

1. General Policy

Gwynedd Council provide free transport to learners who live in the County and who have registered in a school or unit maintained by the Council under the following circumstances:

- Primary schools – for learners who live 2 miles or more from the school in their catchment area, or the nearest school.
- Secondary schools – for learners who live 3 miles or more from the school in their catchment area, or the nearest school.
- Learners with special educational needs or disabilities in accordance with the recommendations of the Special Educational Needs Joint Committee.

It is expected for learners in primary and secondary schools (except those with special educational needs or disabilities) to walk up to 2 miles to meet any transport provided by Gwynedd Council.

In order to receive free transport, the parents of learners in primary and secondary schools are expected to complete a free transport application form and return it to the Education Office.

Receiving free transport is subject to the learners' compliance with the code of conduct for school transport. It is the parents / guardian's responsibility to ensure compliance with the code of conduct. Failure to comply can result in losing the right to free transport from home to school. Should the right to free transport be lost, it is the parents / guardians' responsibility to shoulder the cost of transport from the home to the school.

(Learners who attend a school other than the catchment area school or nearest school are required to make their own travel arrangements and pay the cost for that transport.)

2. Vacant Seats Scheme

Learners who live less than 2 miles (primary school) or 3 miles (secondary school) who are not entitled to free transport can conditionally take advantage of any empty seats in the Council's contracted vehicles. Taking advantage of the scheme is subject to :-

- the availability of empty seats
- the vehicle not having to divert from its usual route
- no additional costs to the Council
- the current fee for vacant seats being paid

The Council is willing to consider applications from learners who attend a school other than the catchment area school to take advantage of any empty seats on contracted vehicles by paying the current out of catchment area fee.

(The vacant seat scheme is not available on contracts that are provided by using public service buses.)

3. Walking Routes

When learners live less than 2 miles (primary school) or 3 miles (secondary) from the catchment area school and, therefore are not entitled to free transport, but travel to school along a road that is considered by the Council to be especially dangerous, free transport is offered.

A dangerous road is defined whereby the nature of the road (which includes public footpaths) means that it is not reasonable to expect learners from walking age (with an escort as needed) to be able to walk in a comparatively safe manner. In assessing the comparable safety of a road, the Council will undertake an assessment of the risks a learner could face along the determined road (including, for example, rivers, ditches, traffic speed along the nearby road, the existence of street lighting, history of accidents, overhanging trees or branches that could impair the ability of pedestrians or drivers to see, etc.). The assessment would be held at the time of day and days of the week that learners would be expected to use the road.

The shortest route available is the route which is not deemed by the Council to be especially dangerous, after assessing the other routes available for the journey.

4. Learners who change address during an examination course

The Council will contribute towards the travel costs of a learner who has moved into a new catchment area during an external examination year, or previous year, e.g. A Level or GCSE course, and who wishes to complete the course in the same school that serves their former home, by means of one of the following methods:-

- Offering free transport when it is possible to arrange transport without an additional cost to the Council.
- Offering to pay an amount up to a maximum of the equivalent to 20 miles of daily travel according to the current local government national public transport allowance scale.

Any payment will be made at the end of every term for every day the learner has been noted as being present on the school's register.