

Surrey School Travel Policy – Proposed Changes Summary

Policy Area	Current Policy	Proposed Update	Rationale
Under 16's Policy – Nearest School, Eligibility	Nearest school defined by walking/road route, may be in neighbouring county.	Adds: Must show attempts to get a place at nearer schools if applying to a non-nearest school. Clarifies definition and evidence requirement.	Aligns with DfE guidance and statutory expectations for discretionary transport.
Statutory Walking Distances – Free School Meals	Refer to extended rights section for FSM/Universal Credit.	From Sept 2026, all Universal Credit households qualify for FSM, but extended travel rights remain linked to £7,400 income threshold.	Reflects UK Government's Plan for Change and DfE guidance; clarifies impact on travel rights.
Nearest qualifying school (Distance Measurement)	Distances to determine the nearest qualifying school are measured using the shortest road route. Distances greater than statutory walking distance are also measured by road route.	Distances will be measured using the shortest walking route when determining the nearest qualifying school. Only when all schools are over the statutory walking distance will the distance be measured using the shortest road route.	Aligns the policy wording with DfE statutory guidance, which requires nearest-school eligibility to be based on walking route measurement, not road or straight-line distance. Road route measurement is only permitted once the statutory walking distance threshold (2/3 miles) is exceeded. Reflects the change already adopted following the 2022 Surrey consultation, ensuring clarity, legal compliance, and consistency across policy documents.
EOTAS & Alternative Provision (SEND)	No duty to arrange/fund travel for EOTAS; case-by-case consideration.	Clarifies EHCP/EOTAS arrangements, AP provider registration, and case-by-case travel support. SEND team to discuss travel needs with families.	Reflects Children & Families Act 2014 and SEND Code of Practice; ensures reasonable, needs-based support.
Concessionary Seats	Spare seats sold to non-entitled pupils, may be withdrawn if needed for statutory cases.	Adds: All vehicles must be PSVAR compliant, reducing seat availability. No appeals if seat unavailable.	Legal compliance with PSVAR 2000; clarifies discretionary nature and accessibility requirements.
Post-16 Statement – Financial Contributions	£675.49 (low income), £931.57 (others).	£689.67 (low income), £951.12 (others). Rates reviewed annually, linked to CPI.	Aligns with DfE guidance; reflects inflation and economic conditions.
Post-16 Independent Travel Allowance (ITA)	Four mileage bands, max £5,000.	Expanded bands up to 50 miles, max £8,750.	Responds to increased travel needs; supports equitable access per DfE guidance.
College/Sixth Form Travel – Godalming College	Subsidised bus: £1,250/year.	Subsidised bus: £1,300/year.	Reflects annual price increase.