

Spare Seats Scheme 2023/24 Academic Year



Disclaimer

Declaration by applicant:

I certify that, to the best of my knowledge, the information given in the application submitted is correct. In consideration of Oxfordshire County Council providing my child with paid for transport to attend school I undertake as follows:

- That I will pay the paid for seat fare as requested
- That I understand the place cannot be guaranteed throughout the time my child attends the school
- To ensure that Oxfordshire County Council's School Transport Code of Conduct is adhered to [School Transport Code of Conduct \(oxfordshire.gov.uk\)](https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/school-transport-code-of-conduct)

By applying for the Spare Seats Scheme you are agreeing to the Terms and Conditions & Charges of the Spare Seats Scheme as detailed below:

Charges

The cost of purchasing a seat under the Spare Seats Scheme for the 2023/24 academic year will be:

- Under 3 miles from home to school/college £434.40 a year (£144.47 per term)
- 3 miles and over from home to school/college £806.30 a year (£268.77 per term)

Invoices will be sent three times per year as follows: -

- Invoice 1 in August to cover Term 1 (Autumn Term - September to December)
- Invoice 2 in December to cover Term 2 (Spring Term - January to March)
- Invoice 3 in March to cover Term 3 (Summer Term - April to July)

Spare Seats Scheme charges will be waived for the following low-income groups for statutory school aged students who are resident in Oxfordshire:

- students who are aged 8 to 16 in the relevant academic year in which travel is required who are eligible for Free School Meals; or
- students who are in Key Stage 1 in the relevant academic year in which travel is required who would have been eligible for Free School Meals on income grounds; or
- students aged 5 to 16 in the relevant academic year in which travel is required whose parents are in receipt of the maximum level of Working Tax Credit

Fees cannot be waived for students aged 16-19. Students aged 16-19 should contact their school or college direct to check if they are eligible for funding towards travel under the Government's 16-19 Bursary Fund. Information on the 16-19 Bursary Fund, including who may qualify, can be found at www.gov.uk/1619-bursary-fund.

Evidence is required to confirm entitlement to one of the above benefits and will need to be provided at time of application. Evidence will also need to be sent each term to show the entitlement is still valid and the fee can be waived.

A copy of the complete 'Tax Credits Award Notice' is required to confirm receipt of the maximum level of Working Tax Credit. To confirm eligibility for Free School Meals based on your income, confirmation will be required from your child's school confirming that they have completed the necessary checks within the academic year in which travel is required.

Please do **NOT** submit payment until you have been contacted. If your application is successful, you will be sent an invoice for the seat which will need to be paid in advance before any travel pass can be issued.

Previous

It will not be possible to travel without a valid pass - NO PASS NO TRAVEL

Spare Seat Scheme – Key Points of the Scheme

- 1) The "Spare Seat Scheme" operates, where spare capacity is available on contracted routes that are operated for the benefit of those who are entitled to free transport to and from school, and where the sale of seats would not result in a breach of the PSV Accessibility Regulations.
- 2) Applications for the new academic year must be submitted by 30 June. For applications received after this date the Council cannot guarantee that they will be processed in time for the start of the new academic year.

- 3) The Council cannot guarantee that a young person will keep the seat for longer than one full term (based on a three-term academic year). **You should ensure you have an alternative plan in case the Council are unable to offer a seat for your child to travel at point of application and throughout your child's schooling**
- 4) Although no guarantee can be given that the transport will continue to be operated throughout the time a student needs or wishes to travel to the school/college, or that the place on the transport will not be withdrawn at some future date, the Council will always endeavour to provide one term's notice if a place is to be withdrawn.
- 5) Transport cannot be diverted, or additional stops arranged for the benefit of travellers who wish to travel on seats purchased under the Spare Seats Scheme.
- 6) Transport can only be provided at the beginning and end of each school day.
- 7) There is no right of appeal if it is not possible to purchase a seat under the scheme.
- 8) Fare prices are reviewed annually.
- 9) The parent/carer, or in the case of Years 12 and 13, the student, must complete an online application form.
- 10) Parent/carer are required to pay in advance for one full term's travel.
- 11) The price charged covers a return journey for every school day of the relevant period.
- 12) There will be no rebates for those deciding to travel for less than the maximum number of possible journeys per term. For example (but not limited to), there is no rebate if a young person decides to use their travel pass for morning travel and returns by some other private means in the afternoon, emergency school closures, if transport is no longer required at any point during the term paid for.
- 13) If a seat is available, a travel pass will only be issued on receipt of a completed online application, and correct payment. Your child should not travel until in receipt of the travel pass as they may be refused travel.
- 14) The Spare Seat charge will be waived for those students who are resident in Oxfordshire, of statutory school age who are eligible for free school meals, or in the case of those aged 5,6 or 7 would be eligible for free school meals on income grounds, or whose parent is in receipt of the maximum level of Working Tax Credit
- 15) If there are more applicants than places, a parent/carer will be able to add their child's name to a waiting list. Any waiting list for a specific route will operate for no longer than one academic year. If no place becomes available within the academic year of application, a new application will need to be submitted for the new academic year, by 30th June to be considered for the following academic year.
- 16) If there is an available home to school transport route operated on behalf of Oxfordshire County Council, students who are not of statutory school age and who are aged 16 to 19, may use the Spare Seat Scheme to purchase a seat on that route to enable access to their school or college.
- 17) When there are more requests to pay for seats on a specific route than there are seats available, they will be allocated in the descending order of priority shown in the table "Priority for Spare Seats".

Priority for Spare Seats

	Priority Category
1	Those with an Education, Health and Care Plan naming the school
2	Looked After Children
3	Years 12 and 13 (if there is no available service bus route)
4	Children in receipt of Free School Meals or whose parent /parents are in receipt of the maximum of Working Tax Credit
5	Those who travelled on the route the previous term
6	By year group, in ascending order of priority from Reception to Year 11 (or to Year 13 if there is an available service bus route)
*	Where there are more applicants than places in any of the above categories, priority will be given to those living closest to the destination school (measured using the shortest designated route on Oxfordshire County Council's Geographic Information System)

- 18) If no place is available to purchase under the scheme parents may place the student's name on a waiting list. Should a place become available it will be allocated using the priority shown above. The order of the waiting list can change if new applications are submitted.
- 19) If seats purchased under the Spare Seats Scheme need to be withdrawn, this will be done in the reverse allocation order of the table above.

Further information

If a pass has been lost or stolen, a replacement can be issued by Oxfordshire County Council. A small administrative charge of £10. To order and pay online for the replacement, please visit https://concessioncard.net/gpp/Login_input.action and select the replacement pass tab.

Oxfordshire County Council's Home to School Travel and Transport Policy can be read at www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/schooltransport