

Factors considered by the Council in assessing availability of routes within walking distance

1.0 The child/young person

- (a) the age of the child/young person;
- (b) any disabilities the child/young person may have.

NB The child/young person is expected to be accompanied by an adult, as appropriate.

2.0 The route

The Council will conduct a detailed assessment the route. In line with guidance issued by the Road Safety Great Britain and Local Authority Road Safety Officer (LARSOA) best practice guidance. This will be undertaken at the times of day that pupils would be expected to use it to travel to and from school and, where appropriate, will include a vehicle gap analysis of roads to cross.

- (a) If a public footpath, totally separated from roads is available, it must normally be made up with a hard surface, for example, tarmac, gravel etc. to be acceptable as a route (in all weather).
- (b) The presence of suitable refuges adjacent to a road, for example, a verge.
- (c) The volume, speed and type of traffic.
- (d) Visibility, for example, sharp bends with a high hedgerow or bank, or overhanging trees or branches that might obscure fields of vision for the pedestrian or motorist.
- (e) Accident record of the route at the times of day children/young people would be expected to use it to get to and from school.

There would normally need to be a combination of factors present for the route to be unavailable for an accompanied child/young person.

3.0 The following are examples of potential hazards which the Council considers to be acceptable to an accompanied child/young person:

- (a) Lonely routes
- (b) Moral danger
- (c) Unmanned level crossings
- (d) Roads to be crossed
- (e) Limited street lighting
- (f) Canals, rivers or ditches running along part or the whole of the route

The legal definition of an 'available route' is a route along which a child, accompanied as necessary, can walk and walk with reasonable safety to school. It does not fail to qualify as 'available' because of dangers which would arise if the child were unaccompanied. (*Essex CC v Rogers [1986]*)