

# Thurrock Council

## Home to school transport – discretionary award guidance notes and application form

### General information

If parents or carers do not meet the legal criteria for home to school transport, we will consider a discretionary award only where circumstances are entirely exceptional.

Parents or carers must give a statement of their circumstances, which must show why – through no fault of their own – they cannot fulfil their responsibility to transport, fund or arrange alternative transport for their child/children. We will decide whether transport is necessary to enable the child to get to school.

We will consider whether the circumstances could have reasonably been foreseen by the parent or carer. For example, a medical condition may not be foreseeable, but where a parent or carer chose a school before confirming that transport was available, the situation would be considered foreseeable.

Situations that might be considered for a discretionary award include, but are not limited to:

- medical condition of a child
- medical condition of a parent
- family living in temporary accommodation and on the housing list
- mother or father moved into a refuge
- child is looked after or the subject of a child protection plan
- bullying
- complex social circumstances experienced by the family
- sudden and traumatic change of family circumstances outside the family's control
- family unable to make sure their child gets to school safely, for reasons outside their control

**Situations unlikely to be considered for a discretionary award** include, but are not limited to:

- work or study means the parent cannot take their child to school or a pick-up point
- parents' separation or divorce results in separate living arrangements

### How we consider cases

We consider each case individually on its own merit. Discretionary home to school transport will be provided up to a maximum of one academic year, based on the period of time covered by the evidence provided. We review arrangements at the end of each term. Transport will be allocated specifically for the exceptional circumstance and will be withdrawn when the need ceases.

New starters must apply for transport within one month of their admission – applications outside of this period will be considered at our discretion

## When completing your application:

- the evidence you provide **must** be dated within the last 6 weeks
- the types of situation that might be considered to be exceptional are:
  - sudden and traumatic change of family circumstances outside the family's control
  - child is the subject of a child protection plan
  - for reasons outside the family's control they are unable to make sure their child gets to school safely
- the situations that would be unlikely to be considered exceptional are:
  - work or study commitments mean the parent cannot take their child to school or a pick-up point
  - family breakdown and fragmentation
- applications for discretionary transport must be made in writing with supporting evidence – you must demonstrate clearly that:
  - you are not able to transport your child yourself logistically
  - you are not able to transport your child yourself financially
  - there are strong educational reasons to keep your child at their current school rather than move to a more local school where they could walk to school or be entitled to transport within the policy
- before we consider the application, we will normally need the application to be supported by either or both of the following depending on the circumstance:
  - written evidence from a suitably qualified specialist stating that the child is unable to walk to school
  - a written endorsement of the exceptional circumstances from a senior officer of the council, such as an education welfare officer or principal social worker
- in considering a discretionary award, the general expectations are that:
  - if one parent cannot take the pupil to school the other parent, another relative or a friend will assist
  - the distance criteria will usually still apply
  - the family's financial circumstances significantly limit their ability to find their own solution
- the phrase "exceptional circumstances" refers primarily to the circumstances of the pupil rather than those of the parent – illness or disability of the parents may be taken into account, but parental work commitments or having children in more than one school is not deemed "exceptional"
- if your child has an education, health and care (EHC) plan and you elect to send them to a school further away than their nearest appropriate school as identified using statutory assessment guidelines, you will be asked to sign a transport disclaimer and be deemed to have taken responsibility for getting your child to and from school, meaning we cannot assist you – to discuss this further please contact your appropriate SEN coordinator
- we will need evidence of any qualifying benefit you receive – the following benefits will be considered:
  - Income Support
  - Employment and Support Allowance – income-related
  - Child Tax Credit – income under £16,190
  - Guaranteed Pension Credit
  - Jobseeker's Allowance – income-based
  - maximum level of Working Tax Credit
  - Universal Credit – your earned income must be less than £7,400 per year
  - Support under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999

## Examples of exceptional circumstances and evidence

The table below lists some of the circumstances that may be considered for a discretionary award, along with examples of the evidence needed to support an application. Other evidence may be accepted. Whilst a pupil may fall within a category, it does not guarantee a successful application.

This list is for guidance only – each case will be decided individually on its merit.

Circumstances	Evidence
<p><b>1. Medical condition of the child</b></p> <p>If a child cannot use their usual mode of transport to get to and from school owing to a medical condition, we may consider transport for a short period of time.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Full statement of circumstances, including why a parent, carer or friends or family cannot support the child.</li> <li>• Clear medical evidence from a suitably qualified specialist dealing with the child's case must be included in the medical assessment form. This must explain their medical condition and why it prevents your child from getting to and from school, accompanied as necessary. The length of time transport is required will need to be outlined in your evidence.</li> <li>• Income evidence must be provided.</li> </ul>
<p><b>2. Medical condition of parent</b></p> <p>If a parent/carer cannot get their child to school due to an unforeseen medical condition, then transport may be considered.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Detailed medical evidence from a suitably qualified specialist dealing with the parent or carer's case which should explain why the parent is unable to walk or drive their child to and from school and the length of time this will be the case. This evidence must be included in the medical assessment form.</li> <li>• Income evidence must be provided.</li> </ul>
<p><b>3. Family moved into temporary accommodation</b></p> <p>Where a family has been placed into temporary accommodation and Thurrock Council's duty to re-house is confirmed by our Housing service, we will consider providing transport.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evidence from the council or housing association stating that the family have been made unintentionally homeless and are in temporary accommodation awaiting permanent housing. The letter must outline the temporary address and the approximate timeframe before the family is to be housed permanently.</li> <li>• Income evidence must be provided.</li> </ul>
<p><b>4. Mother or father moved to a refuge</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Written evidence from the refuge stating that the parent and children are currently residing with them and if possible a timescale estimating the length of time the family will reside at the refuge.</li> <li>• Income evidence must be provided.</li> </ul>
<p><b>5. Looked-after child</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In the first instance you should contact your social worker.</li> </ul>

Circumstances	Evidence
<p><b>6. Exceptional social circumstances and complex needs</b></p> <p>We support schools in dealing with the complex social issues that a child and their family may experience. These circumstances can include incidents of bullying or difficulties arising from the child or the parents' social experiences that can lead them to needing support with transport to school.</p> <p>In the case of children experiencing bullying, the school should be given ample opportunity to resolve bullying issues before we consider providing transport to an alternative school.</p> <p>Where a parent chooses to move their child following a recommendation from the existing school – and evidence is provided – we would consider transport to the next nearest school with space or for children with special educational needs, the next nearest appropriate school to the home address as identified by Statutory Assessment Service.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evidence provided would need to state that the current school has fully recommended that the child move to an alternative school.</li> <li>• Evidence that the child is being admitted to the nearest school with a space available at the time of application and admission.</li> <li>• Other circumstances may be considered on a case by case basis provided full supporting evidence is submitted at the time of the application. These may include complex social situations experienced by the child and their family which led to the family seeking a school placement outside of their usual catchment area. Such moves are undertaken to assist the family to avoid negative experiences or relationships.</li> </ul>

## How we will process your application

Completed applications with sufficient evidence will be assessed within 10 working days. Cases will only be considered against our Home to School Travel and Transport policy.

## Appeals

We have adopted the appeal process recommended within the government's Department for Education home to school travel and transport guidance – go to:

[www.gov.uk/government/publications/home-to-school-travel-and-transport-guidance](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/home-to-school-travel-and-transport-guidance)

## If you do not meet the discretionary award criteria

If we decide that circumstances do not qualify a child for school transport, it remains the parent's or carer's responsibility to make sure the child attends school. Parents or carers must arrange transport or may consider transferring the child to the nearest school with a place available.

# Thurrock Council

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### Pupil details

To be considered, the pupils must be of statutory school age and have their principle and permanent home address within Thurrock.

Any support provided will cease in the event of the pupil moving out of the borough.

Child 1	
Surname	
First name	
Date of birth	
Gender	<input type="checkbox"/> Female <input type="checkbox"/> Male <input type="checkbox"/> Other:
Which school do they attend?	
Does the child have an Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
If 'Yes', do you give permission for us to obtain a copy of the EHC plan from our Special Education Needs service?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Child 2	
Surname	
First name	
Date of birth	
Gender	<input type="checkbox"/> Female <input type="checkbox"/> Male <input type="checkbox"/> Other:
Which school do they attend?	
Does the child have an Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
If 'Yes', do you give permission for us to obtain a copy of the EHC plan from our Special Education Needs service?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Child 3	
Surname	
First name	
Date of birth	
Gender	<input type="checkbox"/> Female <input type="checkbox"/> Male <input type="checkbox"/> Other:
Which school do they attend?	
Does the child have an Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
If 'Yes', do you give permission for us to obtain a copy of the EHC plan from our Special Education Needs service?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No

**Child 4**

Surname			
First name			
Date of birth			
Gender	<input type="checkbox"/> Female	<input type="checkbox"/> Male	<input type="checkbox"/> Other:
Which school do they attend?			
Does the child have an Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	
If 'Yes', do you give permission for us to obtain a copy of the EHC plan from our Special Education Needs service?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	

**Parents / carer details**

Where parents are divorced or separated, the home address will usually be considered the one where the parent receives child benefit.

	Main carer	Partner, if applicable
Title		
Surname		
First name		
Home address		
Postcode		
Preferred daytime phone number		
Alternative phone number		
Email address		
Relationship to child or children		

Please tell us below why you need discretionary transport.

Please tell us below what supporting documents you will provide – if you are applying on medical grounds, supporting evidence from your doctor, hospital or medical professional should be attached to your medical assessment form.

If you have been placed in temporary accommodation by the council's Homelessness service, please provide a copy of your licence agreement.

You should attach your additional information to this application form. If you are unable to supply the supporting evidence with your application, please tell us what date you will provide it.

Date evidence to be provided:	
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If we do not receive this information in full, we cannot consider your application

If the exceptional circumstances are considered to be ongoing, then any transport awarded will be reviewed either annually, monthly or termly – depending on the details of the award.

### Transport needs

From what date do you need transport?	
How does/do your child/children currently get to school?	
For how long do you need help with transport?	
Could you drive your child to and from school by car?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
If 'Yes', would you wish to be considered for receiving mileage allowance, paid after the end of each month? For details, go to: <a href="http://www.thurrock.gov.uk/school-travel-offer">www.thurrock.gov.uk/school-travel-offer</a>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
There may be a variety of ways we can offer transport. If there is any transport that would not be suitable, please give us your reasons below.	

### Household

Only include dependants for whom you either receive child benefit or are awaiting the outcome of a child benefit application. Under 'Date applied', put the date you applied for child benefit.

Dependent children	Age	Date of birth	Date applied

### Bank accounts and savings

Bank accounts and savings	Parent / carer	Partner, if applicable
I have a bank account <b>in credit</b> by:		
I have a bank account <b>overdrawn</b> by:		
I have a savings account or building society account with the amount:		

## Income and outgoings

Income – main carer		
Usual take-home pay	£	per
Income support	£	per
Other state benefits	£	per
Pension	£	per
Others give me	£	per
<b>Other income:</b>		
	£	per
Regular expenses – excluding arrears		
Mortgage	£	per
Rent	£	per
Council tax	£	per
Water charges	£	per
Gas	£	per
Electricity	£	per
TV rental and licence	£	per
HP repayments	£	per
Mail order	£	per
Housekeeping	£	per
Food and school meals	£	per
Travel expenses	£	per
Children's clothing	£	per
Maintenance payment	£	per
Other expenses	£	per
Credit debts – loans and credit card debts		
	£	per
	£	per
	£	per

Income – partner, if applicable		
Usual take-home pay	£	per
Income support	£	per
Other state benefits	£	per
Pension	£	per
Others give me	£	per
<b>Other income:</b>		
	£	per
Priority debts – arrears only		
<b>Property debts:</b>		
Mortgage arrears	£	per
Rent arrears	£	per
Council tax arrears	£	per
Water charge arrears	£	per
<b>Fuel debts:</b>		
Gas arrears	£	per
Electricity arrears	£	per
<b>Other debts:</b>		
Maintenance arrears:	£	per
	£	per
<b>Total priority debts:</b>	£	per
I am behind with payments to		
	£	per
	£	per
	£	per

Is your child or children entitled to free school meals?  Yes  No

If you are applying for help on income grounds, please tell us below how much you believe you can pay towards the transport costs:

<b>I can pay:</b>	<b>How often:</b>
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## How we will use your information

We will use your information to provide the service requested. We may share your personal data between our services and with partner organisations, such as government bodies and the police. We will do so when it is of benefit to you, or required by law, or to prevent or detect fraud. To find out more, go to [thurrock.gov.uk/privacy](http://thurrock.gov.uk/privacy). Get free internet access at libraries and community hubs.

## Declaration

I confirm:

- I understand that if Thurrock Council is made aware that transport has been allocated based upon false information or fraud, then transport will be withdrawn immediately – fraudulent applications may lead to criminal proceedings
- I understand that Thurrock Council reserves the right to withdraw an award of travel assistance, on reasonable notice of up to one month, where this has been made in error – any payments that have been made in error may have to be repaid
- the information provided is to the best of my knowledge correct and complete

<b>Signature</b>	
<b>Date</b>	

Please return to: **Education Awards and Benefits,  
Thurrock Council,  
Civic Offices,  
New Road,  
Grays,  
RM17 6SL**

For internal use only			
Assessor name		Start date:	
Transport awarded?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	End date:	
Decision agreed by:		Dated:	
Appeal agreed by:		Dated:	