

## **Home to School Transport Changes**

### **FAQs**

#### **Policy Position**

The policy position for school transport, agreed by Moray Council on 24 September 2025 following consultation is summarised as follows:

The council will provide school transport at no cost to pupils attending their zoned school where

- a) For primary school pupils the journey from home to school is greater than 2 miles
- b) For high school pupils the journey from home to school is greater than 3 miles
- c) For pupils where there is no safe walking route from home to school

Where transport is provided pupils may still be expected to walk up to 2 miles (primary) or 3 miles (secondary) to access school transport.

The council is responsible for determining whether there is a safe walking route.

The council is required to have regard to safety relating to school transport arrangements but there are no specific requirements or processes to be followed.

Should a pupil have individual support needs or mobility restrictions that preclude walking an otherwise safe walking route (or accessing the routine school transport provision) then transport needs will be met separately through existing processes.

It is parental responsibility to ensure safety of pupils on their journey to school or to/from the pick up point for school transport.

Contracted / Council operated home to school transport routes may also be registered as public bus services.

This policy has been established in line with Scottish Government guidance.

#### **Walking Route Assessment Process**

Considerations for assessing an appropriate walking route include the following.

- Continuous adequate public footway on major roads. This can be pavement or cinder type path or a cleared and unobstructed grass verge/path.

- A suitable route could also be an established active travel route which may not be adjacent to a road.
- On minor routes, the width of the carriageway, potential traffic speed, volume of traffic as well as visibility/sight lines which can be impacted by sharp bend, woods/hedges or other obstructions must be considered. Adequate step offs onto a suitable verge should be available as walking will normally occur on carriageway of a minor road.
- Good visibility of oncoming traffic on walking route, and at bus transport pick up point when relevant.
- Where a road needs to be crossed, consideration taken of traffic flow and sight lines to allow opportunities to cross safely where no formal crossing infrastructure is in place.
- An absence of street lighting does not make a route unsafe.

### **IIA/Scottish Government Guidance/Rights of the Child**

In considering the changes to School Transport, and as part of the review of the safe walking routes to school, an Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) was included with the paper considered at Full Council on 24<sup>th</sup> September 2025. Together these assessments, as well as the individual walking route assessments included consideration of the Scottish Government School Transport Guidance, Getting It Right For Every Child (GIRFEC) principles and the UN Rights of the Child. Link to the report and IIA is [here](#)

### **Supervision of children on the walking route**

In line with legal responsibilities it is for the parent/carer to assess whether their child requires to be accompanied on the journey to school. The assessment is carried out on the basis that any individual child is accompanied if required based on their individual circumstances. The assessment was carried out on the expectation that pupils walking the route will be suitably dressed to allow for seasonal factors. Parents/carers should consider appropriate reflective clothing or accessories such as reflective snap-bands for enhanced visibility walking in darker conditions.

### **Expectation of Walking**

The Council have supplied details of a route considered to be appropriate for the home to school journey but parents/carers may choose to consider alternative routes or modes of transport including cycling and public transport.

### **Winter Maintenance Concerns**

The Council will review the winter maintenance arrangements on the walking routes but must stress that they will be assessed in the same manner as similar routes across Moray. In line with the priorities set out in the published winter service operations plan resources will be concentrated on clearing the busiest paths and roads.

### **Mobile Phones**

The Council's mobile phone policy allows secondary pupils to carry their mobile phones to and from school, the main consideration being that the phone is switched off whilst in school grounds. Any child who feels the need to call their parent to advise they have arrived at school can do so from the school gate before switching the phone off for the day.

## **Craigellachie Specific FAQs**

### **Use of Speyside Way**

The Speyside Way is a dedicated active travel route which has been upgraded in recent years to provide a good quality facility for every day journeys to work, education or for leisure purposes and use of the route for a journey to school is in line with its intended purpose. Although sections of the route are along side the River Spey none are sufficiently proximate to the river to cause a safety concern.

### **Bus Services**

The Stagecoach service 36 stops at Craigellachie Garage on the A941 at 0833h, arriving at the school bus turning circle at 0840h and accepts the Under 22 free bus pass.

When there is not a suitable timetabled service, the m.connect service on-demand can also be booked (subject to availability) using the m.connect app up to 2 weeks in advance and accepts the Under 22 free bus pass.

### **Non-Entitled School Transport**

The council's existing policy is that parents and carers may apply to purchase unoccupied seats on closed home to school transport routes if their home address doesn't qualify them for home to school transport at their school of choice. Availability for purchase is dependent on seats being available on a school contract route (in this case the Dufftown to Speyside High School route). Parents/carers are responsible for ensuring the child/children are at the pick up point offered as no route diversions or additions are included. A charge is made for this service which can be paid by term or annually.

## **Portgordon Specific FAQs**

### **Speeds and speed limits on roads along the route**

Comprehensive vehicle speed data available to the Council does not indicate any speeding on the A990. The data shows an average speed of 40 mph in the 60 mph section with those vehicles with the highest recorded speeds being well under the 60mph limit. Accident statistics from the past 5 years indicate only one collision on the A990 between Portgordon and Buckpool involving a cyclist and a motor car.

### **Street lighting**

An absence of street lighting does not make a route unsafe. The only section of the route which is unlit is along a relatively straight section of road which has continuous pavement.

### **Road Crossings**

The points at which crossing roads has been assessed are all at points with appropriate sight lines. The vehicle speeds and volumes are acceptable for crossing the road, and at St Peter's there is a pedestrian refuge in the road which is a form of safer crossing facility.

### **Bridge Inspection**

The footbridge in Buckpool was last inspected in February 2026 by the structures inspector and has been deemed to be structurally sound in construction. We plan to trim back vegetation and secure the bannisters on the upper steps. This will be in place prior to the change in policy after the Easter break. The bridge is routinely inspected.

### **Stagecoach Bus Service (35)**

There are currently two bus shelters in Portgordon which may be used by any pupil using the Stagecoach bus. The current times of the Service 35 bus between Portgordon and Buckie are as follows and they accept the Under 22 free bus pass.

0749 depart Portgordon

0759 arrive Buckie East Church Street

1620 depart East Church Street

1630 arrive Portgordon.

As a commercial operator, timetabling decisions rest with Stagecoach. The council has approached them to ask if timings of their services can be adjusted. The vehicles generally used on the 35 are normally double decked. The existing loadings mean that whether single or double deck there is capacity on these particular services to accommodate the numbers of pupils travelling to and from school.

Generally public buses are a safe and reliable form of transport, however, if there are concerns about reliability or other matters they should be raised directly with Stagecoach.

When there is not a suitable timetabled service, the m.connect service on-demand can also be booked (subject to availability) using the m.connect app up to 2 weeks in advance and accepts the Under 22 free bus pass.

### **Breakfast Club and After School**

Buckie High School opens at 0800h in the morning for pupils to access the Breakfast Club at the school which provides breakfast in the canteen area in a supervised environment at no charge to pupils.

After school pupils can use the seated area around reception until 1600h if they are waiting for a bus or other transport.

### **Non-Entitled School Transport**

The council's existing policy is that parents and carers may apply to purchase unoccupied seats on closed home to school transport routes if their home address doesn't qualify them for home to school transport at their school of choice. For Portgordon there is no bus routed through the village from April 2026, however, should this change then availability for purchase will be dependent on seats being available.

### **Muirton Specific FAQs**

## **Road Safety**

In the 5 year period from January 2020 to December 2024, the latest date for which collision data is available, there were no recorded collisions on the B9135 from the junction with the A941 and the junction with the B9040 Stotfield Road.

Whilst there may be isolated examples of vehicles driving at excessive speeds for the road conditions, the separation of the dedicated walking and cycling path and the clear safety record of the B9040 itself lends the route to being suitable for travelling to school.

## **Walking Route**

With the exception of an initial section of pavement on the B9135 at Steading View, there is a dedicated walking & cycling path that is separated from the carriageway until the approach into Lossiemouth.

The route includes crossing the junction of Drainie Road which has no formal crossing facilities, but there are clear sightlines and remains path is set back from the main road.

Where the route crosses the B9135 to get onto Typhoon Road, there is an island which allows pedestrian to the road in two stages and gives visibility as well as an indicator to road users of the likelihood of pedestrians crossing at this location.