

TRANSPORT ASSISTANCE TO FAITH SCHOOLS 2009/2010



If you think your child may be eligible for assisted school transport to a Faith School, please complete and **return this form by 1 June 2009**. There is a charge for transport to faith schools which is reassessed every year. In 2009/2010 the charge is £288.

Whose responsibility is it to get a child to school?

All parents are encouraged to consider the practicalities of sending their child to a school which is not within walking distance, unless it is the designated or nearest school, because it is a **parent's responsibility to get their child to school throughout the whole time the child is there**.

How do I check if my child is eligible for assisted school transport?

Transport may be provided to your nearest school on grounds of religion or belief subject to the following criteria:

- You must live in Devon and within the designated transport area of the school. Or, if there is no designated transport area, the journey by public transport is less than 45 minutes to a primary school, or 75 minutes to a secondary school.
- The school can confirm your faith.
- Devon County Council will consider transport to the nearest faith school, which is designated by the local authority to serve the home address, where the school is over the statutory walking distance (3 miles). Parents are strongly advised to contact the school transport team to check entitlement.
- Transport can only be provided from one permanent address.
- Please note transport is **NOT** provided for work experience and induction days.

* Children from low income families (in receipt of a state benefit which qualifies for free school meals, or the **maximum** level of Working Tax Credit) may be entitled to free transport to the nearest school you prefer because of your religion or belief. Your child will be entitled to free transport if the school is over 2 miles and up to a maximum of 15 miles from your home. Distances of up to 2 miles are measured by the shortest available walking route and distances of over 2 miles and up to 15 miles are measured by road – please see below. **If you are applying for transport under low income criteria please enclose a current copy of your benefit evidence.**

How are distances measured?

Walking distances are measured using the shortest available walking route. This may include roads, footpaths and bridleways. The measurement is made between the nearest entrance to your house (for example, a front gate) and the nearest entrance to the school grounds. Private driveways to homes and within schools are not included in the measurement. Distances are measured using an electronic geographic information system (GIS).

What if my circumstances change?

This entitlement has to be reapplied for every year so you should not assume that your child will continue to have support if your circumstances change e.g. if your child is no longer in receipt of free school meals, or if your family is no longer in receipt of the maximum level of Working Tax Credit. **If you feel your child may be eligible you are advised to consider whether you would be able to get him/her to the school of your choice if assistance was withdrawn.**

Confirmation of Faith: Please complete and return the enclosed Certification Form, together with a copy of your child's baptismal certificate, with this application form. **Your application cannot be processed until these documents are received.**

Code of Conduct: We want all passengers to enjoy a safe and pleasant journey. All pupils and their parents must sign the transport application form to agree that children will behave appropriately on school transport and abide by the Code of Conduct which is enclosed. **Your application cannot be processed unless the agreement is signed.**

How Does The Application Process Work?

When we receive your application form we will decide whether your child qualifies for help with transport and will send you a letter to let you know. If your child is entitled to help we will send you a payment form so that you can pay the transport fee, or claim remission of the charge on low income grounds by providing proof of receipt of an appropriate means tested benefit.

If free transport is withdrawn can I appeal? Withdrawal of free transport is not considered to constitute sound grounds for an appeal for assistance from the Council, as parents have been warned in advance that this could happen if they cease to be eligible.

Contact Number: For all queries please telephone: 0845 155 1019

