more than 3 miles from the home address. See charges below which are the same as for the sale of spare seats. • Note: Must Opt in by 31 May 2019. Applications received after 31 May 2019 will be treated as late.
Selling any spare seats for non-eligible pre and post-16 on school buses which are running for those who are eligible.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Selling unallocated spare seats on closed contracts running to schools for pre and post-16 students (as set out on www.suffolkonboard.com) at £750 in September 2019 with phased increases of £30 per term (£90 per year) to reduce the public subsidy SCC provides. • Continue with the current cost increase of £10 per term (£30 per year) for unallocated seats to pre and post-16 students with special educational needs (in September 2019 this will be £690)

<p>Implementing a revised individual exceptions policy for both SCC School and Post-16 travel</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Note: Applications received after 31 May 2019 will be treated as late. • An updated two stage review and appeal process to be published in accordance with the requirements of the DfE School Travel and Transport guidance (Statutory guidance for local authorities): July 2014, as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stage 1 - Review by “Officer B”, who was not involved in the original decision-making process in relation to the application concerned. • Stage 2 – Where a parent asks for the decision to be reviewed, they will have the following options: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Individual Needs Travel Panel (INTP): written submissions 2. Officer Panel (OP): written submissions or 3. Education Transport Appeals Committee (ETAC), made up of county councillors. Parents have the option to make verbal representations or written submissions. Road safety appeals can only be heard by the ETAC. • See the following link www.suffolkonboard.com/appeals.
---	---

Local Agenda and the Sustainable Modes of Travel Strategy (SMOT)

With the introduction of the new School Travel Policy, this will mean that some families may have to think about travel options as there will be a change to past bus/coach service patterns which will be dependent on the decision families make when expressing preferences for schools. The policy change will mean:

- There will be fewer SCC contract buses and spare seats as with reduced numbers of children who are eligible or opting in to take up their funded seat, SCC will be reviewing routes, optimising services and making more use of commercial bus services where they exist. SCC may also elect to purchase a seat(s) on vehicles run by schools, if this proves to be the best value option.
- More parents might be looking to informally car share to get their children to a school of their preference.
- More schools might be looking at running their own transport services for their families.

Suffolk’s SMOT can be found at www.suffolkonboard.com/smot.

All schools have access to the free online STARs Modeshift online resource to assist in updating their school travel plan.

The Suffolk Brokerage Service (SBS)

Suffolk County Council, as part of the Suffolk Brokerage Service, will encourage operators, schools, parish councils and all other interested stakeholders to work together to:

- highlight and capture demand of potential future passengers
- facilitate discussions to ensure financially viable transport routes
- help discussions between transport operators, schools and parish councils to calculate what the funding gap might be to make a transport route financially sustainable
- facilitate discussions with local volunteers that may be willing to drive for Community Transport Organisations for their local area
 - all schools, sixth form centres and colleges of further education will be able to make use of the SBS, in terms of capacity building support, to widen access solutions funded by partner(s).
 - the SBS will work with the full range of commercial bus, coach and minibus operators to promote the commercial opportunities available in running routes to schools of parents' preference.
 - signposting assistance to families and young people as they plan their Post-16 pathway. This service is available from September 2018 onwards, and includes the promotion of the journey planner and other information to help families.
 - signposting and providing advice for their personal travel plan.

Transport operators can help by:

- proactively having discussions with schools in their local area
- promoting current transport services, routes and fares with local parish councils
- having discussions with local communities on future passenger demand
- capturing information from customer enquiries on potential future demand.

Local Solutions

Working with a group of schools, SCC developed a range of potential Local Solutions. The Local Solutions menu formed part of the engagement and consultation undertaken during the period: Autumn term 2017 and Spring term 2018.

The Local Solutions menu provides potential ideas that could make savings and/or mitigate the impact of the policy changes. The Local Solutions will work side-by-side with phasing in the new School Travel Policy and include working with schools, colleges, local communities and/or parish councils. SCC would need to agree the detail prior to implementation; part of the agreement would include an assessment of the impact on the health and wellbeing of the children affected.

Suffolk Brokerage Service, in addition to providing capacity, building support can facilitate the development of Local Solutions.

As at 24 January 2019