

HOME-TO-SCHOOL TRANSPORT – DISCRETIONARY TRAVEL SCHEME

TERMS and CONDITIONS

1. For those pupils for whom no free home-to-school travel entitlement exists under the general policy, offers of discretionary travel are made when there are spare seats available on a journey arranged by the County Council to carry other pupils or students and which is being operated by a specially contracted vehicle. Please note:- Should the route in question subsequently become licensed as a local bus service, payments will need to be made to the operator instead of the County Council.
2. A termly contribution to the cost of the transport is normally required. A subsidised rate is charged – the County Council meets part of the cost. However, if an offer is made, full details of the arrangements for exemption from the charge (for families living in Suffolk), will be shown on the reverse of the invoice (which will be sent with a transport photo pass application form). In brief, the details are as follows:
 - If your child is currently in receipt of free school meals and/or you are in receipt of Income-based Job Seekers Allowance, Income Support or a Tax Credit you may be exempt from the charge (although not all recipients of a Tax Credit will qualify for exemption – if an offer is made, you will find this explained on the reverse side of the invoice). Please note that the County Council additionally operates a scheme whereby you may be exempt from the transport charge if your income, including any benefits not stated above, like Bereavement Allowance, Incapacity Benefit etc, falls below a certain threshold after approved living expenses have been deducted. To establish this, it will be necessary to complete a detailed declaration of income and expenses in order to qualify for exemption under this category.
 - These arrangements for exemption only apply to families who live in Suffolk. No exemptions are available for Post 16 students or for children offered places on Suffolk County Council operated registered local bus service routes. Parents who do not meet the exemption criteria will need to be aware, if an offer is made, that the sum specified in our invoice is payable in full and in advance each term (part-payments and payments in instalments cannot be accepted).
3. We will post the pass(es) to your home address as quickly as possible following receipt of payment in full, or satisfactory evidence of exemption entitlement, and the submission of the transport pass photo application form. All travel is subject to holding a valid travel pass.
4. Parents who accept any initial offer will normally receive an invitation during the second half of that term to ascertain whether or not they wish to pay for their child(ren) to continue to use the transport the following term. Once an offer is made we make every effort to maintain the offer of discretionary travel to the end of the current school year. However, you should note that if the place on the transport is required during the year for another child who is entitled to transport assistance under the County Council's statutory obligations, the discretionary travel place may be withdrawn at short notice. In those circumstances as much notice as possible will be given and of

course, an appropriate refund would be made of any fees paid to the County Council for the term in question.

5. You should note that if an offer of discretionary transport is made it will only relate to the current school year. Parents must submit a written request by the May half-term holiday each year to seek renewal of the discretionary place for the following school year. It must be emphasised that the availability of spare seats may not be known until the start of the school year in question and it is not possible for us to forecast the likelihood of being able to renew the discretionary place in future years. In the light of that and the legislation which ended the practice of allowing three younger children to share a double adult seat on some types of vehicle, parents who have children attending a school outside their area in particular will need to bear in mind that loading on vehicles in the future may prevent renewal of the offer of a place on the transport.
6. Because numbers are tight or unclear, and because sixth formers or college students make late decisions based on exam results, we don't always know the numbers who will be travelling until late in the summer holiday period or sometimes into the autumn term.

OUR POLICY COMMITS US TO HELPING POST 16 STUDENTS AS A PRIORITY OVER YOUR APPLICATION.

7. A pass will only be valid for the term for which it is issued. A 50% refund is available in respect of any pass returned by the half-term holiday. No refund will be made for a pass returned in the second half of the term. If you move from your present address or do not wish to continue to take advantage of the travel facility, it would be helpful if you would advise Passenger Transport immediately. Whilst every effort will be made to operate the transport in accordance with the published arrangements, no refund or allowance will be made in respect of any day or days on which the transport does not operate or on which a child does not board a bus.
8. If your child loses the pass the loss should be reported to the school or to Passenger Transport as soon as possible after discovery of the loss. A charge of £10 is made for the replacement of lost, stolen or damaged passes.
9. You need to note that no journey will be operated solely for the conveyance of discretionary passengers and the County Council reserves the right to withdraw the facility if it becomes necessary for the transport to be altered by cancellation or re-arrangement of the route.
10. You should note that supervision other than by the vehicle driver is not normally provided on the journeys to and from school, and no formal supervision is provided on the school premises until 10 minutes before the start of the school day.
11. Discretionary travellers will only be picked up and set down at one of the approved stopping points and it will not be possible to divert or extend routes or arrange for other stopping places.
12. All travel is subject to holding a pass valid for the journey. It is not transferable and may only be used by the pupil to whom it is issued. We ask all parents to emphasise to their child(ren) how important it is to carry the travel pass every school day.

13. Most of our transport routes are directly linked to specific schools.
Sometimes it is possible to offer a seat to a child who attends another school near the route. In that case the County Council cannot accept responsibility for transporting the child on days when transport does not operate because the school it is intended to serve is closed. Likewise, if a child has to walk between one school and another for set down/pick up purposes then the Council cannot accept responsibility for his/her safety whilst making such journeys.
14. If you are applying for a place on transport for your pre-school age child and an offer is made to you, please note that no lunchtime transport is provided for pre-school children who attend part-time. There are normally no bus escorts on routes to mainstream primary schools.
15. Smoking is strictly forbidden on all Passenger Transport services. Behaviour that causes damage to the vehicle or offence, inconvenience or danger to the driver or other users of the transport may lead to withdrawal of the travel facility, at the Council's discretion.
16. The County Council's general home-to-school transport policy is applied consistently and fairly throughout Suffolk. However, if you believe that your situation falls outside the home-to-school transport policy you may have the right to appeal. For further information see contact details below. Please note that if your child is not attending the school designated to serve your area but is at a school you have chosen which is the nearest to your home, and the distance to that preferred school is two miles or more (children up to 8 years) or three miles or more (children 8 years up to 16 years), the Authority may be able to waive the charge for the place on the transport, subject to verification. Do please notify Passenger Transport if you feel you may fall into this category.
17. EDUCATION AND INSPECTIONS ACT 2006. Please note that the Education and Inspections Act 2006 provides additional opportunities for low income families to receive statutory free transport for children aged 8 – 16 in certain specific circumstances. For more details please visit www.csduk.com or call the number below.

CONTACT DETAILS

Address Suffolk County Council
Passenger Transport
Endeavour House
8 Russell Road
IPSWICH
IP1 2BX

Telephone 0845 606 6173

Fax 01473 216884

Email: education.transport@educ.suffolkcc.gov.uk

Unless stated otherwise, the terms and conditions of travel are the same as those which apply to children eligible for free transport provision.