

**Criteria for school transports, pre-primary and basic education
City of Turku
2025**

1. Provisions on school transport are laid down in section 32 of the Basic Education Act as follows:

If the distance to school for a pupil in basic education or in additional voluntary education exceeds five kilometres, the pupil shall be entitled to free transportation.

If the distance for a pupil in pre-primary education from home to school or from day-care referred to in the Day Care Act to the place of pre-primary education exceeds five kilometres, the pupil shall correspondingly be entitled to free transportation from home directly to pre-primary education or from day-care to pre-primary education and from pre-primary education home or to day-care.

Additionally a pupil in basic education, in additional voluntary education or in pre-primary education shall be entitled to free transportation when the travel referred to above is too difficult, strenuous or dangerous in view of the pupil's age or other circumstances. An alternative to free transportation is an adequate subsidy for transporting or accompanying the pupil to school.

The daily school travel referred to in subsection 1 above, including waiting time, may take a maximum of two and half hours. If the pupil has turned 13 by the beginning of the school year or if the pupil receives special-needs education referred to in section 17(2), the school travel may take a maximum of three hours.

If a pupil is admitted to a school or teaching facility other than those referred to in section 6(2), the admission may be made conditional on the parent/carer assuming responsibility for the cost of transporting or accompanying the pupil to school.

2. Clarification to the criteria for granting the school transport benefit

Criteria for issuing a bus card

In addition to the provisions of section 32 of the Basic Education Act, the criteria for granting free school transport in basic education in the City of Turku are specified as follows:

Bus transport benefit means that the pupil is granted a free bus card for school trips. The decision on arranging school transport is made separately for grades 1–6 and 7–9 if the pupil lives over 5 km away from the school. If the pupil moves or changes schools, a new decision must be made.

The decision is made by the Service Area Director. The decision is recorded in the student register. If the transport benefit is not granted, the decision with justifications is sent to the guardian. The decision may be appealed in writing and must be addressed to the Turku Administrative Court. Appeal instructions are attached to the decision. The appeal is subject to a fee.

The school trip is calculated from the pupil's home address to the school's address using a route planner. The school transport benefit is not granted for an address other than the

pupil's official home address entered in the population system. An exception to this is a temporarily placed child on child welfare grounds.

- A school card may be issued for a shorter distance than provided for here if:
- The trip to school can be considered dangerous. Applications are processed on a case-by-case basis and assessed together with the city's traffic planning.
- Taking into account the pupil's age and other circumstances, the school trip becomes too difficult or strenuous for the pupil. The decision is made on the basis of a justified statement by a doctor or psychologist. The statement should include an assessment of the child's health and/or development as well as their ability to walk or otherwise make the school trip independently.

Only a statement by a public physician or psychologist treating the pupil is taken into account. A statement from a private physician or a private psychologist is not accepted. The statement is requested by the guardian.

If the child, upon the guardian's application, attends a school other than their nearest school, the guardian is responsible for transporting the child. If the education provider assigns a school other than the nearest school to the pupil for educational or other reasons, the transport benefit is granted if the other criteria are met.

Grounds for granting charter transportation

Charter transportation refers to school transportation by a regular or accessible taxi or a minibus.

Charter transportation is arranged if:

The daily school travel, including waiting time, takes over two and half hours. Three hours for those aged 13 or over.

The distance between the home and the nearest bus stop is more than 5 km.

Taking into account the pupil's age and other circumstances, the school trip becomes too difficult or strenuous for the pupil. For example, the trip to school may be too difficult due to the pupil's personal level of development or too strenuous due to health reasons so that the pupil cannot manage the trip independently by walking or taking a bus. The decision is made on the basis of a justified statement by a doctor or psychologist. The statement should include an assessment of the child's health and/or development as well as their ability to walk or take the bus. Only a statement by a physician or psychologist in the public sector treating the pupil is taken into account. A statement from a private physician or a private psychologist is not accepted. The statement is requested by the guardian.

The trip to school can be considered dangerous. In this case, the trip to school is considered dangerous in regard to trips between the home and the bus stop or waiting at the bus stop. Applications are processed on a case-by-case basis.

Temporary transport due to illness or accident is arranged on the basis of a medical certificate issued by the treating physician. The certificate must indicate that the pupil needs the taxi transport for a certain period of time.

When a pupil, upon application by a guardian, attends a school other than the nearest school (e.g. language classes, international school or a school in a different student

area), the guardian is always responsible for the costs of transporting and accompanying the pupil in cases that require long-term charter transportation. Charter transportation is only arranged to the nearest school or the school assigned by the education provider for the pupil according to the charter transportation criteria. The guardian must be informed of this at the application stage. An exception to this rule is a temporary need for charter transportation due to an accident or short-term illness granted on the basis of a medical certificate to ensure that the pupil can continue attending school.

From autumn 2025 onwards, pupils who have received a positive decision on charter transportation may be transported directly home, from their school to the location of an after-school activity in another area, or from their school's afternoon activities to home after the school day.

Urgent placements

In urgent placements, the City of Turku is not responsible for the organisation and costs of the transport of pupils who are temporarily placed in another municipality. This is the responsibility of the wellbeing services county.

Alternating weeks scheduling

For bus cards, the pupil's school trip is only calculated from one address, which is the pupil's official home address. Similarly, charter transportation can only be arranged from one official home address (DVV).

Temporary free school transport

Temporary transport due to illness or accident is arranged by decision of the Service Area Manager. A medical certificate/report on the need for transport and the duration must be presented upon request.

School transport is not organised for

- visits to therapy, doctors, clubs, etc.
- temporary residences or places of care
- afternoon activities (general education/without the right to transport on the basis of

section 32 of the

Basic Education Act.) If the transport benefit has been granted, the student can use public transport or the education provider's charter vehicle to travel

from after-school clubs to home following the set timetable of the vehicle or take the charter taxi for IP pupils with a predetermined

schedule. Taxi transport from afternoon activities is only organised

when needed if it is not possible to use other modes of transport and the need for transport is regular. In other cases, the guardians are responsible for transporting the pupil and

the city does not organise separate transports from after-school activities.

Applying for the school transport benefit

Apply for free school transport by sending a [school transport application](#) via Suomi.fi Messages or by mail (City of Turku, Kasvatus ja opetus/Koulukuljetukset, P.O. Box

355, 20101 Turku). Any appendices, such as expert statements, must be submitted in connection with the application.

Pupils who are starting on grades 1 or 7 in their local assigned school do not need to apply for a school card separately. Their school trips are calculated automatically.

Support for accompanying guardians

According to the Basic Education Act, an alternative to free transportation is an adequate support for transporting or accompanying the pupil to school. However, the municipal support may not exceed what transport or accompanying the pupil would cost if organised by the municipality. The support for an accompanying guardian and the school transport by taxi are mutually exclusive. The guardian's support is only granted to pupils who are entitled to a taxi transport benefit. The amount of the guardian's support is the same as the kilometre allowance paid for the use of your own car paid by Kela. You can apply for the guardian's support with a discretionary application before the need for transport starts. The decision is made by the Service Area Director. The guardian's support may be granted for one academic year, one semester, or for the winter months. Shorter periods are not accepted. The guardian is responsible for school transport for the entire period.

Transports in pre-primary education

The same general principles apply to the organisation of pre-primary education transports as to the organisation of school transport (section 32 of the Basic Education Act). However, the guardian must always apply for the transport benefit for pre-primary education in writing also for trips exceeding 5 km.

If the distance 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 is more than five kilometres, the pupil is entitled to free transport. Pupils in pre-primary education are only entitled to transport benefits for direct trips to and/or from the place of pre-primary education to home. If a pre-primary student participates in complementary early childhood education and care before or after the start of pre-primary education, no transport benefit is granted for travel between home and the ECEC place.

Transport is organised:

- For a distance of over 5 kilometres.
- For travel between home and the place of pre-primary education or travel between pre-primary education and early childhood education and care.
- From family day care to pre-primary education and back on special grounds, taking

local conditions

into account (nearest school principle), for example if there is no day-care centre providing pre-primary education in the area and the place of pre-primary education is located in the child's future school.

- Taking into account the pupil's age and other circumstances, the school trip becomes too difficult, strenuous or dangerous for the pupil on the basis of an expert statement.

When applying for discretionary transport benefits for pre-primary education, the head of the day-care centre checks the grounds presented in the application and issues a statement, while the Regional Head makes the decision. If necessary, the application can be supplemented with another expert statement (doctor, psychologist, occupational therapist or social worker).

The expert statement does not oblige the city to organise transport, but it can be used to support decision-making. Transport is not organised for early childhood education and care places. Transport can be organised for one or several children, either by bus or taxi. Transport is not necessarily arranged for the entire trip; instead, the pupil may make the trip partly independently or the guardians may accompany the child to the bus stop and back.

The parents must request a statement from the head of the day-care centre for the transport application for pupils in pre-primary education. The decision on transport is made by the Regional Head, and for pre-primary education purchased as an out-sourced service, the decision is made by the director of the ECEC service area.