



Home to School Transport

For academic year 2022/23 onwards

Draft for Public Consultation

Forward

To be composed in liaison with Cllr Nicola Greene and BCP Communications Team.

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Is my child eligible for home to school transport assistance?

Most children and young people living in the BCP Council area are not eligible for home to school transport assistance because they have access to a suitable school within a reasonable distance from their home.

A reasonable distance is legally defined as:

- Up to two miles walking distance from home to school for statutory school age children under eight years old (Years R-3).
- Up to two miles walking distance from home to school for statutory school age children and young people aged eight-16 years old (Years 4-11) and receiving the maximum working tax credit or the child/young person is eligible for free school meals.
- Up to three miles walking distance from home to school for all other statutory school age children and young people aged eight-16 years old (Years 4-11).

There are some exceptions who may be provided home to school transport assistance which are further detailed in this policy.

There are schools near our home, but we want our child to go to a school that is further away. Will we get home to school transport assistance?

No, a family would not normally receive home to school transport assistance.

All children and young people have a right to a place at a publicly funded school but will not normally have a right to a specific publicly funded school. The nearest qualifying publicly funded school is the nearest or catchment school with places available that provides education suitable for the age, ability and aptitude of the child/young person, and any special educational needs or disability the child/young person may have.

This means that when seeking transport assistance, a qualifying school is typically the nearest school or the catchment school with vacancies.

For families seeking transport assistance to attend their nearest faith secondary school, they will need to qualify under low income criteria in addition to providing evidence of their religious reasons. Further information can be found later in this policy.

Who is eligible for home to school transport assistance?

Eligible children and young people who are of statutory school age, who attend a qualifying school, and:

- live beyond the statutory walking distance
- cannot walk to school because of their special educational needs, disability or mobility difficulties
- are on a route that is within the statutory walking distance (where a child/young person is accompanied by an adult as necessary) that is considered to be unsafe
- receive free school meals, or whose parents/carers receive the maximum working tax credit. Normally assistance will only be provided if the family live beyond the statutory walking distance.

Secondary aged children and young people receiving free school meals or whose parents/carers receive the maximum working tax credit

Where families are entitled to free school meals or receive the maximum working tax credit, transport assistance will be provided to a school between two and six miles from home if the child/young person is aged between 11-16 years old and there are not three or more suitable nearer schools.

What is a qualifying school?

Qualifying mainstream schools are publicly funded maintained, community, voluntary community, voluntary aided, foundation, trust, academy, studio, university technical colleges and free schools, regardless of whether they are within the BCP Council conurbation.

Qualifying schools for children and young people with an Education, Health and Care Plan

The SEN and Disability Code of Practice sets out the considerations for a child with an EHCP.

- If the parents' preferred school is further away from the child's home than another school that can meet the child's special educational needs then BCP Council can name the nearer school if that would be compatible with the efficient use of resources. Alternatively, BCP Council can name the parents'

preferred school with the condition that the parents agree to pay all or part of the transport costs.

- Where BCP Council names a residential placement at some distance from the parents' home, transport or travel assistance (such as reimbursement of public transport costs, petrol costs or provision of a travel pass) will be provided.
- In exceptional cases where a child or young person has particular transport needs, this will be set out in their EHCP.

How do I apply for transport assistance?

You can apply online or request a paper application form. To ensure your application is considered fully, make sure you include relevant additional information to support it.

What will happen to my application?

Your application will be carefully considered, including making checks on distances, school vacancies and, where appropriate, speaking to other professionals (for example, council tax, social care, SEND team and the NHS).

You will normally receive an outcome within three weeks of receipt of your application. Certain times of the year (the start and end of the academic year in particular) are very busy which may cause delays.

Can I appeal a decision to refuse transport assistance?

Yes. Further information can be found later in this policy.

Late application for a school place

If you apply after the national closing date for a reception, junior or secondary school place, there may not be enough time for us to process your transport application ready for the new academic year.

If parents/carers do not apply for a place at their nearest suitable school or choose a place at a school which is not the nearest suitable school, the child may not be eligible for free travel assistance. Transport assistance applications will be considered taking into account the circumstances of the individual case.

We have a duty to offer an alternative school place if we cannot offer a preferred, catchment or nearest school. We will not provide transport to the alternative school if there is a closer school in a neighbouring local authority which is under the qualifying distance. In this case we will inform parents/carers of the space/s available in closer neighbouring school(s).

Moving to a new home and transport assistance

It is important to check the availability of school places before moving to a new home because there are no guarantees places will be available at the new catchment or nearest school. If you move to new accommodation and want your child/young person to remain at their current school, we normally will expect you to be responsible for making your own transport arrangements.

Transport support provided on exceptional grounds will normally stop if a family move to an area served by a school with places available in the relevant year group. We will not normally provide transport support for children and young people who have been displaced from their home because of family related issues (for example, family disagreements).

If a family moves and does not inform us, they may be liable to pay back transport assistance costs.

Temporary housing

Occasionally, families need to move from their established home address against their will to alternative accommodation on a temporary basis. We may consider transport support to a child/young person's existing school for a maximum period of two school terms when a family has had to be temporarily re-housed by BCP Council. If there are delays in securing permanent accommodation that are not the fault of the family, transport support may be extended. This will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Our agreement to transport support will depend on:

- the location of the temporary housing
- the age/distance criteria
- the basis of the original application (i.e. was the place secured using in area or parental preference grounds?)
- satisfactory reasons for the loss of the registered accommodation.

We will not provide transport support to those families whose main residence is in another local authority's area but who need to move to a BCP Council location on a temporary basis.

We are not able to provide transport support to families who are moved to temporary accommodation in another local authority area. If BCP Council social care team move a family to temporary accommodation outside the area, parents/carers should approach social care to discuss support for transport assistance in the interim.

Transport support when changing school for other reasons

We will not approve applications for transport support following a parent/carer's decision to change schools (even if the decision is supported/encouraged by the existing or receiving school) unless:

- the school they transfer to is the catchment/nearest school and the minimum distance criteria is met; and/or
- all avenues of support at the current school have been pursued and
- the move is supported by a relevant BCP Council manager(s) (e.g. Inclusion manager, SEND manager, Virtual School Headteacher).

Transport support for year 10 and year 11

If you choose to move to new accommodation when your child/young person is in year 10 or year 11, we will not normally provide transport support. We expect families to consider the location and distance of their child/young person's school place when moving.

If your circumstances change for other reasons and your child/young person is in year 11, please contact us to discuss. In most cases, we will advise families to submit an appeal request.

Transport support for children and young people with special educational needs, disability (SEND) and medical needs

Some children and young people may be eligible for travel assistance even if they do not qualify on the distance criteria because they're unable to walk to school accompanied or, in some circumstances, unaccompanied.

To qualify for travel assistance for SEND or medical needs, we will always need supporting evidence through a professional assessment (this may be an EHC Plan). We will also take family circumstances into account, but an employment commitment is not in itself a reason to approve transport support.

We may provide additional assistance when a child/young person has a medical need or disability that would prevent them from making the usual type of

accompanied journey made by other children and young people of their age. The conditions for this assistance may include:

- long-term severely restricted mobility, for example, circumstances that mean you need to use significant physical aids every day – such as a wheelchair.
- a long-term medical condition resulting in severely restricted mobility due to pain and/or extreme tiredness, for example, juvenile arthritis.
- a long-term medical condition resulting in restrictive mobility leading to serious health and safety risks, for example, epilepsy or life-threatening heart defects.
- a sensory impairment resulting in severely restricted mobility, for example, where a child/young person is severely visually impaired.
- a child/young person has a disability leading to significant social, and/or emotional immaturity in comparison with other children and young people of their age. This may mean a child/young person who is extremely vulnerable in social settings, for example, a child/young person with ASD who has very little awareness of personal danger.
- a child/young person with severe learning difficulties who has an inability to manage the complexity of the process of walking to school safely or demonstrates constant challenging behaviour suggesting that the child/young person cannot make an accompanied journey.

All professional assessments must be in the form of a written statement from a relevant (normally medical) professional who is treating the child/young person. The documentation provided must be recent (within last 12 months) and provide clear and detailed reasons why transport assistance is necessary. An EHC Plan may be submitted but additional evidence may also be required as having an EHC Plan does not automatically provide transport assistance entitlement.

Transport assistance is provided for the normal start and finish times of the school day and only to the school. We would need professional advice and evidence to provide specific transport assistance to suit a reduced or individualised timetable.

Siblings of children who have transport because of SEND or a medical need

There is no guarantee that siblings of a child/young person with transport assistance provided will also be eligible. All applications are assessed individually.

Transport support and exceptional circumstances

We may consider transport support where a temporary, part-time timetable is agreed due to medical needs or a reintegration programme. We would need evidence and

the views of relevant professionals to support these cases (e.g. the school, local authority officer).

There may be other exceptions to the general criteria set out in this policy and we will consider these on a case-by-case basis.

Transport support provided on religion or belief grounds: secondary year 7 to year 11 (aged 11 to 16)

Your child/young person is eligible for free transport to the nearest denominational secondary school if you receive the maximum working tax credit, or your child/young person is eligible for free school meals and the distance to the nearest denominational secondary school is between two miles shortest available walking route and 15 miles shortest available driven route.

You will need to provide evidence of any religion or belief.

Examples of acceptable evidence are:

- a baptismal certificate
- a statement of atheism
- a statement of adherence to a particular faith
- a letter of support from a priest or equivalent religious leader stating that the child/young person belongs to a particular congregation
- a completed Supplementary Information Form for the school used as part of the school application.

We may check this evidence with your child/young person's school, your church or other appropriate agencies.

Children in care

Admission authorities are required to give children in care (CiC) the highest priority and agree which school best meets the child/young person's needs and act in the best interests of the child/young person. In accordance with the normal point of entry admission allocations process for reception, year 3, year 5 and year 7, transport eligibility arrangements for CiC will be the same as for all other children and young people.

We will consider providing transport support for in year applications using the following principles:

- successful applications for catchment/nearest/parental preference schools will reflect the arrangements that apply to all other children and young people.

- where a school admits a child in care to BCP Council on the recommendation of the BCP Council CiC Virtual School (subject to the age/distance criteria) irrespective of the location of and space availability at other schools.

where remaining at their current local school placement has been recommended by the BCP Council CiC Virtual School irrespective of the location of and space availability at other schools.

In Year Fair Access

BCP Council's in year fair access protocol ensures school placement allocation for children and young people who meet the protocol and are considered hard to place. CiC and children and young people with EHCPs are not included in the protocol.

We will consider transport support for applications considered under BCP Council's in year fair access protocol following these principles:

- successful applications for catchment/nearest/parental preference schools will reflect the arrangements that apply to all other children and young people.
- where a place is allocated by the panel for an alternative to the applicants preferred/catchment/nearest school, transport support may be provided (subject to the age/distance criteria) irrespective of the location of and space availability at other schools.

Transport support for out of school activities and work experience

We will normally only provide transport support to and from the allocated school at the beginning and end of the school day only. You are normally responsible for supplying transport for your child/young person when they are:

- involved in work experience programmes
- attending before school activities such as breakfast clubs
- attending after school activities, such as sports clubs.

Childcare arrangements

We normally only provide transport support to and from your child/young person's school at the beginning and end of the school day to a nominated stop relevant to the home address.

Examples of when we will not provide transport assistance

We will not normally provide transport support (defined as transport which is provided, or commissioned by us, such as taxis and minibuses) for these journeys (apart from in exceptional circumstances):

- journeys to and from breakfast or after school clubs
- trips and journeys during the school day which are in the curriculum
- to facilitate part time timetables
- to or from a venue that is not your normal home address, for example the address of a childcare provider or a short break placement
- if your child/young person is unwell and needs to be collected from school during the school day
- if your child/young person is excluded during the school day
- medical appointments or other approved activities during the school day or affect the start or end of the school day
- if a child/young person has missed the contracted transport
- transitional/integration placements in schools/colleges
- attendance at work experience programmes
- to/from childcare addresses where they are not on an established route
- to childcare arrangements where they are not on recognised transport routes
- if a child/young person is withdrawn from school by their family and placed in an alternative education setting
- other family members travelling in the same direction
- to support working arrangements for parents/carers and/or children and young people
- where parents/carers of children and young people receive the higher mobility component (HRMC) of the Disability Living Allowance (DLA). This is the gateway to the Motability Scheme that supplies vehicles, adapted or not, in return for the DLA, usually on contract hire terms. If a child/young person is the HRMC recipient and the family obtains a vehicle through the Motability scheme, then the vehicle is expected to be used for the benefit of the disabled child/young person and we will offer contributions to fuel, wear and tear to allow the family to use that vehicle to take their child/young person to and from school. This will be part of a discussion with the parent/carer around travel assistance and will include options for a Personal Travel Budget (PTB).

Modes of transport

BCP Council will decide the most appropriate means of supporting children and young people to travel to and from school linked to our aim of promoting independence, while ensuring cost efficiency.

We consider the following types of travel assistance provided using:

- issue of a travel pass for use on bus and train networks, supported by independent travel training, if needed. If you and/or your child/young person are already in receipt of concessionary travel pass(es), we may ask you to make use of your existing pass instead of providing a new one.
- Personal Travel Budgets (PTB): these are only applicable to children and young people with an EHC Plan. As parents/carers, you can use PTB in any reasonable way to get your child/young person to school
- minibus
- taxi
- fuel, wear and tear contribution, if it is shown to be a cost-effective solution. Families should be prepared to use their own vehicle where there are no suitable or appropriate alternative arrangements in place. The 2022-23 rate is 45p per mile (new rate for all BCP Council residents).

While we understand the importance of maintaining routine and continuity for children and young people, we cannot guarantee that your child/young person will have the same driver for the entire time they receive transport assistance.

Cost

Where a child/young person is eligible for transport assistance then we will meet those requirements. We will always offer the most cost-effective solution on a case-by-case basis, bearing all factors in mind. We will not authorise alternative transport provision if you (as the parent/carer of an eligible child/young person) reject the type of transport support we are offering.

BCP Council or their contracted operator is responsible for the assessment and provision of transport support considering best use of resources. We will not normally contribute the costs of the approved transport provision to a proposed alternative.

Back-dated payments to families who organise alternative transport arrangements whilst awaiting eligibility assessment will not normally be paid by BCP Council. If you are looking at alternative options whilst awaiting assessment, please contact us to discuss.

You will have to pay a charge of £15 if you lose your contract vehicle bus pass. This is to cover administration for the replacement. We review this charge regularly. This charge may be different if your pass is provided directly by the bus company charges may differ.

Transport support clarification points

It is your responsibility to find information about schools and transport provision and/or arrangements. Lack of awareness is not a reason for us to provide transport support.

A school place can only be based on one address; the home address will normally be identified by whoever receives Child Benefit for the child/young person. If a child/young person has split residency between two or more parents/carers, we will provide transport support from the nominated home address, subject to meeting the criteria for transport support to be provided as identified above.

Where this is unclear, disputed, Child Benefit is not received, or care is split equally and there is no agreement between the parents/carers, we will consider the application made by the parent/carer at the address identified on the child/young person's registered general practitioner (GP) record.

Measurement of routes

We consider all transport assistance routes measured from our geographical information system (GIS). We will not consider measurements from other systems outside our own.

The system follows the shortest, safe and practicable walking route. We assess this using appropriate:

- roads
- pavements
- footpaths
- bridleways.

We measure from an appropriate point from the home to the nearest approved access to the school. The GIS maps follows information provided by Ordnance Survey. We can give you a map showing the measured route if you request it.

Transport assistance for 16-to-18-year-olds

Students will qualify for transport assistance if they are starting a new course and are aged between 16-18 and if they meet either all of criteria one or all of criteria two.

Criteria one:

- are a BCP Council resident
- studying a full-time course (a minimum of three full days or 16 hours per week)

- are aged between 16-18 at the beginning of the academic year in which they are applying. In some circumstances it may be possible to support students up to the age of 25 if they are continuing an existing course of study
- have a current EHCP
- attending the nearest suitable school or college offering a course that is compatible with their employment or educational objectives. It will be for the local authority to decide if a course is compatible.

Criteria two:

- are a BCP Council resident
- studying a full-time course (a minimum of three full days or 16 hours per week)
- are aged between 16-18 at the beginning of the academic year in which they are applying. In some circumstances it may be possible to support students up to the age of 25 if they are continuing an existing course of study
- has previously had an EHCP
- has an ongoing significant disability or medical condition. The application must be supported by appropriate recent (dated within the last two years) documentary evidence, e.g. a letter from a GP, specialist or consultant detailing the nature of the condition and how it impacts on travel
- attending the nearest suitable school or college offering a course that is compatible with their employment or educational objectives. It will be for the local authority to decide if a course is compatible.

Eligible students or their families are asked to contribute towards the cost of their transport. For the 2022/23 academic year this is £525 per annum which can be paid in three instalments if preferred.

This contribution can be waived for families on a low income, that is, meeting the eligibility criteria for pupil premium or receiving working tax credit at the maximum level.

16-19 Bursary Fund

If you are 16 to 19 years old, you can apply to your place of study for a bursary through the [16-19 Bursary Fund](#) if one of the following applies:

- you are in or recently left local authority care
- you get Income Support or Universal Credit in your name
- you are disabled and get both Employment and Support Allowance and either Disability Living Allowance or Personal Independence Payment in your name.

You can contact your school or college for more details.

If you are in receipt of Disability Living Allowance, there may be an element within your allowance that relates to transport already.

If you have a disability you may be entitled to a [Connect Pass](#) for off-peak travel on local bus services.

Schools, colleges, and training providers may also be able to award bursaries to young people on a discretionary basis. Please contact your school or college for further information.

Transport assistance for 19-to-25-year-olds

For students aged between 19 and 25 assistance with transport may be extended if they meet all the following criteria:

- are a BCP Council resident
- are aged between 19 and 25 at the beginning of the academic year
- have a current EHC Plan
- attend the nearest school or college offering an appropriate course, that is, one that enables the student to meet his or her employment objectives or is designed to meet the student's special educational needs. This will be determined by the local authority
- studying a full-time course (a minimum of three full days or 16 hours per week).

Transport appeals

You have the right of appeal against the transport assistance decision under the following grounds:

- the transport arrangements offered
- your child/young person's eligibility
- the distance measurement in relation to statutory walking distances
- the safety of the route.

Stage one of the appeal process

Applicants can submit a [Transport Appeal form](#) with full supporting evidence. You need to submit this within 20 days of receiving the letter advising you that your child/young person is not eligible to school transport assistance.

How your stage one appeal will be considered

A senior officer will evaluate the category your appeal will be considered using the following categories:

- Appeals for children and young people with EHCPs
- Appeals regarding the distance measurement or safety of the route
- All other appeals

Regardless of the category for appeal, checks will be made by officers that your application was correctly considered using this policy.

If your appeal meets more than one category, it will be considered using the relevant categories.

Appeals for children and young people with education, health and care plans

Any appeal for a child/young person with an EHCP will be passed to the relevant senior officer(s) within the SEND team to ensure that the needs of your child/young person are assessed in line with their plan. If required, it will then be forwarded to the school transport appeal review (STAR) panel.

Appeals regarding the distance measurement or safety of the route

If your appeal is regarding the distance measurement or safety of the route, it will be passed to a senior officer who can review it using BCP Council's geographical information system (GIS) and/or [Road Safety GB walked routes to school guidelines](#).

All other appeals

If you are appealing on other grounds, your appeal will be referred to the school transport appeal review (STAR) panel.

School transport appeal review (STAR) panel

Cases will be reviewed by the STAR panel, which usually meets on a fortnightly basis and consists of three senior officers from Children's Services.

Outcome of your stage one appeal

We will notify the family or young person in writing within 20 days of the result of the appeal review. If you are still not satisfied with the outcome of this review you have 20 days to request that your appeal moves to stage two of the appeal process. Stage two is where the evidence is reviewed by the BCP Council school transport appeal committee.

Stage two of the appeal process

If you request a further appeal following the outcome of your stage one appeal, you will need to complete and submit an appeal form if you have not already done so. When the completed form is received, it will be submitted to the BCP Council school transport appeal committee with the local authority's statement providing the reasons for the decision, the original application and other supporting documents.

The school transport appeal committee comprises of three BCP councillors.

The applicant can attend to present the case and may be accompanied at the hearing. The committee's decisions are binding on all parties (but do not necessarily set precedence) and the clerk to the panel will inform you of the outcome. If you feel there has been an error in the way the committee made its decision, you may make a complaint to the Local Government Ombudsman.

Transport appeals will only be heard for BCP Council residents. If you live in a neighbouring authority you will need to appeal to your home authority. Only one transport appeal for the same journey is permitted in each academic year.

Safety of the route between home and school

We take the criteria ruling all road safety assessments from national guidance. We will disregard a route if it is deemed unsafe for a child/young person to walk accompanied by an adult. If you disagree with the safety of a route, you can request for it to be reviewed and/or request an appeal.

Journey times

We follow the government guidance recommending maximum journey times wherever possible:

- the recommended maximum each way length of journey for a child of primary school age is 45 minutes

- the recommended maximum each way length of journey for a child/young person of secondary school age is 75 minutes.

The recommended maximum journey times are from 'gate to gate' for travelling to and from school. 'Gate to gate' means where the property meets public paths and roads. For those families living on islands in Poole Harbour, this will be an appropriate point on the mainland.

Pick-up and drop-off points

We make every effort for children and young people to be collected and dropped at a point close to their home. Some pupils may have to walk a reasonable distance to and from their home/school to meet the vehicle.

Parents/carers and children/young people are responsible for being at the pick-up point in good time to access the service.

Parents/carers are responsible for their child/young person's safety in getting to and from the notified pick up/drop off points (including awaiting or leaving transport) or to and from the vehicle if they are picked up at home. Younger children should be accompanied, and parents/carers must make sure that they carry their bus passes (if applicable).

Accompanied children and young people

We may make bus passes available for adults who wish to accompany their children to and from school on local public bus services. This applies to primary-aged children only (up to the end of year 6).

We do not normally provide bus passes for adults who want to accompany secondary age children and young people to school.

We normally restrict bus passes for parents/carers accompanying primary-aged children (up to end of year 6) to home to school return journeys on school days only, term time only.

Passenger assistants

We do not normally provide passenger assistants on transport unless there are exceptional circumstances for doing so. We may provide a passenger assistant if a child/young person has a significant disability, medical or special educational need.

We will consider written information from the school, the SEND team and appropriate health professionals when making decisions to provide passenger assistance.

Parents/carers are responsible for getting their own child/young person on and off the vehicle at the pick-up/drop-off points, not the passenger assistant.

Parents/carers cannot accompany their child/young person in shared vehicles to ensure the safeguarding needs of all children and young people in the transport are met.

Medication

We would not normally be responsible for assisting with medication on a vehicle. If there are occasions when your child/young person may need medication administered due to an underlying health condition, you need to contact us to provide further information. Where appropriate, we will obtain guidance and training from appropriate medical professionals.

Personal luggage

It may not be possible to carry large amounts of personal luggage for individuals. This depends on the capacity of the vehicle, type of luggage and whether it can be secured on the vehicle. The driver reserves the right to refuse to carry excessive luggage or personal belongings.

Seatbelts

Your child/young person must wear a seatbelt if they are fitted in the vehicle. We could withdraw transport assistance if your child/young person continues to travel without using a seatbelt.

Behaviour

Schools have a key role in supporting how children and young people behave when travelling to and from school on transport we have arranged and organised.

The school should initially deal with unacceptable behaviour by children and young people when travelling as part of their discipline policy.

We will work with schools, other professionals, and families to support appropriate behaviour on vehicles.

Families and schools are expected to support any steps necessary to ensure appropriate behaviour on provided transport. Behaviour that endangers others will not be tolerated. Parents/carers may be responsible for the cost of any damage to the vehicle or property of other passengers caused by their child/young person.

Incidents of serious or persistent inappropriate behaviour can lead to us suspending transport support for your child/young person. We will inform parents/carers in writing of any such incidents, outlining any action needed. In such cases it will be the responsibility of parents/carers to make sure their child/young person attends school.

Advice for children and young people

All children and young people should behave in a way that is respectful of other transport users. They must not:

- play at the vehicle's stop
- go near the vehicle's wheels
- go near the vehicle before it stops
- cross the road in front of the vehicle
- eat or drink on the vehicle
- distract the driver.

Reapplying for transport

You will need to reapply annually.

Keeping in touch

If your circumstances change, please contact us as soon as possible. Changes to your child/young person's address, medical, disability or EHCP may affect their eligibility for transport assistance, and we will discuss this with you as soon as we are aware of any changes.

Transport support decisions made in error

If we approve an application for transport support in error, we will withdraw the transport support. We will provide transport support up to the next school holiday where appropriate to support you to make alternative arrangements.

Fraudulent or intentionally misleading applications

Applying for transport assistance must be a fair and transparent process for everyone. It is important that parents/carers provide the correct information on their form.

By applying, parents/carers declare that the information on the form is correct.

If you think a family is making a fraudulent or misleading application, please contact BCP Council. You do not have to provide your personal details (if you wish, you can remain anonymous). We will follow up all allegations of potentially fraudulent applications.

We can withdraw transport assistance should an application or other information provided be found to be fraudulent or misleading, even if transport assistance has already been provided.

BCP Council carries out spot checks on applications and addresses. We can ask applicants to provide additional evidence to verify addresses and/or other details provided. Checks are made with other council departments and with other local authorities for the purposes of verification of details including residence.

Applications can also be referred to the council's audit team for further investigation. Investigations may include arranging for credit reference checks to be undertaken.

These processes are in place to ensure fairness and transparency for all families living within the BCP Council area.

Complaints

A complaint is a way to let us know if you are not happy with some aspect of our service.

First, please contact the [School Admissions Team](#). We may be able to resolve your concern quickly and avoid you having to go through the formal complaints process. It's helpful if you explain why you are unhappy and what you think should be done to resolve the problem. We'll investigate and try to put things right where we can.

How we deal with complaints

We:

- let you know we have received your complaint within three working days

- let you know who will be handling your complaint and make sure we understand what your complaint is about
- find out what you want to happen to put things right
- investigate and respond to you within 20 working days
- let you know if we need more time to investigate your complaint and when we hope to provide a final response
- apologise if we find we have failed to provide the level of service you should expect and look to put things right
- welcome your view of what needs to be done to resolve any problem
- arrange for a review of your complaint if you remain unhappy and aim to respond to you within 15 working days.

Generally, we do not investigate complaints about something you knew about more than 12 months before contacting us for the first time. More information is available within our complaints handling guide.

If things are still not right

You can refer your complaint to the [local government and social care ombudsman](#) (LGSCO) who will carry out an independent review.

Please note the LGSCO will not normally accept a complaint which has not been considered under a council's complaint processes first.

To make a complaint to the ombudsman:

- Go to www.lgo.org.uk
- Call 0300 061 0614
- Text phone users using next generation text can text call back to 0762 481 1595.

Contact us

School admissions

01202 127963

school.admissions@bcpcouncil.gov.uk

SEND statutory services team

01202 128880

SENDbso@bcpcouncil.gov.uk

