

BOROUGH OF POOLE

HOME TO SCHOOL TRANSPORT POLICY

1. Background

- 1.1 This policy is informed by the relevant sections of the Education Act 1996 and the Education and Inspections Act 2006
- 1.2 This policy applies to Local Authority maintained schools.
- 1.3 In cases which do not meet the criteria described below parents are responsible for arranging their child's travel to and from school by whatever means they deem suitable and for meeting any associated costs.
- 1.4 This policy applies to pupils living within the Borough of Poole.
- 1.5 Dorset County Council and Bournemouth Borough Council have their own transport policies, and pupils attending Poole schools, but who live outside the Borough of Poole, will need to apply to their "home" local authority.

2. Pupils in Year R to Year 11

- 2.1 The Borough of Poole provides free transport for pupils who attend their nearest suitable (usually catchment area) school when:
 - the pupil is in Year R to Year 3 and lives 2 miles or more from the school; or
 - the pupil is in Year 4 to Year 11 and lives 3 miles or more from the school; or
 - the pupil is in Year 4 to Year 6, lives 2 miles or more from the school and comes from a low-income family.
- 2.2 Transport will also be provided if: the pupil is in Year 7 to Year 11, attends one of their three nearest suitable schools, lives between 2 and 6 miles from the school, and comes from a low-income family.
- 2.3 A pupil may qualify for transport assistance to either a denominational school or a grammar school if it is **geographically** their nearest school or one of their three nearest schools, assuming that they meet the other relevant criteria outlined in paragraphs 2.1 and 2.2. A child may also qualify for transport assistance to a denominational school if they meet any of the criteria outlined in section 3.
- 2.4 Transport for children in Year R will only be provided at the start and finish of the normal school day. Parents will therefore be responsible for any mid-day travel where the child initially attends school on a

part-time basis.

- 2.5 The 2 and 3 mile distance limits are measured via the shortest walking route which is safe for a child accompanied as necessary.
- 2.6 The 6 mile upper distance limit will be measured by a Geographical Information System along road routes.
- 2.7 “Low income family” is defined as:
Any family eligible to receive Pupil Premium; or
Any family in receipt of their maximum level of Working Tax Credit.

3.0 Voluntary Aided Schools

- 3.1 If a pupil attends their nearest suitable Voluntary Aided denominational school for religious reasons, free transport will be provided if:
The pupil is in Year 7 to Year 11, lives between 2 and 15 miles from the school, and comes from a low-income family.
- 3.2 If a pupil attends their nearest suitable Voluntary Aided denominational school for religious reasons, it is not geographically their closest school and the pupil is in Year R to Year 6, they will not automatically qualify for free transport.
- 3.3 If a child attends a Voluntary Aided denominational school because it is their nearest school **geographically**, free transport will be provided if:
The pupil is in Year R to Year 3 and lives 2 miles or more from the school; or
The pupil is in Year 4 to Year 11 and lives 3 miles or more from the school; or
The pupil is in Year 4 to Year 6, lives 2 miles or more from the school, and comes from a low-income family.
- 3.4 There are a number of contract bus services which run to selected denominational schools. In cases where pupils do not qualify for free transport as per paragraph 3.2, they may qualify for a concessionary seat on one of these services, if:
The pupil is in Year R to Year 3 and lives 2 miles or more from the school; or
The pupil is in Year 4 to Year 11 and lives 3 miles or more from the school; or
The pupil is in Year 4 to Year 6, lives 2 miles or more from the school, and comes from a low-income family.
- 3.5 A charge will be made for these services.
- 3.5 For the academic year 2015-2016, this charge will be £400 per annum, which can be paid in one or 3 instalments, as preferred.

- 3.6 This charge is waived for families on a low income (ie eligible for Pupil Premium or receiving the maximum level of Working Tax Credit, with no deductions for income).
- 3.7 Families applying for transport for “religious reasons” may be asked to provide appropriate evidence of belonging to the denomination of the foundation of the school, namely:
A copy of the pupil’s baptism, First Communion or confirmation certificate; or
Certification of the pupil’s regular church attendance by the appropriate church authority; or
Similar evidence relating to the parent(s) of the child.
- 3.8 Where the child’s catchment area or nearest school is a faith school, applications for transport to an alternative school on the grounds of “absence of faith” will be considered on an individual basis.
- 3.9 If there is no maintained school following the faith of which the parent(s) or child are a member, and the parent(s) of that child have a wish for him or her to be educated in a faith school, applications for transport to a maintained school following an alternative faith will be considered on an individual basis.
- 3.10 Transport for children in Year R will only be provided at the start and finish of the normal school day. Parents will therefore be responsible for any mid-day travel where the child initially attends school on a part-time basis.
- 3.11 The 2 and 3 mile distance limits are measured by a Geographical Information System using public roads and footpaths from the gate of the home address to the nearest school gate that is for the use of pupils using the shortest walking route available for a child accompanied as necessary.
- 3.12 “Low income family” is defined as:
Any family eligible for Pupil Premium; or
Any family in receipt of their maximum level of Working Tax Credit.
- 3.13 The 15 mile upper distance limit will be measured by a Geographical Information System using road routes.

4.0 Grammar Schools

- 4.1 There is no automatic entitlement for a pupil attending a grammar school to receive free transport, unless:

It is geographically their nearest school; and
They live 3 miles or more from the school (or 2 miles if their parent is

on a low income); OR

The pupil is in Year 7 to Year 11; and
The school is one of their three nearest schools; and
They live between 2 and 6 miles from their school;; and
They come from a low-income family.

- 4.2 There are a number of contract bus services running to selected grammar schools. Pupils may qualify for a concessionary seat on one of these services, if:
The pupil lives more than 3 miles from the school; or
The pupil lives more than 2 miles from the school and comes from a low-income family.
- 4.3 A charge will be made for these services.
- 4.4 For the academic year 2015/2016 this will be £400 per annum, which can be paid in one or three instalments, as preferred.
- 4.5 This charge is waived for families on a low income.
- 4.6 Other pupils may also use these contract services as fare-paying passengers; fares will be set by the operator.

5.0 Transport for pupils with SEN

- 5.1 Transport is not provided for pupils with statements of SEN as a matter of course.
- 5.2 If the pupil attends a special school or unit or some other placement other than that recommended by the Borough of Poole the parent(s) will be responsible for arranging and paying for any necessary transport. Where the pupil attends the nearest appropriate school or placement as recommended by the Borough of Poole, assistance will be given subject to the criteria defined in sections 2, 3 and 4.

6.0 Post-16

- 6.1 There is no statutory obligation on any Local Authority to provide assistance with transport for pupils of post-compulsory school age.
- 6.2 The Borough of Poole provides assistance with transport for pupils aged between 16 and 19 attending a school sixth form or college of further education on a full-time course where they meet all of the following criteria:

The pupil has a current Statement of Special Educational Needs
The pupil lives 5 miles or more from the school or college
The pupil attends the nearest school or college able to offer a course compatible with their employment or educational objectives – it will be

for the Local Authority to make decisions regarding compatibility.

Or all of the following criteria:

The pupil has previously had a Statement of Special Educational Needs (lapsed at age 16) or a significant disability or medical condition (this must be supported by appropriate documentary evidence)

The pupil lives 5 miles or more from the school or college

The pupil attends the nearest school or college able to offer a course compatible with their employment or educational objectives – it will be for the Local Authority to make decisions regarding compatibility

The pupil's parent is on a low income ie would meet the eligibility criteria for free school meals or claims Working Tax Credit at the maximum level.

- 6.3 The 5 mile distance limit will be measured by a Geographical Information System along the shortest available walking route safe for a child accompanied as necessary. .
- 6.4 Parents are required to make a contribution towards the cost of this transport; the amount of the contribution will be subject to annual review.
- 6.5 For the academic year 2015-2016 this contribution is £400 per annum, which can be paid in one or three instalments, as preferred.
- 6.6 This charge is waived for low-income families as defined in paragraph 2.6
- 6.7 Transport will not be provided for pupils taking repeat courses.

7.0 Entitlement for pupils living within the minimum distance

- 7.1 Transport may be provided within the minimum distances indicated in sections 2, 3, 4 and 5 if transport is considered necessary irrespective of distance eg due to physical disability. This will follow an assessment of need taking into account the following factors:
- Pupil's inability to walk. Where the pupil has, for example, a severe disability or medical condition (whether temporary or permanent) which means that they cannot reasonably be expected to walk, transport assistance will be provided. Medical evidence will be required.
 - A pupil is physically able to walk but needs to be accompanied

It should be noted that there is a general expectation in law that parents will accompany their child "as necessary". Examples of pupils who may need to be accompanied on the journey to school could include young children, those with sensory impairment, or those with diagnosed emotional and/or behavioural disorders.

Transport may only be provided where there is a compelling reason or combination of reasons why the parent(s) cannot accompany the pupil, for example:

- Where the parent(s) can demonstrate a disability of severe medical condition which means that they cannot be reasonably be expected to physically walk with their child. Medical evidence will be required.
- Where the parent(s) can demonstrate that they are unable to walk with the pupil to and from a special school or unit because of having to take other child(ren) to different schools and that there is no other suitable person who can accompany their children. Full details of other children will be required, as well as an explanation of why other family members, friends or neighbours etc cannot accompany the pupil.

Work commitments of the parent(s) would not normally be accepted as a “compelling reason”.

7.2 It is not possible to identify an exhaustive list of the criteria which it may be appropriate to take into account. If factors not listed here are put forward, professional judgement will be exercised as to their relevance and significance.

7.3 Since the minimum distances for pupils of compulsory school age concern walking to and from school, the inability to pay fares would not in itself be taken into consideration when assessing a pupil’s entitlement to transport.

8.0 Change of address

8.1 If parents move house, their child may stay at the same school but parents will then be responsible for making and paying for any necessary arrangements to get their child to and from school.

8.2 Applications from families who have been placed in short-term temporary accommodation will be considered on an individual basis.

9. Connecting distances

9.1 The Borough of Poole’s aim is to provide free transport for entitled pupils as near to their home as is reasonably practicable. This does not necessarily mean that door to door transport will be provided.

9.2 For pupils in Year R to Year 3 the transport pickup/collection point will normally be no more than $\frac{3}{4}$ mile from their home.

9.3 For pupils in Year 4 to Year 11 the transport pickup/collection point

will normally be no more than 1 mile from their home.

10. Journey times

10.1 The Borough of Poole's aim is to have journey times of no longer than:

- 45 minutes for pupils in Year R to Year 6
- 75 minutes for pupils in Year 7 to Year 11.

11. Concessionary spare places

11.1 Concessionary spare places may be provided if a seat is available on an existing school transport contract.

11.2 A charge is made for this facility; this charge will be subject to annual officer review.

11.3 For the academic year 2015-2016 this is £400 per annum, per child. This can be paid in one or three instalments, as preferred.

11.4 Concessionary spare places are not available on local bus or rail services, where normal fares must be paid.

11.5 Concessionary spare places may be withdrawn at short notice as a result of route rationalisation, an increase in the number of entitled pupils or a change to the size of the vehicle. They can also be withdrawn if the pupil's behaviour is not of an acceptable standard.

12.0 Travel arrangements

12.1 The transport arrangements made under this policy will be at the Borough of Poole's discretion and usually provided on the most cost-effective basis. Arrangements may take the form of:

- Travel pass for use on public transport; or
- Travel pass or other authorisation for use on private contract services; or
- Mileage allowance; or
- Cycling allowance; or
- Provision of an escort to accompany the pupil whilst walking.

12.2 The Borough of Poole will ensure that children aged under 8 years who qualify for transport assistance are provided with a minimum of a lap-type seatbelt if travelling on private contract services.

13. Withdrawal of transport

13.1 The Borough of Poole may withdraw transport facilities from pupils whose behaviour during the journey to and from school or college is not of an acceptable standard.

13.2 If transport assistance is authorised in error, the Borough of Poole reserves the right to withdraw that assistance.

14. Application and appeals

14.1 Applications must be made using the appropriate form.

14.2 Applicants have the right of appeal against decisions made by the Borough of Poole regarding assistance with transport.

14.3 If applicants do appeal, decisions will initially be reviewed by the Education Awards Review Panel, which consists of senior officers from Children, Young People and Learning.

14.4 If the original decision is upheld, parents can then make a formal appeal to the Education Discretionary Awards Appeal Panel, which consists of elected Members.

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