

EDUCATION TRANSPORT POLICY

CYNGOR GWYNEDD



DRAFT POLICY
(January 2026)



1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Cyngor Gwynedd has a duty to provide transport to school in accordance with the *Learner Travel (Wales) Measure 2008* and *Learner Travel: Statutory Provision and Operational Guidance 2014*. This Learner Transport Policy outlines how the Authority provides transport to school learners and Grŵp Llandrillo Menai learners who reside in Gwynedd, and the eligibility criteria.
- 1.2 To meet this requirement, the Authority will consider the following when making arrangements for learners residing in Gwynedd:
- The learner's age
 - The distance from their home to school
 - The nature of the journey from home to school
 - Requests for faith education
 - The needs of learners with disabilities or additional learning needs
 - The needs of learners who are looked after by the Local Authority
 - The needs of learners with dual residency.
- 1.3 The Measure allows the Local Authority to use discretion in relation to the services provided under some circumstances. These discretionary elements are outlined in Part 3 of this policy.
- 1.4 Transport is provided to post-16 learners under the policy as a discretionary arrangement. See Part 3.3.
- 1.5 It is a requirement for the Authority to provide free transport from home to school under some circumstances. These are outlined in Part 2. The duty to provide that transport is only relevant if the child resides in the Authority area.
- 1.6 The Local Authority will continuously strive to provide safe, affordable, efficient and cost-effective transport to those learners who are eligible under this policy.
- 1.7 Transport is provided from home to school to eligible learners between their home addresses or designated pick-up point and the nearest suitable school where they are registered. Free transport is not provided to or from the addresses of other family members or friends, the parents' work addresses or any type of childcare facilities.
- 1.8 The Policy will come into effect from 1 September 2027 onwards. The transport arrangements assessed and provided under the Local Authority's previous policy will

continue but there will be a material change in circumstances requiring making a new application, e.g. moving home or school / post-16 school or college.

2. TRANSPORT FROM HOME TO SCHOOL

2.1 Eligible schools

2.1.1 Cyngor Gwynedd will provide free transport to learners who meet the criteria for transport set in this policy. The policy refers to transport to and from eligible schools in the following categories:

- Community, foundation, controlled or voluntary assisted schools
- Non-maintained special schools
- Pupil referral units
- Independent schools named in a statement of special educational needs

2.2 Distance Criteria

2.2.1 The Learner Travel (Wales) Measure 2008 stipulates that free transport will only be provided for mandatory school age learners, if the distance from home to their nearest suitable school is at least:

- a) 2 miles for Primary School learners
- b) 3 miles for Secondary School learners

2.3 The nearest suitable/catchment School

2.3.1 A learner's catchment school is defined by specific catchment areas and based on the location of the learner's home. The nearest suitable school for transport purposes would be the school under Cyngor Gwynedd's care that is nearest to the learner's home. Further information about the nearest suitable/catchment school is available by visiting the 'Where I live' link on Cyngor Gwynedd's website: [Search for an address](#)

2.3.2 If the nearest suitable / catchment school is full, the availability of the next available nearest suitable school is assessed to accept the learner. The same distance criteria will be relevant.

2.3.3 Transport is provided from home to school for eligible learners between their home addresses or designated pick-up point and the nearest suitable school where they are registered. Free transport is not provided to or from the addresses of other family members or friends, the parents' work addresses or any type of childcare facilities.

2.4 Measuring the Travelling Distance

- 2.4.1 For assessments under the distance criteria in Part 2.2, the work of calculating the distance from home to school adheres to the guidance provided in the *Learner Travel: Statutory Provision and Operational Guidance 2014*.
- 2.4.2 Where learners are reasonably expected to walk to school, the distance is measured according to the shortest route available that the child, whether independently or with a chaperone, could walk, reasonably safe along it; considering the child's needs and age.
- 2.4.3 The suitability of the travel route is assessed in terms of the safety of the learner when walking along it, and thorough risk assessments are conducted by officers of the Integrated Transport Unit (Cyngor Gwynedd) at the likely time of day where the learner would use it.
- 2.4.4 Having undertaken a risk assessment of the learner's travel route (whether walking independently or with a responsible adult), if it is deemed that the travel route from home to school is dangerous, the learner cannot be expected to walk to school, although the distance from home to school is shorter than the statutory distance noted in 2.2 above. In these circumstances, the learner has a right to free transport provision.
- 2.4.5 The definition of a dangerous road is where the nature of the road, including public footpaths, means that it is not reasonable to expect learners to walk relatively safely. In assessing the comparable safety of a road, the Authority will assess the dangers that the learners could face; these could include rivers, ditches, traffic speed along the road, the data of past accidents, trees and branches, as well as other features that could impair drivers of vehicles from being able to see pedestrians on the road.
- 2.4.6 For assessments over the distance criteria noted in 2.2, the distance of the route to school is measured from the home's boundary to the nearest entrance available to the school, and it could include public footpaths, bridleways and other paths, as well as adopted roads. It does not have to represent the shortest distance on the road. The distance is measured by a digital mapping system (GIS).

NOTE: Parents/Guardians should also refer to Part 5.5 for information about sustainable modes of transport to school.

2.5 Primary and Secondary School Transport

- 2.5.1 The Authority will provide free transport to the nearest suitable/catchment school in accordance with the criteria of this policy for Primary and Secondary Schools. Discretionary provision could be relevant, by virtue of the criteria shown in Part 3.

2.6 The Parents / Guardians' Choice of School

- 2.6.1 Parents / guardians have a right to choose any school for their child's admission subject to the availability of spaces. Should the request be accepted, the parent / carer will lose their right to free transport if this is not their nearest suitable school / catchment school, or if it is not the designated Secondary school for the feeder primary school that they attended.
- 2.6.2 This is consistent with and meets the requirements outlined in the *Learner Travel: Statutory Provision and Operational Guidance (June 2014)*.

IMPORTANT: Parents / carers are advised to consider the implications of school transport before declaring their choice for space in a school. See Part 2.3 on the nearest suitable/catchment school, as well as Part 4.4 on the impact of transport.

2.7 School Admission

- 2.7.1 If parents / carers are unable to secure a place for their child in their nearest suitable/catchment school, or if their designated Secondary school (from the appropriate feeder primary school) is full, then free transport will be provided to their next nearest suitable school, on the condition that the distance criteria is met in Part 2.2.

2.8 Pick-up and Drop-off Sites

- 2.8.1 For learners eligible for transport, there will be an expectation that they start from a pre-determined pick-up point, unless noted otherwise when the application is processed. The Authority will strive to locate pick-up points reasonably close to the learners' home and not further than the statutory distances outlined in Part 2.2. Any distance measured will follow the principles outlined in Part 2.4. The assessment will also consider dangerous paths, following the principles noted in Part 2.8.
- 2.8.2 It is the responsibility of the parent / guardian to ensure that their child reaches the pick-up point in a timely manner and gets in the vehicle safely. They must also ensure

that a responsible adult is there to meet the child on the return journey, if the child's age or needs require a chaperone provision.

- 2.8.3 If there is no responsible adult there to meet the child who requires a chaperone provision in terms of age or needs, then additional costs will be payable by the parent/guardian, as Officers may have to seek guidance from the Children Services and, if required, arrange to take the child to a safe place by Cyngor Gwynedd.
- 2.8.4 Nothing in this Policy creates the expectation that every child should walk to the pick-up points, as this would be unsuitable in some cases. The Authority keeps a register of the known dangerous paths, and this forms part of the consideration given when assessing transport requests. However, if a parent / guardian believes that the use of the pick-up point is unsuitable for their child, they should express their concerns to the Authority, who will look into the circumstances to decide whether additional or alternative transport arrangements are required for that child; to ensure that the requirements of *the Learner Travel (Wales) Measure 2008* are met. However, parents / guardians are expected to make arrangements for the first two miles to meet any transport provided by the Authority.
- 2.8.5 The Authority has the right to review the pick-up points to ensure that a safe path is continuously maintained and subject to ensuring that the most cost-effective provision is in place.
- 2.8.6 Once eligibility for school transport is confirmed, the Integrated Transport Unit will inform the school with a request for the school to share the relevant information with the parents / carers.
- 2.8.7 Where transport is used to take learners to pick-up points, the learners must stay with the taxi until the vehicle to transport them onwards arrives. Drivers are expected to report to the Integrated Transport Unit about any learner who does not comply with this expectation.
- 2.8.8 Contractors who provide these services have been instructed to wait with learners to ensure that they go into the vehicle that provides their onwards transport. Parents / guardians are also encouraged to report to the Integrated Transport Unit about any cases where drivers do not do this.

2.9 Dangerous Paths

- 2.9.1 For learners who live under the statutory eligibility distance shown in Part 2.2, the Authority will provide transport to the school if it is considered that the path is dangerous. Dangerous paths are assessed by the Integrated Transport Unit, following

the guidelines provided in the *Learner Travel: Statutory Provision and Operational Guidance 2014*.

- 2.9.2 Where pick-up points are used, the Local Authority will also consider whether there are dangerous paths that could reasonably prevent learners from walking to these locations, accompanied by a chaperone as required. In those cases, the Local Authority, after assessing, will provide free transport from the home to the pick-up point, or refer to the school (whichever is most effective).

NOTE: Where parents / carers have exercised their right to choose a school according to their wishes (see Part 2.6), then it is the responsibility of the parent/carer to arrange transport from home to school.

- 2.9.3 If a parent / guardian believes that a specific path is dangerous, they should express their concerns to the Authority, who will investigate to confirm whether any additional or alternative transport arrangements are required.

2.10 ADDITIONAL LEARNING NEEDS (ALN) AND MEDICAL CONDITIONS

- 2.10.1 The Authority will consider the learner's medical conditions, disability and additional learning needs when assessing the learners' travel needs in the area. If a learner has an Independent Development Plan (IDP), transport for the learner will be provided in accordance with the IDP – this may also include pre-school children. If the IDP is reviewed and the transport element amended, any transport arrangements will reflect the revised IDP.
- 2.10.2 The Authority can provide free transport from home to school for learners of a mandatory school age, if they do not have an IDP, when transport is sought for medical reasons or the learner's additional learning needs (ALN) or disability. This provision will be considered when an application form regarding transport on a medical basis is completed, as well as evidence from an adviser or a person of a similar status (not a GP, Nurse or Practitioner). Transport for learners with medical difficulties/ALN will depend on their individual circumstances and the path that is required for the learner to travel. These transport arrangements are reviewed annually.
- 2.10.3 The Authority is committed to support learners to travel independently where practically possible. The annual review of the travel arrangements will consider the type of transport provided to the learner and, if a personal travel assistant is provided,

whether or not there is a need to continue with that arrangement. Cyngor Gwynedd can make changes to transport arrangements following the review.

2.11 Looked-after Children

- 2.11.1 Looked-after children is the term used in the Children Act 1989 to describe children under 18 years old who receive care and accommodation from the Children and Supporting Families Department, Cyngor Gwynedd, often with foster carers.
- 2.11.2 Looked-after children (according to the Children Act 1989 definition) have the same right to receive transport as children who are not looked after; however, there are no requirements for them to attend the nearest suitable school to their home or the placement's address.
- 2.11.3 If a looked-after child attends a school that is closer than the required distance shown in Part 2.2, free transport will not be provided. Exceptions by virtue of the criteria shown in Part 3 may also apply.

2.12 Dual Residency

- 2.12.1 When parents share responsibility for a child and the child resides in two households, which are the homes of both parents, the Authority will provide transport from the main address, which is the address where the learners usually reside, with at least one of those residences being in Gwynedd. This is on the condition that the school attended is the nearest suitable school from the main residence, or it is agreed that it is the most suitable considering the locations of the two residences. Transport will not be provided from any of the two residences if they are more than five miles from the nearest suitable school.
- 2.12.2 Parents must provide evidence if they believe that the time between both addresses is equal and meets the eligibility criteria.

NOTE: The Local Authority also retains the right to prove the reasonableness of the transport requested under this condition, considering distance, safe and accessible paths, the length of the journey, cost, as well as proximity to other suitable education settings.

3. DISCRETIONARY SCHOOL TRANSPORT

3.1 Within *the Learner Travel (Wales) Measure 2008*, discretionary arrangements can be made under part 6 of the Measure. In some cases, there can be a charge for the cost of those arrangements to the responsible parent / guardian.

3.2 Faith Schools

3.2.1 For faith schools, Cyngor Gwynedd will provide free transport to learners who attend their nearest faith school on a discretionary basis if this is the choice of the parents / guardians for learners who live up to 5 miles from the nearest suitable (faith) school. The statutory distance criteria in Part 2.2 are used to check that the learner is eligible, but with faith schools, the application is also reviewed against the faith school's admission criteria. Evidence of proof can include examples such as a christening certificate, a proof certificate of faith or a letter from a faith leader. If the learner does not meet the faith requirements, then the application is reviewed in relation to the requirements of the nearest school or nearest catchment area.

3.3 Post-16 Transport

3.3.1 Part 2 of *The Learner Travel (Wales) Measure 2008* requires Local Authorities to assess the travel needs of all learners under the age of 19, (learners must be studying a full-time course and be under the age of 19 on 1 September of the academic year when the course is followed).

3.3.2 The Local Authority provides discretionary transport beyond the statutory school age to eligible learners living in Gwynedd. Transport will be provided to the nearest suitable / catchment Secondary school allocated by the Authority to serve the learners' home address only, or in the case of full-time courses at Grŵp Llandrillo Menai, to the nearest college site providing the course. Free transport will be available for learners who live 3 miles or more from the school or the nearest suitable college site. The Authority will use the distance measured by them from home to school or eligible college on the system (GIS) to confirm the actual distance.

3.3.3 Learners with additional learning needs will be able to take advantage of the Authority's post-16 transport plan for a period of up to 4 years from the beginning of their first term.

3.3.4 The policy applies to travel to the following education settings:

- Secondary Schools maintained by Cyngor Gwynedd with a provision for Years 12 and 13.

- Special schools maintained by Cyngor Gwynedd with a provision for Years 12, 13 and 14.
- Grŵp Llandrillo Menai - Dolgellau, Pwllheli, Glynllifon sites, Parc Menai Site - Bangor, Llangefni and Caernarfon. The courses available at each of these settings can be seen in their prospectuses, that are available directly from the establishments.

3.3.5 If the course location or learner transfers to another education setting during the academic year, the criteria for post-16 transport in Part 3.3.2 will still apply.

3.3.6 Transport is provided between learning establishments who work in partnership with each other by those partners.

3.3.7 More information about post-16 transport can be found in Appendix 1.

3.4 School Reorganisation

3.4.1 In cases where schools are reorganised, the Local Authority will consider the most appropriate options for school transport. This could include providing free transport for a specific period of time depending on the circumstances. Such arrangements will be provided on a discretionary basis and documented in the reorganisation process; therefore, relevant schools, governing bodies, parents / guardians and any other stakeholders will be aware of the terms of the arrangement.

3.5 Reviewing Catchment Areas

3.5.1 In cases where the Authority reviews the catchment area boundaries (outside of the schools' reorganisation process), the transport criteria in Part 2.2 will apply.

3.6 Moving Homes

3.6.1 In cases where a learner, who has been receiving free transport, moves home in the middle of the academic year, transport provision will come to an end if they no longer attend their nearest suitable/catchment school.

3.6.2 If a learner is in the middle of a GCSE year (school years 10 and 11), the Authority will continue to provide discretionary transport until the academic years are completed, i.e. until the end of year 11.

3.6.3 This commitment is subject to the learner living in the Local Authority area.

NOTE: The Local Authority also retains the right to prove the reasonableness of the transport requested under this condition, considering distance, journey time, and the proximity to other suitable education settings.

3.6.4 Every other eligibility reassessment will follow the same criteria noted in Part 2. This part will not apply where parents / guardians have previously exercised their choice as detailed in 2.6.

3.7 Controlled School Transfers

3.7.1 Where controlled school transfers are supported by the school Headteacher of the new destination and the Education Department, parents / carers will be aware of this action and will be included in these discussions at a school level. School transport under these circumstances can be supported on a discretionary basis where a part of the action and the agreement of every party is formed to change schools for the benefit of the learner.

3.7.2 It is the parent / carer's responsibility to ensure that they fully engage with the Authority and the school when pursuing a controlled transfer. These matters need to be checked, and evidence will be available. This allows the Education Department to make an informed decision based on the evidence that supports the application for transport.

3.7.3 Where evidence is not available and/or where a parent/guardian refuses to engage with the process with the school and Education Department, the request for transport will be refused. This will be based on the lack of evidence available to make an informed decision.

3.8 Medical Conditions

3.8.1 Consideration is given to the need to provide transport to those learners who need temporary school transport because the nature of their medical condition seriously impacts their mobility (e.g. a broken leg). The Authority will consider every case individually, not only for those eligible for transport based on distance. In every case, transport is only provided to the site that the learner attends.

4. OTHER INFORMATION

4.1 Nursery Education

The Authority does not provide transport to children attending nursery or nursery classes at 3 or 4 years old. Transport is provided to eligible children from the start of the school where the child reaches the age of 5 and starts full-time education, normally in the reception class.

4.2 Clubs Outside of School

The Authority will not provide transport to or from after-school clubs (i.e. breakfast club, after-school clubs etc.) or extra-curricular activities that fall outside the statutory curriculum. It is the responsibility of the parent / guardian to ensure that appropriate transport arrangements are in place if they take advantage of these provisions.

4.3 Changes to the Policy

Should this policy need to be amended, the Authority must follow the statutory requirements set in the *Learner Travel Information (Wales) Regulations 2009*. This requires the Authority to consult, agree and publish changes to the policy before 1 October in the year that pre-dates the academic year when the changes come into force.

4.4 Transport Impact

Parents / guardians must consider the implications of their chosen school on the use of private cars and the impact that could have on traffic and carbon emissions outside their chosen school. The Authority encourages parents / guardians to consider transport and active and sustainable travel to the school of their choice.

4.5 Sustainable Modes of Transport

Parents / carers must consider choices for active travel to school. Information about Active Travel in Gwynedd is available on the Council website, as well as the *Walk Wheel Cycle Trust* website in terms of cycle paths across the county.

5. TRANSPORT PROVISION

5.1 Cyngor Gwynedd Provision

- 5.1.1 The Authority will try to provide the most appropriate and suitable mode of transport to every eligible learner safely and provide the most cost-effective mode of transport. This could be on a bus, a coach, a minibus, or taxi agreements, or on public transport that already exists. These services and the associated agreements are arranged and managed by the Integrated Transport Unit.

5.2 Transport Payments

- 5.2.1 In order to meet the statutory requirements, in exceptional circumstances, the Council can offer personal budget for parents to take their children to school/college should that be cheaper than providing transport arranged by the Authority, or where there are no transport arrangements in place.
- 5.2.2 Monthly payments are made to a parent's bank account after receiving a C1 payment claim form from the Integrated Transport Unit. The application form is checked with information about the learner's attendance in the school/college that they attend. The payment is calculated based on the parent's travel distance from home to school, using the Council's digital mapping software (GIS). The cost is calculated based on the distance of the journey to and from home to school twice. Parents / guardians are not obliged to accept the offer of a repayment; however, it may be considered that this is the most reasonable mode of transport.

5.3 Inclement Weather Arrangements

- 5.3.1 In circumstances of inclement weather, it is the Headteacher's responsibility to decide whether or not the school should be closed. The Education Department is informed of any decision to close the school. The decision will depend on an assessment of the relevant factors, including the weather forecast, the situation in the area of the school, the situation for staff members in relation to travel etc.
- 5.3.2 If the provider is unable to provide a bus or taxi in the morning due to inclement weather, then that transport will not be available in the afternoon. Any parents who have decided to take their children to school under such circumstances must be informed that they need to arrange to take their children home in the afternoon as the usual school transport will not be available.
- 5.3.3 If transport providers inform the school that they are eager to transport some learners home early, the schools must agree to the request as it is the responsibility of the provider to take the learners home safely. When making such a request, the provider

will respond to weather warnings or direct evidence that the situation in terms of weather is worsening. Such a request should not necessarily lead to a decision to send every learner home early.

- 5.3.4 If it is decided to close the school, the Headteacher will contact the transport providers to inform them. They should also confirm with the providers the arrangements for the following days as soon as any relevant decision is made. If unable to contact the providers, the Integrated Transport Unit must be informed on 01766 771 000. When a decision is made to close a school, the Headteacher must inform the Education Department using the "School Closures" system on the Authority's website: www.gwynedd.gov.uk/cau

5.4 Service Monitoring

- 5.4.1 The Authority retains the right to randomly inspect Education Transport services to ensure that everyone travelling is eligible.

5.5 Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) Inspections

- 5.5.1 The Integrated Transport Unit (Cyngor Gwynedd) manages and arranges all the necessary education transport agreements with the appropriate service providers. This includes receiving evidence and keeping a record of the Disclosure and Barring Service inspections for every driver and travel chaperone by the providers.

NOTE: Travel chaperones are only employed on primary school transport services where it is considered appropriate, or if the child's Additional Learning Needs make this appropriate.

5.6 The Behaviour Code

- 5.6.1 Cyngor Gwynedd supports the "Travel Behaviour Code" prepared by the Welsh Government. The Code establishes the expectations of individual learners, fellow passengers and transport providers. The Code can be seen on the Council's website [Behaviour Code](#), and in this Policy's appendix.
- 5.6.2 As learners present a request for education transport, they, or their parents/guardians, must state on the application form that they have understood and are committed to adhering to the Behaviour Code and are aware of the possible results of breaching the Code.

5.6.3 An unacceptable action by a learner that is contrary to the Code could lead to:

- recovering the cost of deliberate damage from learners and/or their parents/guardians,
- cancelling the travel arrangements agreed for learners for a specific period or an unspecified period. It will be the learners' responsibility to make their own transport plans to attend school/college under these circumstances,
- disciplinary action by the relevant school or college,
- submitting a report of the incident to the Police.

6. SERVICE IMPROVEMENT

6.1 Cyngor Gwynedd is eager to receive feedback and comments from service users that could lead to improving services. Any feedback or comments regarding this Policy must be presented through the Feedback and Complaints Procedure [Formal complaint / Praise](#)

7. FURTHER INFORMATION

7.1 The following is available on the Council website: www.gwynedd.llyw.cymru

- A. Timetables and maps of the Network to the relevant establishments
- B. The Behaviour Code
- C. Application forms.
- Ch. Complaints and Comments