



The Buckinghamshire Council school transport Spare Seat Scheme

By law, the Council must provide school bus services for those pupils who are eligible for free transport. The Council runs school buses where required for children who qualify. On some routes there may be a limited number of spare seats that are not needed for eligible children. We offer these seats to parents who wish to pay for a place for their child through the Spare Seat Scheme.

Starting with places for the autumn term 2021, the Spare Seat Scheme is changing. New seats that become available will now be advertised each term, rather than through an ongoing waiting list.

This means there will be more regular opportunities for parents to purchase spare seats if they are available.

The key steps in getting a spare seat are:

1 Parent applies for a seat
We publish information on our school bus routes, including stops, in early summer. Two months before the start of each term, once seats have been allocated to eligible students, we publish information on the number of spare seats available for purchase on each bus, which parents can then apply for.



2 Outcome and acceptance of offer
We will notify all applicants of whether we can offer them a seat. If unsuccessful, parents will need to make alternative arrangements for transporting their child to school. Parents who are offered a seat must pay by the deadline set.



3 Bus pass issued
Once we have received the payment, we will print and send the bus pass.



1. Application

Once we know exactly how many seats are needed by eligible pupils, the remaining spare seats will be advertised on our website, listed by route. This will allow parents to see straightaway whether their desired route has seats available. Full details will be provided on how to apply, should a spare seat be available.

We will advertise spare seat availability at least two months before the beginning of each term. Once details of spare seats go live on our website, there will be a three-week window in which to apply.

We are also introducing a new priority system to help make spare seat allocation clearer and fairer. You can find out more about this in the Home to School Transport Policy on the Buckinghamshire Council website.

Once a place on the Spare Seat Scheme has been offered and accepted, we will assume that it is required for the whole year, unless we are told otherwise. Parents do not need to reapply each term. However, we cannot guarantee that spare seats will continue to be available on any particular route – see our terms and conditions of travel.

2. Outcome and acceptance

After applying for a spare seat, parents will be told of the outcome of the application at least one month before the beginning of the start of term. As the number of spare seats on offer is limited, parents should not rely on getting one. An alternative way of getting a child to and from school must be planned in case the application is unsuccessful.

If the application is successful, we will provide details of the seat that has been secured and ask parents to confirm the place by arranging payment. Payment can be made online in advance for a term or for the full year or paid in monthly instalments by setting up a Direct Debit.

If the payment deadline is missed, the offer of a spare seat may be lost.

3. Bus pass issued

Once payment is in place, the bus pass will be issued. This should arrive within 10 days of payment but may take slightly longer in busy periods.

Full details of school transport services in Buckinghamshire, including the Spare Seat Scheme, are available on the Buckinghamshire Council website:
[buckinghamshire.gov.uk/school-transport](https://www.buckinghamshire.gov.uk/school-transport)