

School Travel Scenarios: Will my child be eligible for Suffolk County Council (SCC) funded school travel?

SCC's School Travel Policy is separate to the admission policies. We will provide SCC funded school travel to the **Nearest Suitable School** that would have had a place available for your child when they are: a) aged under 8 and live more than two miles from the school; or b) aged 8 or older and live more than three miles from the school. This would be whether or not an application was made for a place at that school. The distance in a) and b) above is called the **statutory walking distance**.

We will only provide SCC funded school travel to your child's catchment area school when it is the nearest suitable school to their home that would have had a place available for them and they meet the distance criteria.

A child is eligible for SCC funded school travel if they are eligible for **targeted** free school meals and they meet the extended rights eligibility criteria.

A child is not eligible for SCC funded school travel if they are eligible for **expanded** free school meals under the extended rights eligibility criteria.

We strongly recommend that you check which school is your child's nearest suitable school on our [Nearest School Checker](#) for the **2026/2027 school year**.

The nearest schools have been calculated by measuring the shortest available walking route using a network comprised of the Ordnance Survey MasterMap Highways Network (which includes all roads and urban paths), and Public Rights of Way as shown on the [Definitive Map](#).

The nearest suitable school is the closest school by walking distance to your child's home address with a place available that provides education appropriate to the age, ability and aptitude of the child, and any special educational needs your child may have.

Your **School Preferences** and the order in which you put them on your admissions application could affect your child's eligibility for SCC funded school travel.

Full details about SCC funded school travel, including the School Travel Policy, additional arrangements for low income families and those with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), can be found at www.suffolkonboard.com/schooltravel.

Please note:

- SCC funded school travel eligibility for on time applications is based on the nearest suitable school in Suffolk that would have had a place available for your child on the relevant national offer day. This would be whether or not you applied for a place at that school.
- SCC funded school travel eligibility for late applicants will be assessed when the application is decided.
- If you make a second or subsequent application, we would only re-assess your child's eligibility for SCC funded school travel if they have moved house or their school place offer changes.
- If after the initial offer of a school place, a place can be offered from the waiting list, by the end of the summer term (July 2026), for a school which was previously refused but with a higher parental preference, any previous offer of SCC funded school travel will normally be withdrawn.

The following pages provide some scenarios to show how eligibility for school travel is assessed.

For illustrative purposes:

- **School A** is the nearest suitable Suffolk school – 2.5 miles from child's address
- **School B** is the second nearest suitable Suffolk school – 3.3 miles from child's address
- **School C** is the third nearest suitable Suffolk school – 7.2 miles from child's address

Matthew is aged 4 and due to start full-time primary school in September 2026. His parent's school preferences were ordered as (1) School A which is 2.5 miles from home; (2) School B which is 3.3 miles from home; and (3) School C which is 7.2 miles from home. These preferences are in order of the nearest schools to their home.

Scenario 1

- A place is offered at **School A – the nearest suitable school.**
- SCC funded school travel will be available for Matthew in the Reception Year, Year 1, Year 2 and Year 3, as this is the nearest suitable school and is more than two miles away.
- From Year 4, when Matthew is 8 years old, he would not meet the statutory walking distance criteria. SCC funded school travel would finish at the end of Year 3 because he lives less than three miles from the school.
- If Matthew is eligible for **targeted** free school meals and as he is living between two and three miles from his nearest suitable school, he would continue to receive SCC funded school travel until the end of Year 6. More information on additional arrangements for low income families can be found at www.suffolkonboard.com/schooltravel.

Scenario 2

- **School A** is unable to offer a place.
- A place is offered at **School B – the nearest suitable school with a place available.** SCC funded school travel will be available from the Reception Year to Year 6, because it is the nearest suitable school with a place available for him on National Offer Day and the distance criterion is met.

Scenario 3

- **School A** and **School B** are unable to offer places to Matthew.
- A place is offered at **School C – the nearest suitable school with a place available.** SCC funded school travel will be available from the Reception Year to Year 6, because it is the nearest suitable school with a place available for him on National Offer Day and the distance criterion is met.

Note 1: As the parent applied for the three nearest suitable schools in order of distance from the child's home to the school, Matthew would have been eligible for SCC funded school travel to whichever of these schools he was offered because all three meet the distance criteria for a Reception Year school place and the preferences were listed in nearest suitable school order. So the nearest school possible would be offered.

Note 2: If after the initial offer of a school place, a place can be offered to Matthew from the waiting list, by the end of the summer term (July 2026), for either School A or School B, any previous offer of SCC funded school travel to School C will normally be withdrawn.

Mary is aged 4 and lives in Suffolk near the county border. She is due to start school in the Reception Year in September 2026. Mary's parent applied for a school in Norfolk that is 2.1 miles, and the nearest suitable school from her address, as first preference. Her second preference is School A which is 2.5 miles from home; and the third preference is School B which is 3.3 miles from home.

- A place is offered at the first preference **school in Norfolk**.
 - SCC funded school travel would be provided for Mary in the Reception Year, Year 1, Year 2 and Year 3 (as in scenario 1 above), as this school is nearer to the home address than **School A** and is more than two miles away.
 - If Mary is eligible for **targeted** free school meals and as she is living between two and three miles from her nearest suitable school, she would continue to receive SCC funded school travel until the end of Year 6. More information on additional arrangements for low income families can be found at www.suffolkonboard.com/schooltravel.
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Katie will be starting secondary school in September 2026. Her parent applied for School C only, which is 7.2 miles from home and the third nearest school to her home address.

- A place is offered at **School C**.
 - SCC funded school travel would not be available as although there would not have been a place at **School A**, **School B** had a place available and SCC funded school travel would have been available to that nearer school had Katie's parent applied for it as the distance criteria is met.
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Johnny is due to transfer to secondary school in September 2026. His parent applied for School B, which is his catchment area school, as first preference.

- A place is offered at **School B** which is 3.3 miles from home.
- SCC funded school travel will not be provided to **School B** as had the parent applied for **School A**, the nearest suitable school, a place would have been available.

Note 3: We recognise that the parent would not know whether **School A** would have places available on National Offer Day. The relevant Directory of Schools in Suffolk online at www.suffolk.gov.uk/admissions provides admissions data for the previous school year to give parents an indication of the school's popularity and the cut off distance for the last place offered in 2025. This can only be an indication as both the popularity of schools and the size of the year group can fluctuate from year to year.

School travel eligibility is assessed at the time the admission application is decided. If the nearest or nearer schools become full at a later date, school travel will not be reassessed on this basis, and a child's eligibility status remains unchanged.

Amy is due to go to secondary school in September 2026. Her parent applied for School A which is 2.5 miles from home as first preference. This is Amy's catchment area school.

- A place is offered at **School A**.
- SCC funded school travel would not be available because the distance from home to school is 2.5 miles and does not meet the statutory walking distance criteria.

If Amy is eligible for **targeted** free school meals the extended rights eligibility applies (to attend one of the three nearest secondary schools as long as they are between two and six miles from the home address) and so SCC funded school travel will be available.

Alfie will start secondary school in September 2026. He is eligible for targeted free school meals. An application was made for a place at School B which is 3.3 miles from home.

- A place is offered at **School B**.
 - Had the parent applied for **School A** which is 2.5 miles from home and the nearest suitable school, a place would have been available.
 - As Alfie is eligible for targeted free school meals, the extended rights eligibility applies (to attend one of the three nearest secondary schools as long as they are between two and six miles from the home address) and so SCC funded school travel will be available to **School B**.
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Freda will start secondary school in September 2026. She is eligible for targeted free school meals. Her parents applied for a place at a church school on the grounds of their religion or belief that is 9 miles away as first preference. It is not the nearest school.

- A place is offered at the first preference school.
 - As Freda is eligible for **targeted** free school meals, the extended rights eligibility applies (to attend the nearest school preferred on the grounds of religion or belief between 2 and 15 miles from the home address) and so SCC funded school travel will be available.
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Tommy will start secondary school in September 2026. His parents applied for a place at School B as his older sister Darcy attends this school. School A is the nearest suitable school.

- Tommy's sister Darcy is already attending **School B** and has SCC funded school travel as it was the nearest suitable school with a place available when her application was determined.
- A place is offered to Tommy at **School B** as the first preference school.
- SCC funded school travel will not be provided to **School B** for Tommy as had the parent applied for **School A**, the nearest suitable school, a place would have been available.
- If Tommy is eligible for **targeted** free school meals, the extended rights eligibility applies (to attend one of the three nearest secondary schools as long as they are between two and six miles from the home address) and so SCC funded school travel will be available.

Liam will start secondary school in September 2026. His parents applied for a place at School B as it is their catchment area school. School A is the nearest suitable school.

- A place is offered to Liam at **School B** as the first preference school.
- SCC funded school travel will not be provided to **School B**, even though it is Liam's catchment area school and more than three miles from his home, as had his parents applied for **School A**, the nearest suitable school, a place would have been available.
- As Liam is eligible for **expanded** free school meals, he does not meet the criteria for extended rights eligibility. A child eligible for **expanded** free school meals is eligible for a free school meal only.