
Home to School Travel Allowance Policy



Council of the
ISLES OF SCILLY

August 2012

1 Introduction

1.1 Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 imposes a duty on parents to ensure their child receives appropriate full-time education, either by attendance at school or otherwise. Section 509 of this act states that: "where it considers necessary a Local Authority has a duty to arrange for the provision of home to school transport."

1.2 This policy outlines the circumstances in which the Council of the Isles of Scilly will provide support for children and young people to travel between home and school.

1.3 This support would typically be in the form of transport or a travel allowance. Because the Council of the Isles of Scilly does not have any registered or licensed taxi vehicles it is not possible to exercise the transport option of this policy. Consequently, support for the purpose of this policy relates directly to the travel allowance payment.

1.4 This policy applies to travel arrangements from home to school at the start of the school day and school to home at the end of the school day. It does not apply to attendance at after school clubs or activities outside normal school hours.

2 Eligibility

2.1 To be eligible for consideration for this travel allowance, the pupil's place of residence and the school site attended must be within the administrative area of the Council of the Isles of Scilly.

2.2 Eligibility for travel allowance is generally limited to those children of compulsory school age who attend school and whose home address is beyond the statutory walking distance for their age.

2.3 Legislation defines that the maximum, statutory walking distance as two miles for children under eight, and three miles for children aged eight and over.

2.4 The measurement of the distance is made between the nearest access to the pupil's house and the nearest access to the school grounds, Private driveways to homes and paths or driveways on school grounds are not included in the measurement. The measurement is calculated using an electronic Geographic information system (GIS). The distance is measured by the shortest route along which a child, accompanied as necessary, may walk with reasonable safety. As such, the route measured may include footpaths, bridleways and other pathways as well as roads.

2.5 Measurement of the distance is taken from the Council's Uniform System Ordinance Survey Master Map data and applicants may request their routes to be measured using this facility.

Low income groups

2.6 Since September 2007 primary pupils from low-income families are also eligible for the travel allowance. Low-income groups for this purpose are defined as those who are entitled to free-school meals or those whose families are in receipt of the maximum level of Working Tax Credit.

2.7 The criterion applied to applications from low income groups in deciding whether or not a child is eligible for support is "a child from a low income family aged 8 years, but under 11 years, who is travelling more than 2 miles from home to school".

Pupils with multiple residences

2.8 Where pupils have more than one ordinary residence, for example when parents are separated and parents care jointly for their children, transport allowance can only be provided from one address. Parents of

pupils with more than one address may nominate the preferred address and the allowance will be provided for that address, as long as they qualify under the normal criteria.

Allowances

2.9 The travel allowance payment is a payment to the parent/ guardian/carer of the eligible child to support them in transporting the child to and from school. The parent/carer of the eligible child may use the allowance to engage a private hire vehicle.

The allowance rate will be 40% of the hire of a private hire vehicle cost. Where a parent /carer uses their own vehicle the rate will be at the Local Authority mileage rate (currently 40p / mile, May 2012).

Where a private hire vehicle has been shared with other members of the community the Local Authority will expect all passengers to make a contribution to the cost of the hire and will pay a reduced allowance.

2.10 The travel allowance for eligible children shall not be any less favourable than that in place to support children of the same age with learning difficulties (Education Act 1996, Section 509 Para 5c).

2.11 The travel allowance will be made for term-time travel only on receipt of appropriate evidence of expenditure (invoices, receipts etc.).

Off-island secondary pupils

2.12 The Council of the Isles of Scilly provides transport for off-island secondary school pupils who are weekly boarders on St. Mary's. Weekly boarders are provided with Monday morning and Friday afternoon transport. This is in line with the Local Authority responsibilities under the Education Act.

Pupils with statements of Special Educational Needs

2.13 Pupils with Special Educational Needs whose statement indicates that their needs will be met at the Five Islands School must meet the same eligibility for the travel allowance that apply to all pupils attending school, unless they are unable (by reason of disability or medical condition) to walk the specified walking distance for their age.

2.14 A decision to provide travel allowance will be based on evidence from the SEN statutory assessment, or from the annual review of statement, to consider if the needs of the child are being met appropriately. The views of the parents, school and professionals working with the child will also be sought. Any identified transport need should be reviewed annually.

Early Years Education, 3 to 5 years old

2.15 Arrangements may be made for children below the compulsory school age with special educational needs to attend Foundation Stage Support Classes (FSSC's). When making such arrangements the normal eligibility criteria for pupils of primary school age, including walking distance, will apply.

2.16 It should be noted that transport allowances to attend FSSC's do not carry a statutory entitlement and are made on an exceptional, and therefore discretionary, basis. Parents and carers are strongly advised not to rely upon any transport allowance that may be awarded to enable attendance to FSSC's.

Exceptional Circumstances

3.1 Where a child of compulsory age lives within the statutory walking distance to school, but is unable to walk to school because of a medical condition, a transport allowance may be provided. The allowance, if awarded, will be agreed for a fixed period, e.g. during the time when a child is unable to walk the route owing

to an injury such as a broken leg. If it seems the agreed fixed period will not be adequate, parents will need to ask for an extension.

3.2 It is the responsibility of the parent or carer to produce evidence of the medical condition. This is normally endorsed by the family doctor, but the Council of the Isles of Scilly reserves the right to seek further medical evidence.

Transport for exceptional medical reasons relating to parents/carers

3.3 In exceptional circumstances where a child lives within the statutory walking distance, but the child's parents/carers are unable to fulfill normal parenting expectations because of a disability, the Council of the Isles of Scilly may exercise its discretion of a travel allowance towards the provision of transport for that child/ren.

3.4 It is the responsibility of the parent or carer to produce evidence of the medical condition, normally endorsed by the family doctor, although the Council of the Isles of Scilly reserves the right to seek further evidence from medical professionals.

3.5 In such instances the Council of the Isles of Scilly should consider the availability of help from immediate and extended family members. It is expected that parents will have made every effort to secure other help and the Council of the Isles of Scilly may seek confirmation of this from the school or other agencies.

Escorts

4.1 There is no specific legal duty on the LA to provide escorts for children carried on transport to and from school. However, fulfilling a duty of care to passengers and others may involve the provision of an escort. An escort may be provided to accompany young children (Reception to Y5), or children with significant needs arising from a medical condition or a disability and where there is an exceptional need for care or supervision.

4.2 Should the child or young person be travelling on transport commissioned by parents in support of the home to school travel allowance, the parent /guardian will be responsible for either ensuring their child is escorted by a responsible adult, or will sign a disclaimer absolving the local authority of responsibility.

4.3 Where an escort is provided, he or she will:

- Travel with the child from an agreed pick-up point to an agreed drop-off point,
- Assist, and supervise the child at all times
- Supervise the child's entry and exit to boats, assist with entry and exit to and from land vehicles,
- Ensure as far as reasonably practicable a safe journey for the child and other passengers,
- Provide a caring environment whilst on the vehicle

4.4 For journeys between Islands the boat operator will be responsible for the safe conveyance of passengers from quay to quay. Where adverse weather conditions prevail, the boat operator will make the final decision to travel. Parents should not feel obliged to send their child to their school base should they feel their child would be upset or unsettled by the journey.

Applying for the home to school travel allowance

5.1 Applications for the home to school travel allowance should be made to the Home to School Travel Administrator, Children's Services, Council of the Isles of Scilly, as soon as you believe you meet the eligibility criteria.

5.2 Applications will normally be reviewed on an academic year basis. Payments made for exceptional circumstances will stop as soon as any exceptional circumstances cease.

5.3 In line with DfE guidance payments will be back dated to the start of the academic year for applications made during the year.

4 Complaints

4.1 If you are not satisfied with any aspect of the support with home to school transport as detailed in this policy by the Council of the Isles of Scilly or a decision made with regard to the level or type of support being offered then please write to;

Director of Children's Services
Council of the Isles of Scilly
Town Hall
St Mary's
Isles of Scilly