

Children's Services

1st September 2013

**Policy on eligibility for free school
travel passes for pupils attending a
mainstream school**

Introduction

This policy outlines the circumstances in which Bury Council (the Authority) will provide travel assistance for children and young people, of compulsory school age, attending a mainstream school. This will usually be a free travel pass that is valid for the journey between home and school on school days only, up to 9pm in the evening.

If the school selected is based upon parental choice and there is a closer appropriate school with available places, then the pupil will not qualify for assistance unless one of the eligibility criteria below applies.

Eligibility

An eligible child is defined in the Education Act 1996 (inserted by the Education and Inspections Act 2006), Schedule 35B, for the purposes of Section 508B.

Section 508B describes the local authority's duty in providing free travel arrangements for eligible pupils. The Council's statutory duties in respect of the provision of free transport are set out in section 444 and Schedule 35B of the Education Act 1996 (inserted by the Education and Inspections Act 2006).

A pupil from a low income family will be eligible for assistance if they meet one of the following criteria:

- Pupils aged 8 to 10 years who are attending their nearest appropriate school, that is two or more miles from their home
- Pupils / young people aged 11 to 16 years who are attending any one of the three nearest appropriate schools, that is between two and six miles from their home
- Pupils / young people aged 11 to 16 years attending their nearest appropriate school preferred on grounds of religion faith or belief, that is between two and fifteen miles from their home. In these cases, the parent/carer must demonstrate that the reason for selecting the school is due to religion/faith or belief.

A low income family is defined as a family whose parents/carers are in receipt of the maximum level of working tax credit or the pupil / young person is eligible for free school meals

In addition the Authority will provide support for pupils / young people who are:

- under the age of 8 years who live more than two miles away from their nearest appropriate school
- aged 8 years and over who live more than three miles or more from their nearest appropriate school

The “appropriate” school in the case of mainstream education would usually be the nearest school in whose catchment area the pupil resides with the capacity to accommodate them.

The Authority will provide assistance towards the travel for pupils / young people who are attending a school that is a City Technology College, City College for the Technology of the Arts or an Academy, providing they meet the eligibility criteria within this policy

The Authority will not provide assistance towards the cost of travel to pupils / young people attending independent schools.

The Authority will not provide assistance towards the cost of travel to pupils under or over the compulsory school age, within this policy.

The distance of mileage will be determined by the Authority's computer system. This will ensure that all pupils are measured to the same datasets and that all measurements are as accurate as each other. In order to be transparent in all the decisions the Authority has to adhere to this distance measured using the software, no other software or method of measurement will be accepted.

Eligibility is based upon the address and school that the pupil is attending provided on the original application, if you move house or your child moves school your application will have to be reassessed.

If you cease to receive the maximum level of working tax credit or free school meals you must inform the School and College Transport Team 0161 253 6968 immediately and return your travel pass. Failure to do so will result in you being charged for the period when your child is no longer eligible for assistance.

Procedure for application

Assistance will only be provided during the academic year that the application was received. Applications will have to be renewed annually by completing the application form available from the School and Transport Team, 3 Knowsley Place, Duke Street, Bury, BL9 0EJ, telephone 0161 253 6968, or it can be downloaded from www.bury.gov.uk, select Education and Learning, parents and carers financial support, school transport.

Applications cannot be backdated and assistance will be considered from the date that the completed application form is received.

If you move house you will have to return your travel pass immediately and if the pupil / young person meets the criteria from your new address a new travel pass will be issued. Failure to return your travel pass may result in the Authority charging you for the outstanding unused period of the pass.

Travel passes

Those pupils / young people who are eligible for assistance will receive a travel pass that may be used on buses/trams or trains. The travel pass will be valid for the specified route between home and school. Pupils / young people travelling home from school after 9pm in the evening will need to obtain a variance voucher from their school. The variance voucher will need to be shown with the travel pass when the journey is made.

Pupils who meet the criteria and are living at a temporary address or they are travelling outside the Greater Manchester area, will receive payments on a half termly or termly basis. Payments will be made based upon attendances in a previous term, confirmed by the school.

Appeals

If you are not satisfied with the outcome of your application or how it has been processed you should contact the School and College Transport Team Manager, 3 Knowsley Place, Duke Street, Bury, BL9 0EJ, or email schoolandcollegetransport@bury.gov.uk

If after receiving a reply from the School and College Transport Team Manager you are not satisfied, please address complaints to

The Complaints Coordinator
Strategy & Commissioning
Children's Services
Bury Council
3 Knowsley Place
Duke Street
Bury
BL9 0EJ