



St. Helens
Council

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SERVICES

HOME TO SCHOOL TRAVEL ASSISTANCE POLICY

MAINSTREAM

Effective: 1st September 2016

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1.0 Introduction

It is parents/carers responsibility to secure their child's regular attendance at a school and to ensure that their child is able to get to and from school by whatever means is available to them.

Whilst parents/carers have a right to express a preference for their child to attend a primary or secondary school of their choice, the Local Authority does not have any legal responsibility to provide transport if the school is not their "nearest qualifying school".

If a pupil is attending the "nearest qualifying school", the Local Authority has a duty to provide assistance with transport as per the Education Act 1996, and the Education and Inspections Act 2006.

The "nearest qualifying school", is taken to mean the nearest school to the pupils home address, with available places that provides education appropriate to the age, ability and aptitude of the pupil.

This policy document sets out the way St Helens Council exercises its duties and powers under the legislation and provides information for parents/carers regarding assistance with transport.

2.0 Eligibility

For the purpose of this policy, the Local Authority has a duty to provide assistance, to pupils who are St Helens residents.

3.0 Statutory Distance Criteria

3.1 Primary Pupils – Reception to Year 6

Assistance with transport will usually be provided to those pupils who are attending their nearest qualifying school within borough, with available places, where the measured walking distance between home and school is two miles or more, for pupils up to the age of eight, and three miles or more, for pupils over the age of eight and up to the age of eleven.

3.2 Secondary Pupils – Year 7 up to Year 11

Assistance with transport will usually be provided to those pupils who are attending the nearest qualifying school within the borough with available places, where the measured walking distance between home and school is more than three miles.

4.0 Low Income Criteria

4.1 Primary Pupils

For those pupils aged eight and up to the age of eleven who are entitled to free school meals, or whose families are in receipt of the maximum Working Tax Credit, assistance will be awarded if they are attending their nearest qualifying school with places where the walking distance between home and school is two miles or more.

4.2 Secondary Pupils

For those pupils who are entitled to free school meals, or whose families are in receipt of the maximum Working Tax Credit, assistance will be awarded if they are attending any one of the three nearest qualifying secondary schools (not including faith schools) providing those schools are more than two miles and less than six miles.

4.3 Religion or Beliefs

For those pupils who are attending a school on the basis of religion or beliefs, and are either entitled to free school meals, or whose families are in receipt of the maximum Working Tax Credit, assistance with transport will be awarded if they are attending the nearest faith/belief school and the measured distance is more than two miles and not more than fifteen miles.

4.4 Proof of Low-Income

When submitting an application, parents/carers must provide up to date proof of low-income.

5.0 Measuring Distance

All measurements are taken from the front door of the pupil's home, via the shortest safest walking route, to the nearest gate of the school. To ensure accurate and consistent measurements for all applications, the Authority uses a Geographic Information System (GIS).

A safe walking route is deemed to be a route that is paved and lit and an accompanied child can walk.

6.0 Unsafe Walking Route

If the route between a pupil's home and their school is deemed unsafe, assistance with transport will be awarded.

7.0 Exceptional Circumstances

If a pupil, in year 6, year 10 or year 11 moves address and becomes a resident of St Helens Local Authority, assistance may be provided to the pupil's existing school, if the school is within a reasonable travelling distance.

If a pupil, in year 6, year 10 or year 11, who is a resident of St Helens Local Authority, moves address, and the measured safest walking distance from their new address to their school is more than the statutory distance, assistance with transport may be granted.

8.0 Managed Transfers

Under the Local Authority Fair Access Protocol, if a pupil transfers to a school that is recommended by the Local Authority, assistance with transport will be provided if the measured safest walking distance from the pupil's home to the school is more than three miles. Assistance will be in the form of a public service bus pass.

If the measured safest walking distance is less than three miles the parents/carers will need to complete a Transport Review Form to be considered by the Transport Review Process.

9.0 Types of Assistance

9.1 Public Service Travel Pass

In the majority of applications, pupils who qualify for assistance will be issued with a public service travel pass, either a Supersaver or Solo pass.

The Local Authority will determine the type of travel pass that is appropriate to enable the pupil to travel to and from school.

A pass is valid on public transport and can only be used during term time. Limitations to its use will be found on the back of the issued pass.

9.2 Loss of Public Service Travel Pass

If a pass is lost, a duplicate travel pass can be purchased from the School Transport Section. The cost of the duplicate pass is reviewed on an annual basis by the Transport Providers. To obtain the current cost of a duplicate pass please contact the School Transport Team on telephone number 01744 671033.

9.3 Hired Services

If it is appropriate for a pupil to travel on one of the Local Authority's hired services, parents/carers will be notified of the route, and the pupil will be collected from their home address and taken to school.

9.4 Mileage Allowance

Mileage allowance will only be paid to parents/carers if there are no appropriate local buses, rail or hired services.

Mileage forms can be submitted on a monthly basis to the School Transport Team. Please refer to the web page for the current mileage allowance rate.

10.0 Change of Circumstances

10.1 Statutory Criteria

Once assistance is awarded, transport will be granted until the pupil finishes school or there is a change in circumstances.

If a pupil changes address or school, the parent/carer must notify the School Transport Team as soon as the change occurs. If the pupil is in receipt of a public service travel pass, the pass must be returned immediately. A reassessment of the pupils' eligibility will be carried out and, if the pupil is still eligible the pass will be returned.

If the pupil is travelling on a hired service, their place on the route will be suspended and a reassessment of their eligibility will be carried out. If the pupil is still eligible, the service will be reinstated.

If the Authority is not informed of any change, and a pupil is no longer entitled to assistance with transport, the parent/carer will be required to pay the full cost of the transport provision from the date there is a change in circumstances to the date the Local Authority is notified.

10.2 Low-Income Criteria

If a pupil qualifies for assistance with transport under the low-income criteria, assistance will be awarded to the end of the academic year the application was processed in. Assistance will continue even if there is a change in circumstance, within the same academic year as per the terms of the Education and Inspections Act 2006.

11.0 Return of Public Service Travel Pass

If a travel pass is returned, the parent/carer must obtain proof of the pass being returned to the Authority.

12.0 Annual Renewals

Parent/carers will receive renewal applications at the end of every academic year to confirm whether assistance with transport is required for the following academic year.

Parent/carers of pupils who qualify for assistance under the low-income criteria will have to supply supporting low-income evidence with their renewal application.

13.0 Non-eligible pupils

If a pupil is refused assistance with transport, the parent/carer can supply additional information for further consideration by the Transport Review Process.

14.0 Transport Review

Transport Reviews follow a 2 stage process to review applications from parents who have been refused assistance under the statutory criteria.

The Review process will determine if the policy has been applied fairly and consistently and if so, whether the individual circumstances of the pupil is sufficiently exceptional to justify deviating from the policy.

15.0 Applying for Transport

Applications can be downloaded from the St Helens web page, www.sthelens.gov.uk/school-and-college-transport or alternatively contact:

Children and Young Peoples Services
School Transport Team
Atlas House
Corporation Street
St Helens
Merseyside
WA9 1LD

01744 671033

schooltransport@sthelens.gov.uk