

# Home to School Travel Policy

## Mainstream Policy 2025/ 2026

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## HTST Travel Policy - Mainstream

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BS23 1UJ

**Web:** [www.n-somerset.gov.uk/hometoschooltransport](http://www.n-somerset.gov.uk/hometoschooltransport)

# 1 Introduction

This is one of a suite of policies relating to home to school transport. The Policy is based on the statutory guidance produced by the Department for Education. It sets out the home to school travel assistance that North Somerset Council will provide for children of compulsory school age (aged 5 to 16) resident in North Somerset.

*This policy covers students in education from reception year until year 11. There is a separate policy for students who are above the compulsory school age (16+) which can be found on the North Somerset Council [Home to School Transport website](#).*

## 1.1 Home to School Principles

Home to School Transport provision is made by North Somerset Council in line with the following principles:

- It is the legal duty of parents to ensure that their children attend school.
- North Somerset Council will assist with home to school travel assistance where a child qualifies for school transport.
- Where provided, the primary purpose of home to school transport is to facilitate a child's attendance at school.

This policy outlines:

- Which children are eligible for home to school travel assistance.
- How to apply for home to school travel assistance
- How to appeal a home to school transport decision
- North Somerset's Vacant Seat Payment Scheme
- The different types of home to school travel assistance that can be provided.

The Local Authority will consider each individual application on its own circumstances.

## **2 Eligibility Criteria**

The following criteria will be used to determine eligibility for home to school travel assistance. An easy-to-follow flowchart can be found in Appendix A.

### **2.1 Compulsory school age**

Children must be between the age of 5 and 16. If your child is over 16, please refer to the Post 16 Policy on the North Somerset Council Home to School Transport webpage.

All children must now participate in education or training up to 18 years of age, but this has not changed the compulsory school age.

Children aged under 5 years of age, attending a reception class full time will be considered on an individual basis for travel assistance under our discretionary application process provided all other criteria are met.

### **2.2 Statutory walking distances**

Travel assistance will be provided for:

- Children under the age of 8 who attend their nearest suitable school where it is more than two miles from their home; and
- Children aged 8 and over who attend their nearest suitable school where it is more than three miles from their home.

Where a child receives travel assistance and turns 8 their eligibility for transport will be reassessed. You will not have to reapply for transport. Should travel assistance not be continued you will be notified in writing.

## 2.3 Unsafe walking route

Travel assistance will be provided to children within the statutory walking distances where children attend their nearest suitable school but cannot walk there, regardless of accompaniment, because the nature of the route means it would be unsafe to do so and there is no reasonable alternative route.

## 2.4 Extended Rights

Extended rights are designed to support low-income families to extend the school choice. A child is eligible for free travel to school if they are eligible for free school meals or a parent with whom they live receives maximum Working Tax Credit and they are:

- aged 8 or over but under 11, attend their nearest suitable school and it is more than two miles from their home; or
- aged 11 to 16 years, and attend one of their three nearest suitable schools provided it is more than two miles but not more than six miles from their home; or
- aged 11 to 16 years, attend a school that is more than two but not more than fifteen miles from their home that their parents have chosen on the grounds of their religion or belief if, having regard to that religion or belief, there is no suitable school nearer to their home.

*Distances will be calculated by the Local Authorities in-house mapping software.*

The extended right transport award is to provide transport for one year. Parent and carers must submit another transport application for the next academic year, for reassessment by the transport officers.

Please note that universal credit is replacing working tax credit. This does not change the way eligibility for extended rights to free home to school travel assistance is

determined. Once the roll out has been completed children who are eligible for free school meals will still receive free travel.

## **3 Eligibility – How will it be assessed?**

### **Measurement of distance**

Children may sometimes live a very similar distance from more than one school. The Local Authority may determine which is the nearest by measuring the shortest walking route. It is not necessary to determine at this point whether they would be able to walk this in relative safety for the purpose for determining, which is their nearest school. This is to assess the Child's eligibility for free travel.

Statutory walking distances (section 2.2) are measured electronically as the shortest walking route between the child's home address and the nearest school entrance.

For extended rights (section 2.4), the two-mile limits will be measured along the shortest walking route as above. The six-mile and fifteen-mile upper limits will be measured by the shortest available road route.

### **3.1 Safe walking routes**

Walking routes are calculated between the child's home address and nearest school entrance. These are checked to ensure there are no particular hazards or dangers along the route. For example, if a child needs to walk an extended distance along a narrow road with no pedestrian provision, this may not be considered a safe route.

In determining a safe walking route to school or to a centralised pick-up point, the council will review whether the route is safe if a child is accompanied where necessary.

Safe walking assessments are undertaken following [Road Safety GB](#) guidance. If taken to appeal, the panel will review on individual case basis.

Footpaths, bridleways and other pathways may comprise part of a child's walking route when considered safe.

## **3.2 Private Lanes/ Unadopted Roads**

If the road is deemed as unadopted, then it is deemed as private, and transport will not go down this road. It is the parent's/ carers responsibility to get their child to the centralised/ designated pick-up point.

## **3.3 Accompaniment**

The Local Authority are not responsible for the accompaniment of students to and from school. When assessing whether any child can reasonably be expected to walk to school, to a centralised pick-up point and when assessing route safety, the council will consider whether the child can reasonably be expected to walk if accompanied. The expectation is that a child will be accompanied by a responsible adult where necessary.

Reasons such as the parent's working pattern or the fact they have children attending more than one school on their own will not typically be considered good reasons for a parent being unable to accompany their child.

The Local Authority are not responsible for the accompaniment of students to and from school.

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## 3.4 Home address

For the purpose of evaluating a child's eligibility for home to school travel assistance, the home address is necessary. This refers to the child's current, permanent place of residence. This information will be obtained from their admissions application.

When a child has multiple residences, such as when their parents live separately, the home address used for home to school travel assistance will be the one submitted as part of their school admissions application.

In these circumstances, there is no expectation for the Local Authority to provide transport to separate addresses.

Where a child who is eligible for home to school travel assistance moves home address, their eligibility will need to be reassessed, the Local Authority will need to be informed of the change. A student may no longer be eligible for travel assistance.

## 3.5 Nearest suitable school

Home to school travel assistance will typically be provided only to the nearest suitable school for the child. The nearest suitable school, in the context of home to school travel assistance, refers to the closest suitable school to the child's home address that is (or would have been) able to offer them a place. This determination is made by the Authority at the time of application during the school admission process.

For secondary schools, the nearest school will be determined with reference to the home address and the council's determined areas for home to school transport. You can view a map on the [North Somerset Council website](https://www.n-somerset.gov.uk).

If your home address falls into the determined area for just one secondary school, then that will be treated as the nearest school, and you will receive travel assistance if you



live further away than the statutory walking distance. Where an address falls within two determined travel areas, assistance may only be provided to the nearest of the two schools. Please note, these travel areas are determined by the Council and may differ from the geographical areas identified by schools or academies for their admissions policies.

Where a child does not attend their nearest suitable school, parents should be aware that the council may not have an obligation to provide home to school transport.

Evidence illustrating that the nearest school was not available or appropriate will need to be provided with any application for home to school transport. If a child is allocated a place at a school that is not the nearest suitable because of parental preference, travel assistance will not be provided.

## **3.6 School Admissions Policies**

### **Fair Access Protocol**

We need to establish a fair access protocol to ensure that all unplaced children, especially the most vulnerable, are offered suitable school placements as quickly as possible, even outside the normal admissions period.

It's essential that all schools, regardless of their vacancies, are asked to accept a fair number of children who have been excluded from other schools or who present challenging behaviour. This includes children who have recently moved to the area, asylum seekers, Those with Special Educational Needs or Disabilities but do not hold an Educational Health Care Plan, and those who have been excluded from other schools.

Eligible children can receive “free” travel assistance from their home address to their assigned school.

For more information about this protocol, please visit [our website](#).

## **Off-site Direction**

To support your child with their behaviour, the school may decide that your child will be educated elsewhere for a limited time. This could involve placement at another school or an alternative provision setting, or your child may split their time between two different locations. This option is known as off-site direction and should only be used when it is deemed the best way to support your child's behaviour.

If your child has an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP), the local authority must be informed about the off-site direction placement.

A child with an Offsite Direction (OSD) is eligible for travel assistance for a maximum of eight weeks. This support may include existing travel services, public transport, or a personal travel allowance.

## **Manage Move**

In some cases, a child's school may determine that it is in the best interest of the child to permanently transfer to another school following an off-site direction placement. This is referred to as a managed move.

Managed moves should be voluntary and require your agreement before they occur. The school should not pressure you into consenting to a managed move. If you feel pressured, it is essential to bring this to the attention of the school's governing board.

A managed move should only happen when it is deemed beneficial for your child, and all parties involved—this includes the new school and yourself—agree that a permanent transfer is the best option.

Schools should not implement a "trial period" or "trial admission" for managed moves, as these transfers are intended to be permanent.

If your child has an Educational Health Care Plan (EHCP), their school must contact the local authority before the move. If the local authority, both schools and you all agree on the managed move, the local authority will need to follow the appropriate process to amend the EHCP.

The local authority considers this agreement as parental preference, and it is the responsibility of the parent/ carer to ensure their child attends their new school.

### 3.7 Discretionary Award

Is an award that is considered after the appeals process (**see section 9 for more information about the appeals process**) has been completed. Where parent and carers have the duty to disclose any information which may influence the travel support, we provide. Circumstances can include:

- Parents who have disabilities or mobility issues that restrict them from accompanying their child/ren to and from school.
- Child/ren under the age of 5 who attend school full time in a reception class setting.
- A child may be eligible because of temporary mobility problems; however, due to the short-term nature of some mobility problems, it may not always be practicable for the local authority to make travel arrangements before the child has recovered.

The discretionary award is to provide transport for one year. Parent and carers must submit another transport application for the next academic year, for reassessment by the transport officers. These will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

## **4 Home to School Transport – How does it look?**

There are several transport alternatives for eligible students. One of the following types of travel assistance may be offered where appropriate:

- Cycling/ Wheeling allowance
- A bus or rail pass
- Independent Travel Training assessment may form part of the travel offer.
- Reimbursement for parents/carers via a personal travel allowance (PTA)
- Travel on private hire coach or minibus.
- Travel in a taxi or other form of private hire vehicle.

The Local Authority reserves the right to determine the appropriate provision of transport that considers and meets the needs of an individual which together promotes sustainable means of travel wherever possible. Sustainable and active travel choices such as walking, cycling, wheeling and using public transport services to promote health benefits whilst in many cases, prepares students for the transition into sixth form, college and working life.

### **4.1 Quality and Compliance**

The Home to School Team commission transport from a range of operators which are monitored for quality and compliance with our terms and conditions.

## 4.2 Passenger Assistants

Passenger Assistants (PAs) will be provided only following the outcome of an assessment of the child's Special Educational Needs and/or medical needs to meet the needs of the child/ren travelling to and from school. This will consider:

- medical issues; and/or,
- health and safety related issues, including risk to self or others; and/or
- the child's mobility; and/or
- severe learning or physical difficulties that necessitate continual care and supervision

PAs may supervise more than one child on a journey, consistent with providing the appropriate level of service for each individual child while they are on the vehicle.

The provision of a passenger assistant will be subject to continual review and personnel could change at any time.

The Local Authority may provide a suitable space for transport for any designated carers or a 1:1 health care assistant where this is deemed necessary; an additional PA would not be allocated; however, the Home to School Transport will not fund this provision.

*Please note, PAs are not permitted to leave the vehicle, to make a doorstep pick-up/drop-off or to alert parents or carers that the vehicle has arrived.*

Key expectations of what can be expected of a PA and the driver on school transport can be found in **Appendix B**.

## 4.3 First Aid and Administration of Medication

Passenger Assistants (PAs) are trained in first aid as first responders. For emergencies beyond this, emergency services will be contacted.

In certain situations, it may be necessary to administer emergency medication to a child. PAs will only administer such medication in accordance with instructions from a healthcare professional. The PA responsible for administering the medication will receive training from a health care professional. The Local Authority will endeavour to arrange this on a case-by-case basis.

We will engage with parents/ carers for a suitable alternative if this is deemed necessary.

## 4.4 Home to School Transport Journey Times

Journey times are subject to influence from day-to-day traffic conditions and geographical restrictions. We always endeavour to meet the best practice guidance set out by Government. This states:

“As a general guide, transport arrangements should not require a child to make several changes on public transport resulting in an unreasonably long journey time. Best practice suggests that:

- The maximum each way length of journey for a child of primary school age to be forty-five minutes.
- The maximum each way length of journey for secondary school age seventy-five minutes,

For children with SEN and/or disabilities, journeys may be more complex and journey times may fall outside these guidelines' times due to the distance, number of student pick-ups and traffic conditions to their placement schools.

North Somerset Council seek to avoid extending routes unnecessarily and ensure travel arrangements are safe and reasonably stress free to enable children to arrive at school ready for a day of study. The total journey time is taken from when the child leaves the home address.

## **4.5 Independent Travel Training**

Independent Travel Training (ITT) is available to all parents/ carers who wish for their children to participate. This initiative is designed to enhance the confidence, skills and resilience of young people in order for them to become independent travellers.

The Home to School Team may provide an ITT assessment as part of the final travel offer for any child who may benefit from additional support in using different modes of transport.

If a child is considered suitable for the training following the initial assessment, our ITT Team will provide support through a tailored 6-week course designed to meet individual needs and abilities. The duration of this course can be adjusted based on the specific circumstances of each child. In this 6-week plan, the responsibilities of parents/ carers will be outlined.

If parents/ carers believe this course would benefit their child, they can find out more information and apply through our [website](#).

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## 4.6 Home to School Transport Operational Times

Eligible children will be provided with travel assistance at the start of the school day and at the end of each day of school as determined by the school/academy's published term dates. Part time placements due to special needs and short-term arrangements for medical reasons will be taken into consideration on a case-by-case basis, each case will be determined on their own circumstances.

Where travel assistance is provided it remains the parent/carers responsibility to ensure their child's safety by making any necessary arrangements for their child/ren to be accompanied to and from a bus stop, a designated pick up/drop off point and during the journey if required.

## 4.7 Parent/ Carer not at Home

In instances where a parent/ carer is not at home, the transport operator will attempt to contact the parent/ carer using the contact information provided in the child's application. If no response is received, the emergency contact listed on the child's application will be contacted.

If neither the parent/ carer nor the emergency contact can be reached, the child's school will be informed of the situation. The school will then advise the operational team on their safeguarding policies and procedures.

Where there is no answer from School, the operational team will continue with their route and return to the address once all drop-offs have been completed. If the parent/ carer is still not present, a risk assessment will be conducted to determine if the child should be taken to the operational office. A designated safeguarding person will then supervise the child until the parent/carers can arrange collection.



In cases of emergency or if the operational staff are unable to address the child's needs, Social Services and the Police will be contacted as a last resort. The Police have the authority to place a child under a police protection order if necessary.

## **4.8 Centralised Pick-up Points**

Many forms of travel assistance will operate from the home address of the student to school; however, the Local Authority will seek to operate from designated pick-up points where suitable. These will often be public bus stops or central locations within residential areas.

The suitability of a centralised pick-up point will be determined at the point of application, considering the individual requirements of the child and by assessing any risks.

As a guide we do not have centralised pick-up points that are more than one mile from the student's home address.

## **4.9 Cycling/ Wheeling Allowance**

A Cycling allowance may be provided as travel assistance, to promote more sustainable travel options for students. This is paid directly to parent/ carer to enable a child to cycle to school.

Young people who may lack confidence in cycling independently and are seeking additional training can benefit from our partners at [Bikeability](#). They offer training at various levels and provide valuable information on how to support your child.

Parents/ carers can view all North Somerset cycle routes including roads graded by the suitability for cycling on our interactive map on our [website](#). If you would like a more

concise cycle map for your specific area, [Better by Bike](#) offer downloadable maps that can be printed.

For students who are wheelchair users, the allowance could be used to provide someone to escort the child to school.

## **4.10 Personal Travel Allowance/ Parental Mileage**

A personal travel allowance (PTA) or parental mileage (PMILE) payment may be provided as a travel assistance offer, if mutually agreeable and meets any of the following:

- Only student at the school,
- Student needs as determined in agreement with SENDCO, SEN and Home to School Transport Team
- Lack of contracted transport and;
- Medical needs of the child.

PMILE is for short term use only, while a more suitable transport provision is being organised. After one term, the home to school transport team will have the right to move parents/ carers over to a PTA.

PTA and PMILE will only be provided where the Home to School and the parent/ carer mutually agree it as a more suitable arrangement. Where any change to transport provision is made, the local authority will endeavour to give as much notice as possible.

It is important to note that the value of the PTA or PMILE will not exceed the value of contracted services and is intended exclusively to reimburse parents/ carers for vehicle running costs incurred during journeys from home to school. For further information regarding the implementation of this initiative, please see our [Personal Travel Allowance Policy](#).

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## 5 Application Process

To complete an application form, parents/carers will need to follow the instructions on the home to school transport page on the [North Somerset Council website](#).

The application will be assessed by the Home to School Transport (HTST) team to determine eligibility and travel provision.

Upon receipt of the application form, the HTST team will normally process the application within twenty working days. For more complex travel assistance needs these timescales may take longer. We will inform you in writing of the outcome of your application.

Your travel assistance offer letter will include detailed information regarding the type of transport your child will receive, the driving staff including any passenger assistants and what time the transport will arrive and depart school.

## 6 Vacant Seat Payment Scheme

North Somerset Council operate a scheme where vacant spaces on transport services are offered at a subsidised rate for students who are not eligible for travel assistance.

Vacant seats are allocated on a first-come, first serve basis and can be withdrawn at two weeks' notice if the seat is required for another child that is eligible for travel assistance, or if the seat is no longer available for any other operational reason.

To ensure fairness to all families, application forms for this scheme become available online and are accessible from council gateways from midday on the 31 July for the new academic school year. Applications are accepted from 9am on the 1 August, and all

applications are time stamped once received. The application form will be on the [North Somerset Council website](#).

The charge for the vacant seat payment scheme can be financed in one payment or through an 8-month payment plan. The charge is reviewed annually and can be found within the council's published Fees and Charges document which is available to view on the North Somerset Council website.

Where the council identifies that an eligible seat has been vacant for a significant period (12 weeks) the student may be contacted, and the seat re-allocated to an unentitled paying student. If the eligible student subsequently wishes to reinstate their space on transport, they will need to write to the Home to School Transport Team giving at least two weeks' notice. Spare seats on vehicles will be advertised on the home to school transport page of the website.

If payment for a vacant seat is not received, the council reserve the right to suspend the seat with one week's notice, pending review.

If the council refuses a child a vacant seat payment scheme transport application, the parent/ carer **cannot** appeal the decision.

## 7 Managing Risks, Incidents and Accidents

North Somerset Council takes safety extremely seriously and we will strive to ensure that any transport arrangements we make are safe for your child. It remains your responsibility to make any necessary arrangements for their child/ren to be accompanied to and from a bus stop, a designated pick up/drop off point and during the journey if required.

You can also help us to keep your child safe by:

- Helping to write the journey care plan for your child (see section 7.2 below)
- Keeping us informed about your child's needs and health; and
- Reporting any health and safety or safeguarding concerns promptly

The Council will seek to use CCTV and audio recording on transport to help mitigate and manage risks and investigate incidents.

### 7.1 Behaviour

Poor behaviour on school transport can result in a range of problems, including endangering the safety of other passengers and road users. The council works closely with the operators, schools and parents to address incidents of unacceptable behaviour in line with the school's behaviour policy.

Poor behaviour on transport will be discussed in conjunction with the school, the operator and parents. Consideration may be given to withdrawing travel assistance on a temporary timescale or permanently in cases of more serious or repeated behaviour.

If consideration is being given to withdrawing free school travel assistance because of unacceptable behaviour, then:

- On the first occasion of unacceptable behaviour, where deemed appropriate, a written warning will be issued.
- If any further unacceptable behaviour takes place, then, depending on how serious the incident is and how long it was since a warning was given, a further warning may be given, or the decision may be made to suspend the free transport and refer the case to the transport appeals panel for representation of all parties around the future of any provision.

In the event of transport provision being withdrawn, it remains the responsibility of the parent to ensure their child's attendance at school.

The Local Authority does not tolerate any negative parental behaviour. This includes abuse, harassment, or violence towards the operator (including the driver), passenger assistants and/or students on the vehicle. Any concerns should be emailed to [schooltransport@n-somerset.gov.uk](mailto:schooltransport@n-somerset.gov.uk) as the first port of call.

Any negative behaviours reported will result in the procedure above to be followed.

## 7.2 Journey Care Plans

Where there is an identified need for a journey care plan for a student who has a travel entitlement, the parent/carer will be asked to complete a journey care plan prior to the arrangement of transport. This will cover information about your child's needs and what we may need to know to make the journey as comfortable and pleasant for them as reasonably possible. The journey care plan is based on information you provide, confirmed and supplemented by the school, the SEN team and the child's EHCP if they have one and will be agreed by Home to School Transport.

The journey care plan form is available on the home to school transport webpage embedded within the SEN application form.

## 7.3 Risk, Health and Safety

The Council will maintain an overall risk assessment for the home to school transport service. Individual risk assessments will also be conducted for individual children, routes or journeys which present more complex or significant risks. The Council maintain a database for unsafe walking routes, this is periodically reviewed.

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## 7.4 Safeguarding

We follow the policies of the North Somerset Safeguarding Children Board. This includes making sure that staff have the appropriate checks and training. If you have any safeguarding concerns, please report these to us by calling:

01275 888 808 - Monday to Friday, 8am - 6pm

01454 615 165 - Out of hours and at weekends

In an emergency, please ring 999.

## 7.5 Incident Report

We take all incidents relating to home to school transport seriously and are committed to investigating them appropriately. Please send all details of the incident to [schooltransport@n-somerset.gov.uk](mailto:schooltransport@n-somerset.gov.uk)

## 7.6 Accident Reporting

In the event of an accident, the operational staff will need to fill out an accident form. The parent/carer will be informed of the accident. If the accident occurs while on the way to school, the operational staff will need to notify the school.

A copy of the form will be provided to both the school and the parent/carer for their signature.

## 8 Complaints

If the parent/ carer is unhappy with the travel service, they have the right submit a complaint.

The service will investigate your complaint and aim to reply within ten working days. You will be told when a reply will take more than ten working days and given a date to expect a reply.

To register a complaint, please do this via the [North Somerset Council Website](#).

## 9 School Travel Assistance Review

If the council refuses a child's home-to-school travel assistance or you believe the travel offer received is not suitable, the parent/ carer has the right to ask for a School Travel Assistance Review (STAR). The STAR process is for parents/ carers who wish to make a challenge in the areas of:

- Travel arrangements offered
- The child's eligibility for travel assistance (where a parent believes the policy has not been applied correctly)
- The distance measurement in relation to statutory walking distances
- The safety of the route to school

*Parents and carers must provide all relevant information and evidence at Stage 1 that may support your STAR. Please note that the final decision will not take into account any information submitted during Stage 2.*

*Additionally, we will only accept information sent from the parent/ carer's email address; we cannot accept emails from third parties.*



To launch a School Travel Assistance Review (STAR), please email the relevant information to [school.travel.appeal@n-somerset.gov.uk](mailto:school.travel.appeal@n-somerset.gov.uk) within twenty working days of receiving the travel offer or refusal. You will be provided with a unique reference number for your case. We kindly request that you keep this document safe and refer to it when emailing for updates. The STAR process consists of two clear stages:

## **9.1 Stage one: Review by Senior Officer**

Once we receive written confirmation of your intent to launch a STAR, including evidence that the policy has not been applied correctly under the following criteria:

- You are not satisfied with the travel arrangements offered to you.
- The school is the nearest suitable school with a place available, or is the transport area school for your home address.
- You believe the walking route exceeds the statutory walking distance.
- You consider the walking route to be unsafe for a child accompanied by an adult.
- Your child has a medical need, or there are other exceptional needs that mean travel assistance is needed. Any medical need would need to be evidenced in writing by a medical practitioner.

All the information will be forwarded to our Senior Officers for their review.

Next, the senior officer will have twenty working days to review the decision and the information provided in relation to the home-to-school travel policy. They will then respond with details regarding whether the decision is approved or refused. This response will provide a thorough explanation of the reasons behind the decision and the factors considered in making it.

## 9.2 Stage Two: School Travel Assistance Review (STAR) Panel

If a parent/ carer is not satisfied with the outcome of stage one of the STAR, an impartial reconsideration of the case can be undertaken through to stage two of the STAR process. A parent/ carer should submit a written notification that they wish to escalate this to Stage Two within twenty working days of receiving the outcome of Stage One.

Within forty working days of receiving the parent/ carer's request to proceed to stage two, an independent transport STAR panel will review the case. The decision of the STAR panel will be sent to the parent/ carer within five working days of the STAR panel hearing.

## 9.3 Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman

If you have completed the STAR process and believe that North Somerset Council has unfairly refused help, made a mistake, or not handled your appeal correctly, you may be able to complain to the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman.

For more information, please visit the [Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman website](#).

## 10 Contacts

The Home to School Transport team are based at the Town Hall offices in Weston super Mare and can be contacted via the following channels:

Telephone: 01934 634 715

E-mail address: [schooltransport@n-somerset.gov.uk](mailto:schooltransport@n-somerset.gov.uk)

## 10.1 Additional useful contacts:

School Admissions Team – 01275 884 078

Sustainable Travel and Road Safety Team – [Sustainable.Travel@n-somerset.gov.uk](mailto:Sustainable.Travel@n-somerset.gov.uk)

National Rail enquiries – <http://www.nationalrail.co.uk/>

First Group (customer services) – UK-Tickets SWW - [Ticketssww@firstbus.co.uk](mailto:Ticketssww@firstbus.co.uk)

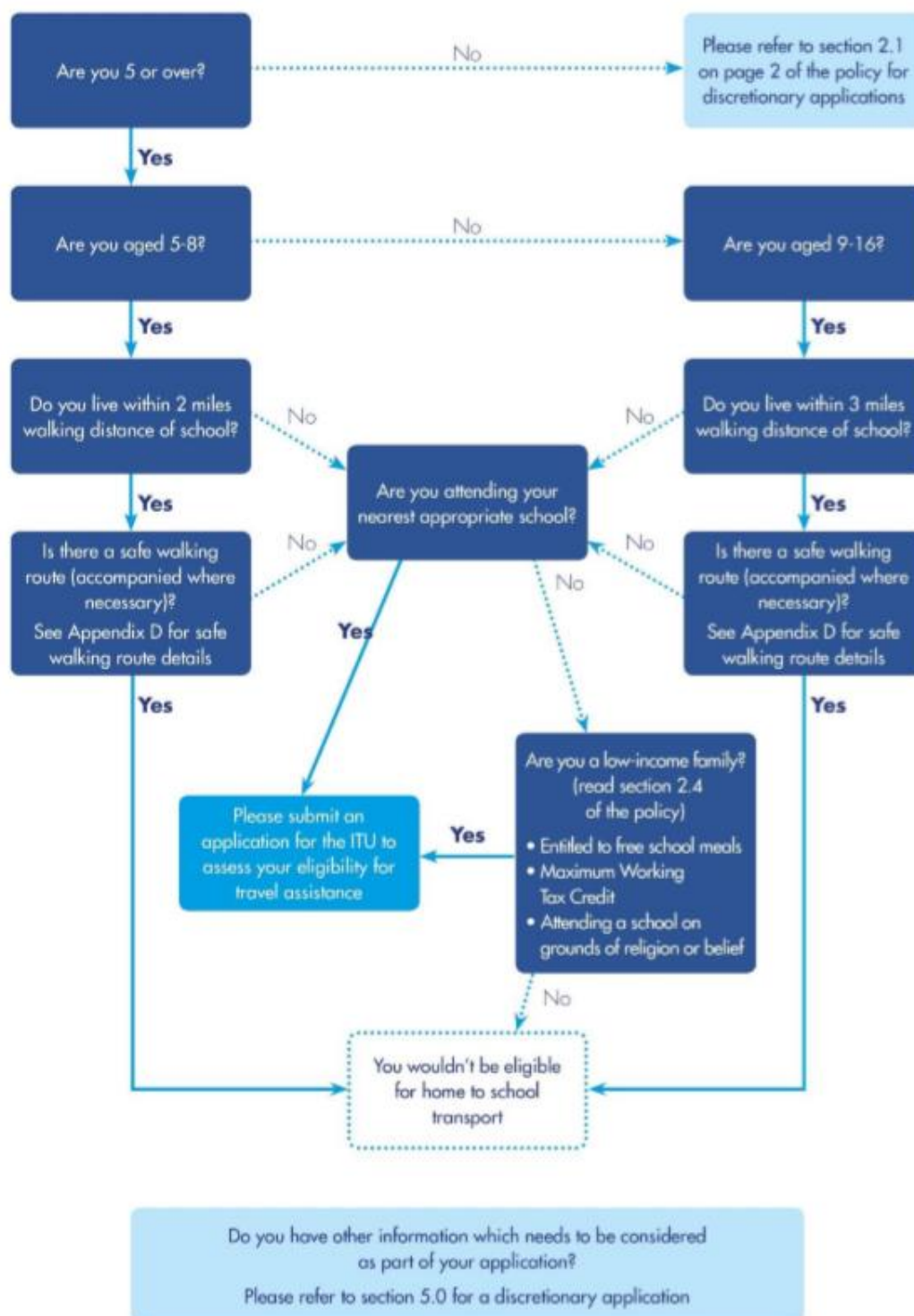
Great Western Railway (customer services) – 0345 7000 125

North Somerset Council's home to school travel assistance policy is based on the statutory guidance produced by the Department for Education published in July 2014.

This policy has been produced working with North Somerset Parents and Carers Working Together, Weston College and Baytree School.

This document will be reviewed annually and published prior to the start of the academic year in September, or in conjunction with a change in National Government Legislation.

## Appendix A



## Appendix B

### North Somerset Council responsibilities

- Deliver home to school transport within the provisions of the relevant legislation and the current Department for Education guidance
- Make home to school transport provision in line with the published local policy and any relevant operating procedures
- Ensure appropriate training and support of passenger assistants and drivers
- Ensure that all drivers and passenger assistants have undergone an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check
- Ensure all transportation is appropriately licenced
- Ensure that all transport provision is safe and fit for purpose
- Carry out regular route checks to assess the safety and suitability of transport arrangements
- Ensure effective joint planning and working between the relevant transport and children's services functions in relation to education of students with special educational needs and disabilities
- Provide a staffed enquiry line between 9am and 5pm weekdays during term time
- Liaison between transport providers and schools
- Plan and commission transport provision for bulk and in year admissions
- Communicate within a timely and appropriate fashion with parents, carers and schools
- Provide suitable and safe transport
- Ensure that staff responsible for planning and managing HTST are appropriately trained
- Remain confidential and professional regarding all students

## Parent Responsibilities

- Ensure their child's attendance at school
- Ensure their child/ren are ready for the school day and are available at their pickup location at least 10 minutes prior to their scheduled time
- Ensure that their child is equipped with necessary medication and equipment
- Ensure the equipment needed is in a clean and safe condition
- Arrange with the school to keep any safety equipment with them during the school day.
- Ensure that their child adheres to the school's behaviour policy
- Ensure that a responsible adult is present to receive the child at the end of the school day
- Inform the driver or passenger assistant (where provided) of any concerns regarding a child's behaviour or safety
- Remain confidential and professional regarding all students
- Communicate within 72hrs in an appropriate fashion with North Somerset Council and the school attended by their child (e.g., change of address etc.)

## Passenger Assistant Responsibilities

- Ensure the safety, care and well-being of children whilst they are on the vehicle and in their care to enable them to arrive in a stress-free state
- Provide front-line liaison with parents and schools
- Hold the journey care plan which contains the additional needs of a student
- Are there to pick up the student from the parent at the start of the day and hand over to the parent at the end of the day
- Can help students boarding and alighting the vehicle

- As a standard, DO NOT administer medication, but provide a safe exchange of medication between the parents and school
- The administration of first aid or medication will only be carried out in an emergency under guidance of a qualified medical professional.
- Report concerns of a child's behaviour or safety on transport
- Remain confidential and professional regarding all students
- Ensure all students take personal belongings, medical equipment etc. with them when departing the vehicle

## **Key Training of Passenger Assistants**

- Induction
- Emergency protocols
- Understanding risk assessments
- Journey care plans
- Safeguarding
- First Aid
- Disability awareness
- Discrimination awareness
- Equalities awareness
- Skills in supporting disability and behaviour
- Managing Communications
- GDPR and data protection

## **Driver Responsibilities**

- Legally responsible for all aspects of:
  - the vehicle

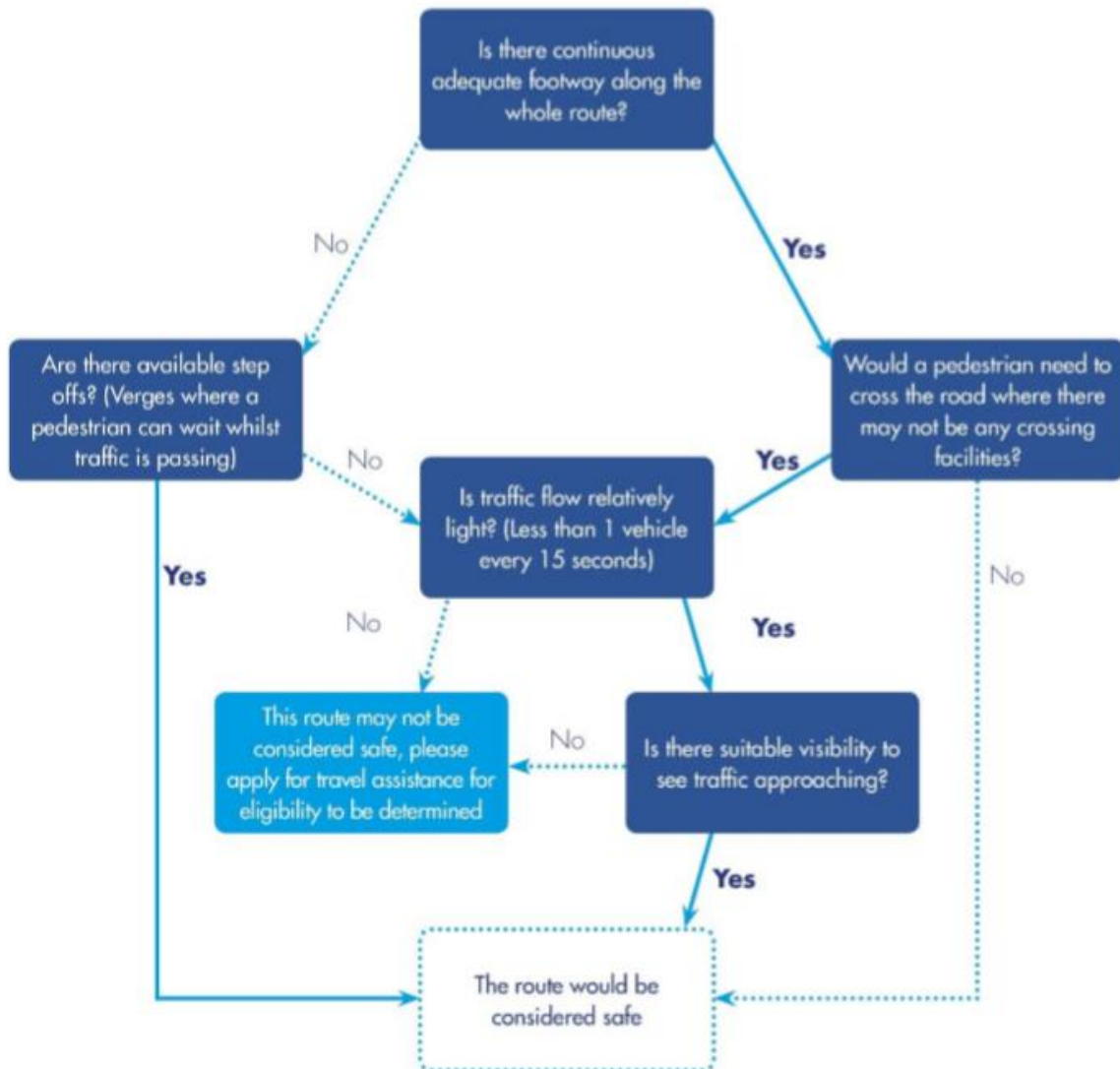
- Passengers
  - Equipment
  - Safety of passengers, pedestrians and all other road users
- Must carry appropriate driving licence and where necessary, driver qualification card (Certificate of Professional Competence)
- Can help students boarding and alighting the vehicle
- Report concerns of a child's behaviour or safety on transport
- Remain confidential and professional regarding all students
- Wear identification badges
- Taxi transport will display valid North Somerset (or other) licencing plates

## **Headteacher responsibilities (delegated where necessary)**

- Have in place a school behaviour policy which is appropriate to all students' journey to and from school including by home to school transport
- Provide appropriate pick up/drop off point(s) within the school site
- Provide appropriate staff to manage the transition from transport to school and vice versa
- Ensure that all relevant staff are briefed on the drop off/pick up arrangements
- Ensure all students take personal belongings, medical equipment etc. with them when entering the vehicle
- Manage concerns of a child's behaviour or safety which may influence transport provision
- Remain confidential and professional regarding all students
- In the absence of a PA on transport, report any concerns of a child's behaviour or safety on transport



## Appendix C



## Glossary

<b>Academic year</b>	Defined in the <a href="#">School Information (England) Regulations 2008</a> as a period commencing with 1st August and ending with the next 31st July.
<b>Compulsory school age</b>	<p>Set out in section 8 of the <a href="#">Education Act 1996</a> and <a href="#">The Education (Start of Compulsory School Age) Order 1998</a>.</p> <p>A child reaches compulsory school age on the prescribed day following their fifth birthday, or on their fifth 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>
<b>Disability</b>	Defined in section 6 of the <a href="#">Equality Act 2010</a> . A person has a disability if they have (a) a physical or mental impairment, and (b) that impairment has a substantial and long-term effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities. A chronic physical or mental health condition may constitute a disability. Not all disabilities are visible.

<b>Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP)</b>	<p>An Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan details the education, health and social care support that is to be provided to a child or young person who has special educational needs or a disability. It is drawn up by the local authority after an EHC needs assessment of the child or young person has determined that an EHC plan is necessary, and after consultation with relevant partner agencies.</p> <p>Home-to-school travel arrangements are not normally considered to be special educational provision. In exceptional cases travel arrangements may be deemed to constitute special educational provision because they fulfil an education or training function. In these circumstances the travel arrangements should be recorded in section F of the EHC plan.</p> <p>Travel costs can also be provided as part of a Personal Budget, where one is agreed and included in the EHC plan as part of the special educational provision. This should be recorded in section J of the plan.</p>
<b>Home</b>	<p>The place where a child is habitually and normally resident. Local authorities should make clear in their school travel policies how they will determine a child's home address for the purposes of assessing their eligibility for travel, including in circumstances where their parents do not live together, and the child spends part of the week with each parent. In these circumstances, there is no expectation that local authorities should provide travel to and from two separate addresses.</p>

<b>Medical need</b>	A health need that has the potential to put a child's safety or wellbeing at risk while travelling to and from school.
<b>Mobility problem</b>	A physical impairment that impacts a child's ability to walk to school.
<b>Parent/ carers</b>	References to parent in this document include birth parents, adoptive parents, foster parents, carers or legal guardians with parental responsibility.
<b>Parental Mileage (PMILE)</b>	<p>A temporary allowance to assist the parents/ carers in transporting their child to and from school, which covers the associated operating costs of their vehicle.</p> <p>This allowance will be paid at the end of each month, contingent upon the submission of a claims form by the parent, which must also be signed by the head teacher.</p>
<b>Passenger Assistant (PA)</b>	This individual is assigned to a child and/ or vehicle based on their needs, providing essential support throughout the child/ren's journey.
<b>Personal Travel Allowance (PTA)</b>	<p>Long term allowance to assist with parents/carers in transporting their child to and from school, which covers the associated operating costs of their vehicle.</p> <p>This allowance is distributed in six termly payments throughout the academic year.</p>

<b>Religion</b>	Section 509AD (3) of the <a href="#">Education Act 1996</a> defines religion as any religion. A reference to religion includes a reference to lack of religion.
<b>Safeguarding</b>	<p>Defined in <a href="#">Keeping Children Safe in Education</a> as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• protecting children from maltreatment</li> <li>• preventing the impairment of their mental and physical health and development</li> <li>• ensuring they grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care</li> <li>• taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.</li> </ul>
<b>School day</b>	<p>Schools are responsible for deciding when their school day will start and end. The expectation is that local authorities will arrange travel for eligible children to enable them to attend for the 'normal' school day.</p> <p>Schools should organise the school day and school week in the best interest of their pupil cohort. They are expected to act reasonably when making changes to their school day or week. It is unacceptable for them to shorten their day or week unless it is a direct action to enhance pupils' education.</p>
<b>Special educational needs (SEN)</b>	Defined in section 20 of the <a href="#">Children and Families Act 2014</a> . A child or young person has special educational needs if he or she has a learning difficulty or disability which calls for special educational provision to be made for him or her.

<b>Taxis/ Private Hire Vehicles</b>	<p>Taxis also known as hackney carriages, black cabs and cabs. May carry up to 8 passengers. May be pre-booked or can be hired immediately by hailing on the street or at a rank.</p> <p>Private Hire Vehicles may carry up to 8 passengers and can only be pre-booked via a licensed private hire vehicle operator.</p>
<b>Walk</b>	<p>In this guidance walk has its literal meaning. A child could not be considered to be able to walk to school if they would need to travel in a wheelchair, but a local authority may decide, for example, that suitable travel arrangements for a child would be an assistant to push them in a wheelchair.</p>
<b>Wheels</b>	<p>Refers to people who use wheelchairs and mobility scooters and may not identify with walking</p>