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BARNET'S HOME TO SCHOOL TRANSPORT POLICY

FREE TRAVEL POLICY

Arrangements will be made for the provision of free travel from a pupil's home to his or her educational establishment if, in the view of Barnet education authority, this provision is necessary.

From September 2005, children up to the age of 16 years will be able to travel free on buses in Greater London so it will not be necessary for the education authority to provide funding to pay for children to travel to and from school in most cases. The provision of free travel could be considered necessary if, in the view of the local authority, the nearest suitable educational establishment is beyond the statutory walking distance and a bus journey to the school is impractical. The statutory walking distance is defined as 2 miles for pupils under 8 years and 3 miles for older pupils from 8 to 16 years, in both cases measuring distance by the nearest route along which pupils can walk in reasonable safety, accompanied if necessary. In making decisions about the suitability of educational establishments, the authority will have regard to the circumstances of each pupil, including parental preference for a denominational school, but it is unlikely that free travel will be considered necessary if there is any school within 3 miles that could provide education that is suitable to the pupil's age, ability and aptitude.

There may be exceptional circumstances based on medical, social or other grounds when the provision of free travel would be considered necessary and each case will be considered on its own merits.

If, in a particular case, the provision of free travel is not considered necessary the authority will then consider whether assistance with travel costs may be offered under the assisted travel policy.

ASSISTED TRAVEL POLICY

Arrangements will be made for assistance with travel costs from a pupil's home to school if, in the view of Barnet education authority, this provision is warranted.

Assistance provided under this policy will usually be in the form of a termly rail card issued to the qualifying pupil or payments towards private coach arrangements or the cost of public transport. Payments would normally be made twice a term but would not exceed the cost of a travel or rail card which would be needed for a similar journey over the same period.

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Pupils in Primary Schools

Free travel is rarely considered necessary for pupils at primary schools because places can almost always be offered in suitable schools within a walking distance of 2 miles for pupils under 8 years and within 3 miles for those who are over 8. On the occasions when this is not possible, children under 11 years may travel free on buses in Greater London. It is therefore very rare that any assistance with travel to primary schools will be warranted.

However, there may be instances where the authority might decide to provide assisted travel on medical, social or educational grounds. Each case will be assessed on its own merits.

Pupils in Years 7 – 11 in Secondary Schools*

Free travel would not normally be provided for pupils at secondary schools if, when places are allocated, suitable education is available at a school within a walking distance of 3 miles from the pupil's home.

From September 2005, children aged 11 – 15 years may travel free on buses in Greater London provided those who are 14 or 15 have a valid photo-card. A large majority of children in these year groups will therefore be able to travel free so assistance will not be warranted.

However, in cases of financial hardship and where a bus journey is impractical, the authority may be able to offer assistance with travel costs to those parents who wish to exercise their preference for a more distant secondary school for their child. Each case will be considered on its own merits, but assistance will normally be offered to pupils whose families are on income support, income based job seekers' allowance, working tax credit or child tax credit if the assessed annual income does not exceed £13,910 and who attend full-time an academy or a community, voluntary aided or foundation school that is more than three miles from their home by the shortest walking route.

The authority also recognises the high cost of travel that can arise in larger families when the children attend denominational schools at a distance and to which bus travel is impractical. Accordingly, assistance with travel will normally be given to the third and subsequent children of a family for the period during which three or more children are in attendance at the same time at the nearest denominational school that accords with the parent's religion or denomination. This would apply provided the denominational school is more than three miles from the family home by the shortest walking route, none of the other children at the school is already receiving free or assisted travel and bus travel is impractical in the view of the authority.

There may be other instances where the authority might decide to provide assisted travel on medical, social or educational grounds. Each case will be assessed on its own merits.

* For students over 16 years in schools or colleges, please see the separate policy