

# Privilege Lift Scheme

A GUIDE FOR PARENTS AND PUPILS

## INTRODUCTION

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Under Section 51 of the Education (Scotland) Act 1980, as amended, the Council is obliged to offer spare seats on school contract buses to children who do not have an automatic entitlement to free home to school transport. In addition The Local Government in Scotland Act 2003 gave Education Authorities the power to charge for the use of vacant seats. From August 2013 Scottish Borders Council will operate a paid privilege lift scheme where places are available.

You are advised to read this guidance carefully if you are considering applying for a privilege lift.

## WHAT IS THE PRIVILEGE LIFT SCHEME?

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Before setting out the details of the Privilege Lift Scheme it is important to make clear that a privilege lift is **not** an entitlement to school transport, it is only offered to a pupil who does not qualify for free home to school transport, where space is available on an existing school contract vehicle. It is a condition that no expense is incurred by the Council in acceding to a privilege lift and that no amendments or changes to a route will be made.

At Scottish Borders Council the following categories of pupils qualify for an entitlement to free school transport:

- Primary school pupils who live more than 2 miles from their catchment school.
- Secondary pupils who live more than 3 miles from their catchment school.

The Council will operate a paid privilege lift scheme and if you live near a school transport route and where there are spaces available you may be able to apply. Privilege lifts will automatically be removed at the end of each school session and parents/guardians will have to re-apply for the following school session.

## HOW ARE PRIVILEGE LIFT SEATS ALLOCATED?

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Pupils who have an entitlement to school transport will always take precedence.

Privilege transport will only be granted providing there is a spare place on an existing school contract at designated pick-up and drop off points and will not deviate from the current transport route. A privilege lift cannot be provided where a service bus is used on the school run.

A privilege lift will **only** be offered upon receipt of a fully completed application in line with the following priorities:

- Those attending their catchment school over those attending an alternative school by parental choice.
- Amongst those attending their catchment school, to those who live furthest away.
- Amongst those equidistant from the school, to the youngest.

- Amongst those attending an alternative school by parental choice, to those who have attended longest at the school concerned.

Privilege lifts are not processed until after the start of the new term when all entitled pupil allocations are processed and finalised. Seats may not be available until mid September.

**It is important to note that until you are notified that a seat is available it is your responsibility to make alternative transport arrangements for the beginning of the new term.**

Critically, privilege lift transport is not guaranteed for any period of time and will be withdrawn at a weeks notice if space becomes required by an entitled pupil.

## HOW DO I APPLY?

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All privilege lift passes will be allocated each year after all entitled pupils have been provided with a seat.

Please complete the form on the Scottish Borders Website:  
[www.scotborders.gov.uk/privilegelift](http://www.scotborders.gov.uk/privilegelift)

Alternatively, a copy can be received by e-mailing [e&itransport@scotborders.gov.uk](mailto:e&itransport@scotborders.gov.uk) or by post at:

The Passenger Transport Section,  
Privilege Lift Applications  
Council Headquarters  
Scottish Borders Council  
Newtown St Boswells  
TD6 0SA

Successful applicants will be notified but will only be approved and passes released once payment is received. If your application is unsuccessful you will be advised and no payment will be required.

Applications should be received **no later than** 15<sup>th</sup> July to allow for processing.

## HOW MUCH DOES A PRIVILEGE LIFT COST?

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Payment will be required in advance on a term by term basis. If your application is successful the privilege lift pass will only be issued once payment is received.

Charges are based on a standard fixed rate as below:

£1 daily return fare for pupils who attend their catchment school.

£2 daily return fare for pupils who do not attend their catchment school.

The cost will be worked out per term dependant upon the number of school days by local area. The cost for any approved privilege lift seats will be notified to you at the time of approval but will be based on the following periods:

September – December  
January – March  
April – June

The standard charges are made for each place on a school vehicle irrespective of number of days or type of journey made. There will be no reduction to the standard charges set and will apply for each school day of the term irrespective of single journeys or use on specific days of the week. If you require a place on a second vehicle such as for connecting services or transport to another address a separate charge will be levied at the rates shown above.

Where payment in advance is not received your child's name will be removed from the scheme and the seat awarded to another child using the allocation criteria. A different coloured pass will be issued for each term. A bus pass will not be issued until payment in advance for the following term is received.

No refunds will be provided for periods of absence or when school transport is not available, for example during inclement weather or service failure. Refunds will only apply where the seat is no longer required and the privilege lift bus pass has been received by the Passenger Transport Unit. The refund will be calculated from the date of receipt and the days remaining in the school term.

The charges will be reviewed on an annual basis and you will be notified of any agreed price changes prior to the end of the school session.

## **ARE THERE ANY EXEMPTIONS OR CONCESSIONS FOR THIS SERVICE?**

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In line with legislation consideration has been given to the financial circumstances of families. Exemptions for privilege lifts at Scottish Borders Council will only apply to pupils who have an approved entitlement to free school meals. This entitlement will be verified during the application process and must have already been processed and approved when payment is due to be made.

There will be no concessions awarded for families who have more than one child travelling and the daily rate per journey as outlined above will apply.

## **HOW DO I MAKE A PAYMENT THIS SERVICE?**

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If the application is successful a letter will be sent to you outlining the amount payable along with details of payment methods.

## **WHEN WILL I KNOW IF MY CHILD CAN HAVE A PRIVILEGE LIFT?**

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Pupils who have an entitlement to travel must be accommodated for the start of the new school term on a suitable contract. This process of allocating entitled pupils continues into the start of the term and therefore spare capacity cannot be identified until this process is complete and all entitled pupils are allocated a seat.

Privilege lift seat applications will therefore not be confirmed or approved until some point during the month of September.

It is important that you have arrangements in place to get your child to school until you are notified that a privilege lift has been approved.

## **IF A PRIVILEGE LIFT IS ALLOCATED IS IT GUARANTEED FOR THE DURATION OF THE TERM OR SCHOOL YEAR?**

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All privilege lifts will be removed at the end of a school session and will not be allocated until September each year.

A privilege lift seat can be withdrawn at any time during the academic year if seats are required for entitled pupils or should a change to the contracted vehicle be required. You will be provided with one weeks notice regarding the removal of your privilege lift seat and a refund will be made on pro-rata basis.

Where it is necessary to withdraw a privilege lift seat the following criteria will be used to identify the child/ren whose privilege seat will be withdrawn:

- Pupils not attending their catchment school
- Pupils attending their catchment school but who live closest to the school
- Oldest pupils attending their catchment school

This transport is not guaranteed for any period of time and may be withdrawn if more children are granted free school transport through entitlement. Scottish Borders Council retains the right to withdraw privilege lift seats or to vary timings or pick-up and drop-off points.

## **WHAT IF TRANSPORT IS NO LONGER REQUIRED?**

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You must notify Passenger Transport immediately. A refund will be made but only from the date that the privilege lift pass has been received by Passenger Transport.

The refund will be made on a pro rata basis from date of receipt of the pass and number of days left in the term. Refunds are made by way of cheque which will be posted directly to your home address.

## **PRIVILEGE LIFTS AWARDED DURING THE COURSE OF THE YEAR?**

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Applications can be made during the course of the school year if circumstances change or seats become available for any reason.

## WHAT HAPPENS IF A BUS PASS IS LOST?

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It is important that you notify Passenger Transport immediately. Bus passes must be shown to travel on a vehicle and to enable the operator to identify pupils that are eligible to travel.

If a pass is lost then a new pass will need to be issued to allow travel on the vehicle. Replacement or lost passes are issued by the Passenger Transport Section and are charged at £5.00 each.

## APPEALS PROCESS

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Parents/guardians will be given an opportunity to appeal against any decision made by the Council in relation to school transport where a child **attends their catchment school**. There is no requirement to provide transport for pupils who have been granted a placing request to attend a school other than the school in whose catchment area they reside.

The Council will consider special circumstances and may grant exceptional school transportation, where:-

### **Safety**

There is a significant element of danger for an accompanied child. A road safety assessment will be undertaken to determine whether the route would be considered unsafe for an accompanied child in line with Council Guidelines.

### **Health**

Where the grounds of the appeal cite a medical condition of the pupil then written confirmation substantiating that the child cannot walk to school is required from a medical specialist.

Appeals should, be submitted in writing using the appeals process form available online or by request from Passenger Transport. It should clearly state the grounds for appeal and be returned to **The Network Manager, Environment & Infrastructure, Scottish Borders Council, Council HQ, Newtown St Boswells, MELROSE**. Written notification of the outcome of the appeal will be provided by an Education Manager within four weeks of receipt of the appeal.

Appeals will not be considered for pupils who do not attend their catchment school.

## CONTACT INFORMATION

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For information or advice please contact:

### **The Passenger Transport Section**

E-mail: [e&ittransport@scotborders.gov.uk](mailto:e&ittransport@scotborders.gov.uk)