



PRIMARY SCHOOL TRANSPORT SCHEME

Advance Notice

The purpose of this explanatory notice is to advise you in general of the changes to the Primary School Transport Scheme, which will come into effect from the beginning of the 2011/2012 school year.

The changes arise from the Budget 2011 announcement and relate to the following:

1. Introduction of Charges
2. Changes to school transport provision under the 'Central/Closed School Rule' (CSR)
3. Changes in minimum numbers required for the establishment and retention of a service

1. Introduction of Charges

From the commencement of the 2011/2012 school year **eligible primary pupils** will be subject to an annual charge of €50 per pupil, up to a family maximum of €110 for eligible primary pupils only. Where families have eligible pupils availing of school transport at both primary and post primary level, a family maximum contribution of €650 per annum will apply. Eligible pupils with a valid medical card will be exempt from these charges.

Primary school pupils who are not eligible for school transport, e.g. don't meet the distance criteria of 3.2km (2.0 miles) or are not attending their nearest school, may apply for concessionary transport subject to the terms of the scheme, at an annual charge of €200 per pupil, subject to a family maximum of €650 per annum. Pupils holding a valid medical card will not be exempt from the charge for concessionary transport.

Pupils who currently avail of free school transport under the CSR (see below), who reside less than 3.2km (2.0 miles) from their school of amalgamation and who wish to continue to avail of school transport, may apply for concessionary transport, subject to the terms of the scheme, at an annual charge of €200 per pupil, subject to a family maximum of €650 per annum.

Application Process

With the introduction of charges, it will now be necessary for parents/guardians to apply directly to Bus Éireann for school transport for all pupils who wish to avail of school transport for the school year 2011/2012.

The enclosed Application Form should be completed in full for pupils seeking school transport for the school year 2011/2012 and returned to Bus Éireann **no later than 31st March 2011**. Services for the school year 2011/2012 will be planned and seats provided based on the Application Forms that are returned by this date. **Late Applicants will not be guaranteed a seat on school transport services.**

Payment

Invoices will be issued in early July 2011 in respect of all applicants who apply on time. The Annual charge may be paid in full by 29th July or alternatively in two instalments, i.e. 50% by 29th July and the remaining 50% payable by 9th December.

2. Changes to School Transport Provision under the 'Central/Closed School Rule (CSR)'

Under the CSR, where a primary school closed and amalgamated with another, pupils residing in the closed school area are currently eligible for free transport to the school of amalgamation even though they may reside less than 3.2km (2.0 miles) from this school.

Where a number of schools closed and amalgamated into one new school, free transport is currently provided for eligible pupils residing not less than 1.6 km (1 Mile) from the new central school; this arrangement is referred to as the Central School Rule.

From the commencement of 2011/2012 school year, the distance criteria of 3.2km (2.0 miles) will be applied nationally and eligible pupils, currently availing of free school transport under the CSR who reside less than 3.2km (2.0 miles) from their school of amalgamation will **not** be eligible for school transport.

Current pupils who are eligible for school transport under the CSR and who reside 3.2 km (2.0miles) or more from their school of amalgamation will retain their eligibility for school transport for the duration of their primary school cycle up to a maximum of 7 years.

Bus Eireann is assessing all pupils who currently avail of school transport under the CSR and will notify the families affected by the above changes when this exercise is complete. Notwithstanding this assessment, it is important that the Application Form is completed and returned by the **31st March 2011** for all pupils who wish to avail of school transport for the school year 2011/2012.

From the commencement of the 2012/2013 school year, eligibility based on the CSR will cease for all **new** pupils entering primary schools. Therefore from the 2012/2013 school year it may arise that siblings in a family may have school transport eligibility to different schools in instances where there is now a nearer open school than the school of amalgamation. The Department acknowledges that this revision will affect some families in the short term and is therefore providing advance notice in this regard.

3. Changes in Minimum Numbers Required for the Establishment and Retention of a School Transport Service

From the commencement of the 2011/2012 school year, services with less than 10 eligible pupils will be withdrawn. Equally, from the commencement of the 2011/2012 school year a minimum of 10 eligible pupils residing in a distinct locality will be required to establish a service.

In light of this it is important that the Application Form is completed and returned by 31st march 2011 as these applications will form the basis on which decisions will be made regarding the introduction of or retention of services. Eligible pupils that have applied for school transport where there are insufficient eligible pupils to warrant the retention of or the establishment of a service may be eligible for a Remote Area Grant.

Should you wish to seek further clarification or additional information on any of the above please contact School Transport Section at 057 93 24 300.

Copies of this Notice and Application Form are available online at www.education.ie or www.buseireann.ie.

The Application Form can be completed online at www.buseireann.ie.