

How will Covid affect the scheme ?

The scheme itself will not be affected. The Council want to offer the same financial support towards the cost of bus travel for students that need to travel to and from school by bus.

Government advice is to avoid the use of Public Transport where possible. Currently the capacity available on buses is very restricted and we want to try and ensure that the space that is available is kept for those that really need it. Children who live closer to school should consider walking or cycling to school and those who have the option to be dropped by car should do so. For those that do still need to use the bus to get to school, the schemes will work in exactly the same way as in previous years and with normal use, will continue to save parents about half of the cost of bus travel against what you would otherwise pay.

More than ever, parents need to carefully consider how Government Guidance and possible changes might affect use of the pass to work out if it still represents good value.

As the Council knows that this will be a difficult decision for parents to make at the moment, when the current restrictions on public transport are lifted, we will make a part year pass available. This will be reflected in the cost. For example, if we make a Travel Saver available that will be valid from January then the fee would likely be £230 reflecting reduced period of travel that it provides. In this instance we would open for applications as soon as possible towards the end of the year. In the meantime, parents could buy tickets from the operator or make different transport arrangements. Details will be confirmed when the situation changes.

What's going to be happening with Schools and how does this affect the scheme ?

Central Government are currently indicating that schools will be operating as usual from the start of the new school year. However, this has the potential to change and it is possible some schools will need to change attendance patterns or schools times. We recommend that parents check with your school or college as if this happens, it could change the amount of bus travel that children will need to make, which might affect your decision about how your child might travel and the value that the scheme represents.

Are all buses going to run ?

KCC have been supporting operators throughout the pandemic to ensure that they all remain in a position to provide school buses again when they are needed so we do not expect this to be a problem. However, the financial impact on bus services and operators has been significant so it could be that more services than usual are subject to change or cancellation. In addition, at the moment, operators are only able to let about half of the usual numbers of passengers on their buses and if this remains the case, then providing enough space for all passengers could be a problem, and so students that can travel in a different way should do so at the moment.

How will this affect my application ?

Because of the disruption caused to the Travel Saver team and whilst we have been trying to understand what the position with schools is going to be, we have had to delay opening for applications this year. For the same reasons, this year you will not be able to apply by post and all applications must be made on-line. By making these and some other changes, if you apply by 9th August then we should be able to ensure that passes are available for collection on the first day of term. If you qualify for the sibling offer then you can apply for these passes by post but will need to email us for an application form.

Should I apply ?

Yes. If your child needs to use the bus to get to school and they will still be traveling regularly then the pass will still save you money. However, before you apply, we are suggesting that parents understand how any changes to schools, bus services or intended travel habits could change the use made of the pass. If children are travelling less frequently then you may want to consider buying tickets directly from operators on a daily or weekly basis instead.

Will you be making any changes to the scheme because of Covid ?

Not really. The scheme will basically work in the same way and offer the same benefits. It is the use of the pass that could get changed by all of the issues identified and it is therefore vital that parents really consider how any changes might affect the way that children travel to school and the value that the scheme provides to them in light of that.

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