

School Transport Policy

Sections 42 and 51 of the Education (Scotland) Act 1980 require education authorities to provide free transport to a child's catchment school where the walking distance from home is defined as 3 miles or over for all children over eight and 2 miles for children under eight.



The act places a duty on councils to take safety into account when assessing walking routes under these statutory distances. What constitutes safety is not defined in the act and it is up to each individual council to determine.

West Lothian policy

West Lothian Council has a far better distance qualification for free school transport than the statutory requirement. It is 1.5 miles or over for primary children and 2 miles or over for secondary children attending their catchment school. The distance is determined by the shortest walking route from a family's permanent home address to the school gate. For a walking route to be deemed as being acceptable for a child to walk whilst accompanied by a responsible adult three simple tests are applied:

- The route must be paved and of adequate width, or be a shared roadway.
- The route must have an all weather surface.
- The route must be lit.

All the walking routes are assessed by a qualified transportation engineer. Where suitable walking routes do not exist transport to school is made available below the council's qualifying distances.

The network of school bus services can also be used by pupils not entitled to free school travel. **Most buses allow pupils to pay a fare either on the bus or to use pre-paid discount travel tickets.**

Schools served by home to school transport will have their own written statements of policy for the supervision of embarkation/disembarkation by staff within the resources available to the school's management team. Policies will take account of the individual circumstances and layout of school grounds and reflect good practice in endeavouring to minimise risks to pupils.