



City of Turku transport principles for early childhood education and care, pre-primary education and basic education from 15 October 2026



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1 General information on transport

Transport provided by the City of Turku is granted and arranged in accordance with the Act on Early Childhood Education and Care, the Basic Education Act and the school transport principles adopted by the Finnish-language Children and Young People Services Committee.

These principles are intended to clarify matters related to granting and arranging transport in early childhood education and care, pre-primary education and basic education. They also specify the rights, responsibilities and obligations of the various parties, as well as procedures and policies for different situations. The principles provide guidance for children in early childhood education and care, pre-primary pupils and basic education pupils who apply for or are entitled to transport, as well as their guardians. The principles also support those responsible for school transport in applying consistent practices throughout the city.

The school transport principles are available on the City of Turku website under [School transport | Turku.fi](#).

1.1 Arranging transport

The City of Turku primarily arranges all transport using Föli scheduled services. Discretionary transport for children in early childhood education and care and school transport for pupils in pre-primary and basic education may also be arranged using charter transport services procured by the City. In individual cases, transport may also be arranged by granting an accompanying allowance to the guardian or using charter transport separately arranged by the City.

For pupils in basic education, the practical transport arrangements, such as the mode of transport and pick-up point, may vary during their school years depending on factors such as the pupil's age, road safety, the timetables of pupils in the area, the number of pupils requiring transport, or measures to develop or modify transport arrangements.

Within the limits of the available appropriations, the Finnish-language Children and Young People Services Committee has decision-making authority over transport procurements for Children and Young People Services. Decisions on granting free school transport are made by the Regional Head of Early Childhood Education and Care and the Head of Special Services for early childhood education and care and pre-primary education, by the Service Area Director for Finnish-language basic education, and by the Service Area Director for Swedish-language basic education. The City's Transport Services are responsible for preparing the matters. Early childhood education and care planners and the Head of Special Services, as well as Regional Principals and specialists in basic education, may be consulted as experts during the preparation process. Where necessary, the City's traffic planning unit is consulted when assessing road safety. The practical transport arrangements are handled by transport secretaries in co-operation with school principals (pupils in basic education), heads of day-care centres (pre-primary pupils) and the service providers arranging the transport.

1.2 Applying for a transport benefit

A decision on the transport benefit is always made for children in early childhood education and care, pre-primary pupils and pupils in basic education. Applications for a transport benefit must be submitted by the end of May (31 May).

1.2.1 School transport benefit granted without an application

In basic education, a school transport benefit is granted without a separate application when the pupil's journey to school exceeds five (5) kilometres. As a rule, the school transport benefit is granted for a fixed period covering grades 1–6 or grades 7–9. The transport benefit is granted for use on Föli scheduled services. The pupil's entitlement to the school transport benefit is reviewed annually on the basis of the address information held by the Digital and Population Data Services Agency. The guardian is responsible for ensuring that the pupil's address information is up to date and for notifying Transport Services of any change of address without delay.

1.2.2 Applying for other statutory school transport benefits

The guardian must always apply separately for a school transport benefit for their child in the following situations:

- a transport benefit is always applied for separately for a pre-primary pupil;
- the whole or part of a basic education pupil's journey to school is dangerous;
- a basic education pupil's journey to school is too difficult or strenuous for them for health reasons;
- the official address of a basic education pupil has changed and the change may affect their school transport benefit or the decision on their local school;
- a basic education pupil's journey to school exceeds five (5) kilometres, but for reasons related to the pupil, using public transport as the primary mode of transport is too difficult for them for health reasons.

Submitting the application

For early childhood education and care, pre-primary education and basic education, applications and their attachments must be submitted to the City of Turku by 31 May. Applications should primarily be submitted via Suomi.fi Messages or by post (Turun kaupunki, Lapset ja nuoret/Koulukuljetukset, PL 355, FI-20101 Turku).

If an application is received after 31 May, it cannot be guaranteed that any transport benefit granted or transport arrangements will be available immediately at the beginning of the school year. Transport planning, changes to routes and contractual requirements all require sufficient preparation time.

Application attachments

In the application, the guardian must state the grounds for applying for the transport benefit and submit the necessary supporting documents as attachments. Only statements issued by a professional who is already familiar with the pupil and/or by the public specialised healthcare provider or hospital treating the pupil, or by the school's pupil-specific multidisciplinary student welfare expert group, will be taken into consideration. Statements issued by private doctors or private psychologists are not accepted. Processing of the application will begin once the guardian has submitted all the required attachments as part of the application.

Determining and reviewing entitlement to transport

A decision on a child's/pupil's transport benefit is made for one operating year/school year at a time, unless an expert statement or another justified reason indicates a need for a shorter, longer or permanent period of validity. The decision is made by the official with the relevant decision-making authority.

Entitlement to transport is generally reviewed in the following situations:

- when the child's/pupil's official address changes;
- when the pupil's school changes;
- when the pupil is admitted to a specialised class or an international school;
- when a fixed period specifically stated in the decision expires.

Decision-making and appeals

The decision on granting a transport benefit is made by the official responsible for the matter. Anyone dissatisfied with the decision may appeal against it to the Turku Administrative Court in accordance with the provisions governing administrative judicial procedure. More detailed appeal instructions are provided with the decision. Appealing to the Administrative Court is subject to a fee.

Guardian's duty to report changes

The guardian must report without delay any changes affecting the transport benefit. Such changes include, for example:

- a change in the child's/pupil's official address;
- changes relating to after-school activities;
- changes in the child's/pupil's health or other personal circumstances;
- the end of or a change in the need for transport.

If the grounds for the transport benefit change, the guardian must submit a new application or report that there are no longer grounds for granting the benefit.

1.3 Accompanying allowance

As an alternative to free school transport, the guardian may be granted an adequate allowance for transporting or accompanying the pupil. The accompanying allowance is primarily an alternative in situations where arranging the actual school transport is particularly difficult, for example due to:

- the pupil's place of residence;
- transport timetables;
- reasons related to the pupil's health.

The accompanying allowance may be used, for example, where the pupil is accompanied to a bus route and no other school transport route is available in the area. If the City is able to arrange school transport appropriately using its own transport arrangements, no accompanying allowance will be paid even if the guardian transports the pupil in their own car.

The accompanying allowance is based on kilometres travelled and is equal to Kela's kilometre allowance for the use of a private car in force at the time.

The allowance is paid only for the part of the journey during which the pupil is in the vehicle. The accompanying allowance is paid free of value added tax on the basis of an invoice submitted by the guardian. The guardian is responsible for any tax consequences if the tax authorities consider the allowance to constitute taxable income.

1.4 Feedback and complaints

The quality of transport services is monitored on the basis of feedback and surveys received from schools, drivers, guardians and pupils. Feedback should be submitted as soon as possible after a problem occurs, either to the school or to School Transport Services at koulukuljetukset@turku.fi.

Feedback should include, among other things, the following:

- date and time;
- route and the identity of the driver;
- details of the feedback;
- contact details of the person submitting the feedback.

In the event of serious infringements, such as violations of road traffic legislation, the police will be contacted, as they have the authority to inspect transport operations and intervene where necessary. In

extreme cases, repeated complaints or serious neglect may result in termination of the transport contract.

2 Legislation governing transport

2.1 Act on Early Childhood Education and Care (540/2018)

Children in early childhood education and care do not have a statutory right to free transport between home and their place of early childhood education and care. Transport for children in early childhood education and care is a service provided at the municipality's discretion.

2.2 Basic Education Act, section 6 (628/1998, 21 August 1998)

Education in a municipality must be arranged so that, in view of the location of residential areas, schools and other places where education is provided, as well as public transport connections, pupils' journeys to school are as safe and short as possible. When pre-primary education is arranged, account must also be taken of the possibility for children participating in education to use early childhood education and care services.

The municipality shall assign a child of compulsory school age and any other pupil receiving education referred to in this Act to a local school or another suitable place referred to in subsection 1 where education is provided, in accordance with section 4(1) and (2) of this Act, in the pupil's own language in which the municipality is obliged to provide education. A child receiving pre-primary education may also be assigned to a place of early childhood education and care referred to in section 1(2), or another suitable place providing pre-primary education, provided that it meets the corresponding requirements. For a justified reason related to the provision of education, the municipality may change the place where education is provided without changing the language of instruction.

2.3 Basic Education Act, section 26 (628/1998, 21 August 1998)

Completion of basic education Completion of basic education begins at the time laid down in section 2(2) of the Compulsory Education Act, unless a decision has been made under section 27 of this Act for the child to begin education at a different time. Completion of basic education ends when the basic education syllabus has been completed or, at the latest, at the end of the school year in the calendar year in which the pupil turns 17.

2.4 Basic Education Act, section 32 (628/1998, 21 August 1998)

School journeys If the journey to school of a pupil in basic education exceeds five kilometres, the pupil is entitled to free transport. If the journey of a pupil in pre-primary education from home to pre-primary education or from early childhood education and care, as referred to in the Act on Early Childhood Education and Care, to pre-primary education exceeds five kilometres, the pupil is correspondingly entitled to free transport directly from home to pre-primary education or from early childhood education and care to pre-primary education, and from pre-primary education to home or to early childhood education and care. A pupil in basic or pre-primary education is also entitled to free transport if, taking into account the pupil's age and other circumstances, the journey referred to above would be too difficult, strenuous or dangerous for the pupil. As an alternative to free transport, an adequate allowance may be granted for transporting or accompanying the pupil. The pupil's daily journey to and from school, including waiting time, may take no more than two and a half hours. If the pupil has turned 13 by the beginning of the school year, the journey to and from school may take no more than three hours.

If a pupil is admitted to a school or other place where education is provided other than one referred to in section 6(2), admission may be made conditional on the guardian assuming responsibility for the costs of transporting or accompanying the pupil. In addition, if a child receiving pre-primary education participates

in early childhood education and care provided in another municipality as referred to in section 6(4) of the Act on Early Childhood Education and Care, the education provider has the right to require the child's guardian to assume responsibility for the costs of transporting or accompanying the child between the place of early childhood education and care and the place where pre-primary education is provided.

3 Guardian's responsibilities

The guardian has primary responsibility for their child's journeys to and from school and for their safety during these journeys. The guardian must ensure that the pupil knows the route to school, knows how to use any transport arrangements provided and is able to travel safely in traffic in a manner appropriate to their age and level of development. Where necessary, the guardian must practise the journey to school with the pupil and accompany and guide the pupil until they are able to travel safely and independently.

The guardian must also report without delay any changes affecting the school transport benefit and ensure that applications for the benefit and any necessary supporting documents are submitted by the deadline.

The guardian is responsible for:

- teaching the pupil how to travel safely in traffic;
- practising the route to school, transport arrangements and timetables with the pupil where necessary;
- ensuring that the pupil travels safely between home and the transport pick-up or drop-off point;
- ensuring that the pupil is at the transport pick-up point or public transport stop at the agreed time;
- reporting without delay any changes affecting the school transport benefit, such as a change of address, a change of school or other circumstances affecting the transport arrangements;
- applying for the school transport benefit in accordance with the instructions and submitting the necessary supporting documents and statements by the deadline.

4 Discretionary transport in early childhood education and care

In early childhood education and care, a child's education, instruction and care are primarily provided at the local day-care centre (section 5 of the Act on Early Childhood Education and Care). The Act on Early Childhood Education and Care does not require municipalities to arrange transport for children in early childhood education and care. Parents have primary responsibility for transporting their child to and from early childhood education and care.

Free transport is granted on a discretionary basis. Transport is granted on the basis of an application submitted by the guardians and a statement from a public-sector doctor or psychologist attached to the application. An expert statement does not oblige the City to arrange transport, but serves as expert advice in the decision-making process. Guardians undertake to follow the agreed booking and notification procedures.

Discretionary charter transport for early childhood education and care is applied for by submitting the Application for discretionary charter transport in early childhood education and care via Suomi.fi Messages or by post (Turun kaupunki, Lapset ja nuoret/Koulukuljetukset, PL 355, FI-20101 Turku). Transport applications for the following operating year, including all attachments, must be submitted by the end of May (31 May).

Any attachments, such as expert statements, must be submitted with the application.

Transport is arranged by shared taxi for all children in early childhood education and care who require transport. Based on the child's health needs, individual rather than shared transport may also be arranged. In such cases, the statement must include separate grounds for the need for individual transport. The guardian is always responsible for obtaining the required statements.

Transport is provided using charter transport separately arranged by the City to the place of early childhood education and care assigned by the City. Charter transport is arranged from only one address, the child's official home address recorded by the Digital and Population Data Services Agency (DVV), and the child is entitled to charter transport only for direct journeys to the place of early childhood education and care assigned by the City and/or from the place of early childhood education and care to home.

Transport is not provided during holiday periods unless the guardians submit a separate notification. Guardians are responsible for notifying the service provider of the need for transport during holiday periods. Guardians are also responsible for ensuring that the day-care centre is aware of the child's transport schedule, including during holiday periods.

Early childhood education and care does not arrange or reimburse transport to therapy for children in early childhood education and care. In cases of urgent placement, the City of Turku is not responsible for arranging or covering the cost of transport for children temporarily placed in another municipality. This is the responsibility of the wellbeing services county.

Decisions on discretionary transport in early childhood education and care are made by the City of Turku's Head of Special Services for Early Childhood Education and Care.

5 Transport in pre-primary education

A school transport benefit may be granted to children residing in Turku who attend pre-primary education provided by the City of Turku and who meet the requirements laid down in the Basic Education Act and the school transport criteria. The distance is measured from the child's home to the place of pre-primary education along the shortest publicly accessible route suitable for walking. The distance is measured using the measurement software used by the City.

A pre-primary pupil is entitled to a transport benefit only for direct journeys to pre-primary education and/or from pre-primary education to home. If a pre-primary pupil participates in complementary early childhood education and care before or after pre-primary education, no transport benefit is granted for journeys between home and the place of early childhood education and care.

The primary form of transport between home and pre-primary education is a transport benefit for use on Föli scheduled services. The benefit is granted to the guardian of a child of pre-primary education age until the child turns seven. Once the child turns seven, the transport benefit is granted to the child. If a mode of transport other than a bus is used, pre-primary pupils are generally transported together with pupils in basic education using the same transport services. A pre-primary pupil is granted a maximum of two school transport journeys per pre-primary education day.

The criteria for receiving school transport to the place of pre-primary education assigned by the City are as follows:

- the pre-primary pupil's journey exceeds 5 km;
- in the City of Turku, the pupil is entitled to transport only to the day-care centre assigned to them in the primary placement process for pre-primary education;
- taking into account the journey to pre-primary education, the pupil's age and other circumstances, the journey is considered too difficult or strenuous for the pupil on the basis of an expert statement. The statement must clearly specify the individual need and grounds for transport, the recommended mode of transport and the period for which school transport should be arranged. The statement must also indicate how far the pupil is able to walk independently.

School transport funded by the City is primarily arranged using public transport. A pre-primary pupil may be granted shared transport if public transport is unavailable and the pupil would be entitled to school transport on the basis of the length of the journey.

Decisions on transport benefits are made by the Regional Heads of Early Childhood Education and Care.

If the need for transport arises during the operating year, the application will be processed and the transport arranged within a maximum of two weeks.

6 Transport in basic education

School transport for pupils in basic education is primarily arranged by granting a transport benefit for use on public transport. School transport may be arranged using different modes of transport and may include part of the journey being made independently.

A pupil is granted a maximum of two school transport journeys per school day. A pupil participating in after-school activities arranged by the City of Turku who has been granted charter transport may, after the school day, receive transport directly home, from their own school to an after-school activity in another area, or from after-school activities at their own school to home.

Statutory transport may also be arranged as charter transport if the pupil's health or a journey to school deemed dangerous prevents the use of a bus. Door-to-door transport is arranged only for justified reasons, for example on the basis of a statement from a doctor or another expert. The guardian may not order school transport themselves or change the transport route.

Guardians have primary responsibility for teaching their children how to travel safely in traffic. Guardians must ensure that pupils starting school, as well as older pupils, are thoroughly taught their route to school, the relevant timetables and how to travel safely in traffic. Guardians must guide and advise their children and, where necessary, accompany them until they have learned to travel independently and pay appropriate attention to traffic. Guardians of pupils who have been granted a free school transport benefit are responsible for ensuring that their child can travel safely from home to the vehicle and from the vehicle back home.

Entitlement to school transport applies only to pupils admitted through the primary pupil admission process. Exceptions are children temporarily placed elsewhere on child welfare grounds and pupils in preparatory education who could not be placed in their local school. A pupil with a disability may be granted a school transport benefit as a reasonable accommodation under section 15 of the Non-Discrimination Act.

The guardian is responsible for the costs of transporting or accompanying the pupil if the pupil has been admitted through the secondary pupil admission process to a school other than the local school determined by their address, or if the pupil participates in education following a curriculum with a special emphasis, attends a specialised class or attends the Turku International School.

School transport is granted from the pupil's address recorded in the Population Information System to the school assigned to the pupil. This also applies to alternating residence arrangements. In alternating residence arrangements, only one of the two homes may be the child's official place of residence (section 9a of the Act on Child Custody and Right of Access).

The journey to school is measured from the pupil's home to the school gate along the shortest publicly accessible route suitable for walking. The distance is measured using the measurement software used by the City.

6.1 Transport in Swedish-language basic education

The City of Turku's Swedish-language basic education has a single pupil admission area covering the entire city. The school assigned to a pupil is determined in accordance with the Swedish-language service network and the pupil admission criteria. However, entitlement to a school transport benefit is determined on the same grounds as in other basic education. Choosing Swedish-language education or the existence of a city-wide pupil admission area does not in itself entitle a pupil to a school transport benefit. Entitlement to a school transport benefit is assessed in relation to the school assigned to the pupil and the criteria for granting the benefit in force at the time.

6.2 Changes of address and school

The pupil's guardian must always notify the City's Transport Services of any change to the pupil's address recorded in the Population Information System. Any existing transport benefit from the previous address ends when the pupil moves. When the pupil's address changes, Children and Young People Services will always reassess the pupil's local school. If a pupil moves within the city at the beginning of or during a school year and wishes to continue attending the local school previously assigned to them or to complete the school year at their former local school, transport will not be arranged or reimbursed unless Education Services reassigns the school as the pupil's local school. The transport benefit is activated only after the Regional Principal has issued a new decision on the pupil's local school, the change of address is visible in the Population Information System and a new transport decision has been made. If the Regional Principal issues a secondary school placement decision for the pupil, the existing school transport benefit ends immediately on the basis of that decision.

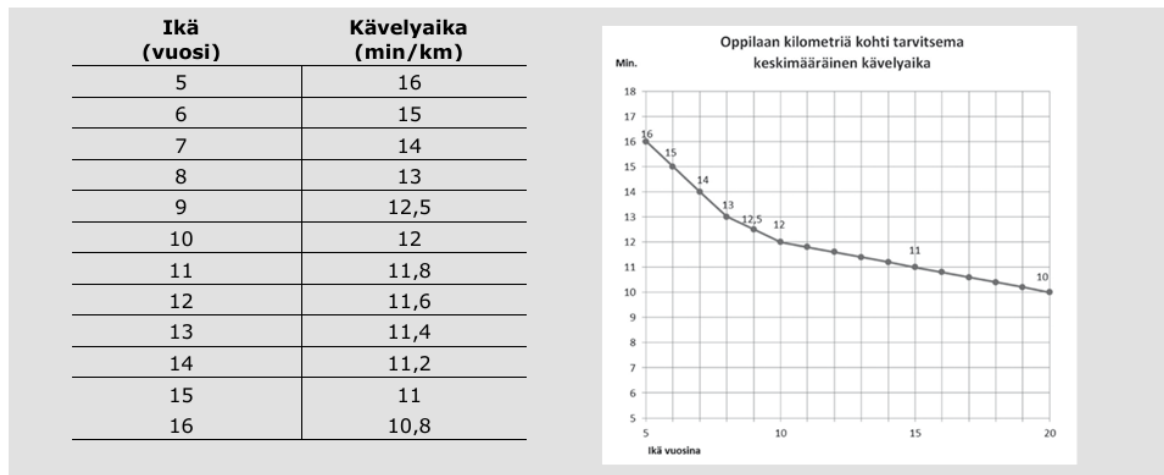
In Swedish-language basic education, the pupil's local school is determined by the principal. When the pupil's address changes, their local school is reassessed and, where necessary, reassigned in accordance with the pupil admission criteria for Swedish-language basic education.

6.3 Pick-up points and independently travelled distance

For taxi transport, the transport benefit decision generally specifies the pupils' pick-up and drop-off points. Factors taken into account when determining the pick-up point include the level of danger posed by roads, equal treatment and pupils' journey times. Taxi stopping points and pupil pick-up points are determined by the transport operator and are subject to approval by the City's Transport Services.

The following principles apply when determining pick-up points:

- **Independently travelled distance:** The distance that a pupil may be required to travel independently may be no more than 3 km for pre-primary pupils and pupils in grades 1–2, and 5 km for pupils in grades 3–9. The time spent travelling this distance independently is included when calculating the total time the pupil spends on their journey to and from school.
Duration of the journey to and from school: The statutory maximum journey time must not be exceeded (2.5 hours for pupils who have not turned 13 by the beginning of the school year / 3 hours for pupils who have turned 13 by the beginning of the school year). The total duration of the journey to and from school is calculated by adding together the duration of the morning and afternoon journeys. This includes the time spent walking between home and the pick-up point or bus stop, travel time by taxi or bus, and waiting time at school. Walking times are calculated using the walking speeds specified by the Association of Finnish Local and Regional Authorities, taking the pupil's age into account. The walking speeds specified by the Association of Finnish Local and Regional Authorities for pupils of different ages are shown in Figure 1.



Kuva 1. Oppilaan kilometriä kohti käyttämä keskimääräinen kävelyaika (min). (Kuntaliitto, henkilökuljetusopas)

Age (years)

Walking time (min/km)

Average walking time required by the pupil per kilometre

Min.

Age in years

Figure 1. Average walking time per kilometre for pupils (min). (Association of Finnish Local and Regional Authorities, Guide to Passenger Transport)

6.4 Waiting for transport

In the City of Turku, transport schedules are arranged with the aim of avoiding waiting times. If a school has pupils using school transport, the pupils must be able to enter the school premises and supervision must be provided at the school. During afternoon waiting times, pupils are provided with an opportunity to participate in supervised activities organised by school staff. There are no statutory provisions on supervision before the beginning of the school day.

By law, a pupil's daily journey to and from school, including waiting times, may take no more than 2 hours and 30 minutes if the pupil has not turned 13 by the beginning of the school year. Consequently, pupils in the same grade may have different statutory maximum journey times. For older pupils, the journey to and from school, including waiting times, may take up to three (3) hours per day.

6.5 Illness of a pupil using school transport during the school day

If a pupil becomes ill during the school day, their guardian will be contacted and asked to collect the pupil and take them home.

6.6 Dental treatment and therapy for pupils using school transport

The City of Turku does not arrange or reimburse transport for pupils to dental treatment or therapy.

6.7 Removal of a pupil using school transport from the school premises during the school day

If a pupil using school transport has to be removed from the school premises during the school day because of behaviour associated with their disability or illness, the guardian will be contacted in the first instance and asked to collect the child and take them home. It is also possible to arrange transport home for the pupil in accordance with the transport benefit decision granted to them. This must be agreed with the City's Transport Services.

6.8 Remedial instruction, detention, school clubs and instruction in the pupil's own mother tongue supplementing basic education

Remedial instruction for a pupil using charter transport should primarily be arranged during the pupil's school day. If remedial instruction is arranged outside the pupil's daily lesson hours, transport may be arranged for a fixed period by separate agreement. This must be agreed with the guardian and the City's Transport Services.

School detentions should be arranged so as to avoid additional transport costs or arrangements. The primary option is to arrange for the pupil to take another school transport service or scheduled bus departing from the school later the same day. As a secondary option, the guardian will be contacted and asked to arrange the pupil's transport. If neither of these arrangements is possible, the City's Transport Services will be contacted.

Voluntary school clubs organised as part of school activities to support teaching should be arranged, taking transport schedules into account, so that pupils using school transport also have the opportunity to participate. An exception applies to pupils using charter transport who have received a decision on pupil-specific support and who could not be placed in their local school. They are entitled to school transport home from school club activities (Liike, OPH, HTM) when the club is held immediately after lessons have ended. Any changes to schedules must be agreed well in advance with the pupil's guardian and School Transport Services so that transport can be arranged.

Instruction in the pupil's own mother tongue supplements basic education and is voluntary for the pupil. Two lessons of instruction are provided per week after the school day. Instruction in the pupil's own mother tongue may not necessarily be provided at the pupil's own school. The pupil's guardians are responsible for any transport required and the associated costs.

6.9 School journeys for pupils in preparatory education

The same principles concerning school transport benefits that apply to pupils in basic education also apply to pupils under the age of 17 in preparatory education. An exception applies to pupils in preparatory education who could not be placed in their local school. These pupils are granted a transport benefit for use on Föli scheduled buses when their journey to school is at least 3 kilometres. If, after preparatory education, the education provider assigns the pupil to a school other than the local school determined by their address, a discretionary transport benefit for bus travel may be granted if the journey to school is at least 3 kilometres.

6.10 Temporary pupil transport for health reasons

If a pupil requires transport due to illness or an accident occurring during leisure time or at school, transport may be arranged on the basis of a medical statement or certificate for the period specified in it.

Temporary transport required due to an accident or other health-related reason must be applied for through the City's Transport Services. The application must include a medical statement confirming the need for transport and the period during which transport is required. The application must specify whether the accident occurred during leisure time or the school day, which parts of the body were injured as a result of the accident, and any other factors that may need to be taken into account when arranging the transport. The application and its attachment (medical statement) must be submitted to koulukuljetukset@turku.fi. As a rule, the transport will be incorporated into existing taxi or bus transport arrangements wherever possible. Transport Services processes the application, and the Service Area Director for Basic Education makes the decision.

6.11 Free school transport benefit during periods of work experience (TET)

Work experience (TET) in lower secondary school is part of education. Entitlement to a free school transport benefit remains in effect during the TET period for journeys between home and the TET placement. Charter transport is not arranged for travel to and from TET placements. Transport is not arranged if the TET placement is in another municipality or takes place outside the school hours specified in the timetable.

If a pupil is not otherwise entitled to a free transport benefit but the journey to the TET placement exceeds 5 km, the pupil will receive a bus card paid for by the school for the duration of the TET period.

7 Safety of the journey to school

7.1 Road safety

As a rule, traffic environments in urban areas and private roads are not classified as dangerous. Snowy or slippery conditions, the dark season in sparsely populated areas, or a pupil travelling alone along an unlit road do not, in themselves, mean that the journey to school is considered dangerous. On private roads, the road maintenance association is responsible for road safety. Similarly, using a public road that carries traffic does not in itself make the journey to school excessively dangerous. Driving behaviour that violates traffic regulations is not grounds for granting a school transport benefit on the basis of road safety. Having to cross roads is not, in itself, considered grounds for transport. Pupils also often wait for transport by the roadside.

Road safety is assessed using the Koululiitu assessment method and a statement from the expert group responsible for transport. The Koululiitu assessment method examines the impact of the traffic environment on the safety of journeys to school and provides a method for calculating safety levels for individual road sections. The level of danger posed by conditions on different sections of the route to school is measured using risk scores, which represent road and traffic characteristics converted into index values. The level of danger posed by the conditions is assessed by road section, meaning sections of road with similar characteristics. Not all roads have been assigned separate risk score indices in Koululiitu. Where necessary, their safety is assessed using the same assessment data as in the Koululiitu method, the City's own assessment and, where necessary, a site visit.

Even if a road or a particular section of road has been classified as potentially dangerous in Koululiitu and the pupil would therefore, on the basis of their grade, be entitled to a free school transport benefit, the pupil may still cross the road provided that particular caution is exercised. The pupil may also be required to travel along the road in question to a bus stop or other transport pick-up point, or from a drop-off point to the road leading to their home. Any distance travelled along a road classified as potentially dangerous is always assessed on a case-by-case basis, taking into account the pupil's age and other factors relating to the pupil, visibility and other road-related risk factors.

If the competent authority considers the shortest route too dangerous for the pupil to travel independently, the pupil may be instructed to use an alternative safe route to and from school. Provided that the alternative route is not substantially longer than the shortest route or more difficult to navigate, the journey to school will be considered to be the shortest alternative route along which the pupil can travel safely while observing traffic regulations.

7.2 Danger posed by large predators

Large predators may occur within the City of Turku. The presence of such animals does not in itself constitute a danger on the basis of which a free transport benefit would be granted. Transport Services monitors the large predator situation using population estimates and the natural resources information service of the Natural Resources Institute Finland and by consulting both the Finnish Wildlife Agency and local wildlife experts.

7.3 Health reasons (strenuousness and difficulty)

A pupil may be granted a transport benefit if this is required due to their level of development or for health reasons. The transport benefit is primarily granted for travel by bus.

An expert statement is required for a transport benefit to be granted. Only statements issued by a professional who is already familiar with the pupil and/or by the public specialised healthcare provider or

hospital treating the pupil, or by the school's pupil-specific multidisciplinary student welfare expert group, will be taken into consideration. Statements issued by private doctors or private psychologists are not accepted. A decision on pupil-specific support does not automatically entitle the pupil to a free school transport benefit and is therefore not accepted as an attachment to the application or as grounds for granting the school transport benefit.

The statement must clearly specify the individual need and grounds for transport and the period for which school transport should be arranged. The statement must also indicate how far the pupil is able to walk independently.

An application for a school transport benefit on the grounds that the journey is difficult or strenuous, together with the related expert statement, must be submitted annually. An exception applies to pupils whose health-related reasons are permanent or long-term in nature, such as severe mobility impairments or pervasive developmental disorders. These pupils are generally granted a transport benefit for a period longer than one school year.

The school transport application and its attachments must be submitted to the City of Turku's Transport Services by 31 May at the latest.

8 Other situations

8.1 Fires and other sudden exceptional circumstances

In sudden and short-term exceptional circumstances (lasting no longer than until the end of the school year) affecting the pupil's home at the address recorded in the Population Information System, such as a fire or water damage, a pupil entitled to a school transport benefit may, upon application, be granted a discretionary transport benefit to a temporary address for student welfare reasons on the basis of an expert statement, provided that an existing transport route is available.

8.2 Completion of basic education and flexibility at the final stage

Under section 26 of the Basic Education Act, a pupil completes basic education when they have completed the basic education syllabus or, at the latest, in the year in which they turn 17. If a pupil does not complete the syllabus within the normal timeframe and continues in basic education after grade 9 in order to complete it, they are entitled to a free school transport benefit during this period in accordance with section 32 of the Basic Education Act.

In addition, under the flexibility arrangements for the final stage referred to in section 5(3) of the Compulsory Education Act, a person subject to compulsory education who has not completed the basic education syllabus by the end of the school year in the calendar year in which they turn 17 may, if they wish, continue to fulfil their compulsory education obligation by participating in basic education, including basic education for adults. In this case, they become eligible for Kela's school transport subsidy.

9 Rules governing transport

9.1 Passenger capacity regulations

Pupil transport by taxi is subject to the provisions on passenger capacity and safety arrangements for school and pre-primary education transport operated as charter services laid down in section 142 of the Road Traffic Act (729/2018, 10 August 2018) and Government Proposal HE 180/2017.

Vehicles used for pupil transport must not exceed their permitted passenger capacity (section 3 of Decree 553/2006). On scheduled services, the registered passenger capacity may be temporarily exceeded by 30 per cent (section 38 of the Decree on the Use of Vehicles on the Road).

9.2 Seat belts

The use of seat belts and other safety equipment during taxi transport is governed by sections 90–91 and 94–95 of the Road Traffic Act. In taxi transport, the driver is also responsible for ensuring that pupils wear seat belts in vehicles fitted with them. The driver will assist pupils in fastening their seat belts where necessary. For public transport, the use of seat belts is additionally governed by sections 91 and 94 of the Road Traffic Act and the provisions of the Seat Belt Directive (2003/20/EC): seat belts must be worn on public transport vehicles where they are fitted to the seat.

9.3 Conduct

The rules of conduct of the City of Turku's basic education schools also apply during journeys to and from school. Pupils must comply with the rules of conduct and the driver's instructions to ensure safety during transport.

Taxi transport

During taxi transport, the taxi driver is the adult responsible for the pupils. Pupils must follow the driver's instructions during transport. The driver has the right and obligation to intervene appropriately in disruptive behaviour during transport and, where necessary, report it to Transport Services, the school and the place of pre-primary education.

Road safety is the highest priority during transport. Pupils must remove their school bags from their backs when entering the vehicle. Pupils must remain in their seats during transport and keep their seat belts fastened. The driver is responsible for ensuring that pupils wear their seat belts. The driver must also wear a seat belt as required by law and otherwise behave as a responsible role model. Pupils may not unfasten their seat belts during the journey without permission or move from one place to another in the vehicle while it is in motion. If a pupil repeatedly breaches the rules or fails to follow the driver's instructions, the City's Transport Services or the school will contact the guardian.

Bus transport

On public transport services, the bus driver is not the adult responsible for the pupils, although the driver's duties include maintaining order in the vehicle (Act on Maintaining Order in Public Transport 472/1977, 17 June 1977). On public transport services, the driver is not responsible for ensuring that passengers wear seat belts. Under section 3 of the Act on Maintaining Order in Public Transport, the driver may remove a passenger who causes a disturbance and continues to do so despite being told to stop. However, a passenger may not be removed if doing so would endanger their health.

9.4 Sports equipment and other unusual items

Only sports equipment and other items required for schoolwork, or items that have otherwise been separately agreed with the school, may be carried on charter transport. Sports equipment must be appropriately protected during transport (e.g. blade guards must be fitted to ice skates, and skis must be placed in a bag or tied together). On public transport, the applicable conditions of carriage must be followed when transporting equipment.

