

Environment and Development Services
Corporate Transport Unit - Passenger Services
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Email the Council for **free** @ your local library!
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My Ref: CTU/JMR

Contact: Julia Russell

Date: 31 October 2011

Dear Parent/Carer

Discontinuation of Zero Fare Bus Passes - Blackburn Primary School

I wish to reaffirm the information outlined in the letter issued to affected parents/carers of Blackburn School dated 3 October 2011.

In 1973, the Council's Education Committee recommended that transport be provided to convey children to Blackburn School because of the variation of the catchment area.

In April 1997, the Council noted that a review of home to school transport was undertaken and this included Blackburn School. It was stated:

"That pupils from the Farm View Estate attending Blackburn J & I School (*and another school*) continue to be provided with free transport subject to this being reviewed should the route to the schools be made safer by improvements to the roads concerned."

It is also acknowledged that zero fare bus passes were previously awarded as there were doubts regarding the safety of the nearest available walking route and this was again reviewed in 2006 and deemed to be safe. National guidance and set criteria relating to "safe walking routes" is provided by LARSOA (Local Authority Road Safety Officers Association).

In accordance with the Education Act 1996, free transport assistance is usually awarded for those pupils under 8 years of age, who live more than 2 miles, and for those over 8 years who live more than 3 miles from their catchment school. The distance from your home address to Blackburn School is within these statutory limits.

It was subsequently confirmed by Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council's Road Safety Team, during 2010, and in May and June 2011, that an alternative safe walking route was available from your home address if you do not wish to use Droppingwell Road. This review was formally considered by the Cabinet Member and Senior Adviser for Town Centres, Economic Growth and Prosperity in September 2011.

As a consequence of this updated information, you were formally notified that your child was no longer entitled to a zero fare bus pass.

It was also agreed that because children were issued with a pass in September 2011 that they would keep them until they expired in July 2012, as children had already commenced attendance at Blackburn School.

The decision of parents/carers to use public transport services, walk, and cycle or use private vehicles to enable children to travel to and from any school is not the responsibility of the Council.

The Council will, of course, continue to meet its statutory duty in transport provision for all Rotherham's children and young people (in accordance with the Education Act 2006).

Please also note that if your child's circumstances change (such as a change of address) then their entitlement will be re-assessed and the zero fare bus pass may be withdrawn before July 2012. Similarly, if your child's circumstances change from September 2012, they will be re-assessed and you will be advised about their entitlement to a new zero fare bus pass.

If you need any further details, please contact me on telephone number 01709 822416 (24 hours voicemail service is available).

Yours sincerely

Julia Russell
Passenger Services
Corporate Transport Unit

Cc
Blackburn Primary School