



Dear Principal,

Please see the update below in respect of the School Transport Scheme.

Information for families regarding School Transport Application Process for 2024/25 School Year

New applications for the 2024/25 school year

The Bus Éireann family portal is now open for new applications for school transport services for the 2024/25 school year. New applications are considered as:

- Students who will be attending junior infants in primary school or first year in post-primary school for the first time in 2024.
- Students that did not apply for school transport in previous school year(s).
- Students that may move home address or will be attending a new school in the 2024/25 school year

The closing date for new applications is **Friday 26 April 2024**. Any new applications made after the closing date are **considered late applications**. A late application may mean that a ticket is not available.

All applicants - Payment/medical card details - closing date 7 June 2024

This year, families can apply and pay /enter medical card details in one step from the date the portal opens. This means new and existing applicants can pay/enter medical card details from now until 7 June 2024.

The Bus Éireann family portal is now open to accept payments/medical card details **until 7 June 2024**. Payments made after the deadline date **will be deemed late**. A late payment may mean that a ticket is not available.

The portal will close from 7 June 2024 for a 3-week period to allow Bus Éireann time to plan for the new school year.

Payments/medical card details must be submitted for:

- new applicants, and;
- pupils who have previously applied/availed of school transport and require a seat on a service for the 24/25 school year.

Children (who are eligible for school transport) and who possess valid medical cards (GMS Scheme) are exempt from paying the annual charge however, their medical card details must be submitted to Bus Éireann. Bus Éireann are now accepting medical card details until 7 June 2024. Medical card details received after 7 of June deadline are considered late.

Customer Call Centre

Bus Éireann has put in place a dedicated customer care call centre to assist families specifically with School Transport queries during the busy summer

period. Families that have queries can contact the call centre on: LoCall 0818 919 910. Operating hours are 09.00 – 17.00 Monday to Friday.

Families can also contact Bus Éireann their website:

www.buseireann.ie/schooltransport by submitting a query via:

<https://www.buseireann.ie/inner.php?id=769>,

Updates on the application process can be found on Gov.ie/schooltransport and on buseireann.ie/schooltransport

Eligibility

Children are eligible for transport at primary level where they reside not less than 3.2 kilometres from and are attending their nearest national school, as determined by the Department/Bus Éireann, having regard to ethos and language

and at post-primary level where they reside not less than 4.8 kilometres from and are attending their nearest post-primary school/education centre as determined by the Department/Bus Éireann, having regard to ethos and language.

- Children who are eligible for school transport and who have completed the application and payment process on time will be accommodated on school transport services where such services are in operation and where capacity exists.
- Children who are not eligible for school transport, but who complete the application and payment process on time, will be considered for spare

seats that may exist after eligible children have been facilitated; such seats are referred to as concessionary seats.

- Because of the nature of concessionary transport for non-eligible children and the priority of providing places for eligible children, there may be an excess of demand over supply for concessionary places, in these cases Bus Éireann will allocate tickets for spare seats using an agreed selection process.
- In addition, temporary alleviation measures will continue for the 2024/2025 school year, this means that transport will be provided, where such services are in operation and where capacity exists, for pupils who are eligible for transport to their nearest school and are attending their second nearest school/post primary centre and who apply and pay on time.

Ticket Charges

For the 2024/25 school year charges of €50 per student at primary level and €75 per student at post-primary level will apply, with a cap per family of €125. Eligible children with a full medical card and children who are eligible for SEN transport services remain exempt from the annual ticket charge.

School Transport Scheme Review

A review of the School Transport Scheme has been completed. This review was conducted with a view to examining the current scheme, its broader effectiveness, and sustainability and to ensure it services students and their families adequately.

The School Transport Scheme 2030 report has now been published, which marks the largest review of the School Transport Scheme since it was established in 1967. The Government is committed to working to achieve the report's recommendation of expanding access to the scheme so that an additional 100,000 pupils can be carried by 2030. Throughout the review, the value of the School Transport Scheme to both families and in supporting wider Government policies has been very apparent. In summary, school transport not only plays an important part in supporting children's access to education, but it also aligns to wider Government objectives.

Overall, the recommended changes to the future operation of the Scheme concern:

- expansion of the current eligibility criteria,
- addressing current operational challenges
- charges and grants and
- over time, moving towards better integration with public transport to ensure optimum value for money to the Exchequer

A phased implementation of the review's recommendations will commence in September 2024. This will include a shared effort between my Department and the Department of Transport to pilot and introduce greater integration of the roll out of transport networks with school transport routes, with a view to expanding provision of transport and reducing the reliance over time on individual car trips for school journeys. It is intended subject to resources to commence implementing the revised eligibility criteria in the 2025/2026 school year.

Pupils from Ukraine

Pupils from Ukraine who require school transport should not apply on the Bus Éireann family portal but should visit gov.ie/ukraine for details on how to apply. Please note that any pupils from Ukraine who are currently on school transport do not need to re-apply for the 2024/2025 school year unless they have changed address or school.