

FAQs School Transport – Academic Year 2026-2027

1. How do I apply for a place on the school bus for my son or daughter?

The on-line application form will be available from May 2026 and anyone wishing to travel to Carmel College for the academic year September 2026 to July 2027. The on-line application form must be completed as soon as possible to enable places to be awarded. The deadline for applications is **29 May 2026**.

Will the school bus be 'free'?

Darlington Borough Council has a duty to make the necessary travel arrangements for 'eligible children' under Section 508B of the Education Act 1996.

The Council will provide 'free' transport in the following circumstance

- To the nearest appropriate school which is more than 3 miles from the parental address
- To children entitled to free school meals or those families in receipt of the maximum working tax credit to:-
 - 1 of their 3 nearest schools which is more than 2 miles but less than 6 and/or
 - To the nearest suitable school on grounds of religion or belief which is more than 2 miles but less than 15.

You can apply online by going to <https://www.darlington.gov.uk/education-and-learning/school-years/apply-for-school-transport/> and clicking on the link 'Apply online'. The portal will be open from Monday 1st June to Friday 14th August.

Alternatively, if you would like a paper copy of the application form, please contact the School Travel & Transport Team via the email address below:

Email: Schooltraveltransport@darlington.gov.uk

If your child is in the sixth form, they can apply for the 16-19 Bursary. Please contact enquires@carmel6.org.uk for an application form.

2. If I don't qualify for 'free' transport can I still apply for a place?

Carmel College can offer a limited number of places on existing routes. The spaces are limited and there is no guarantee that every child that applies will be allocated a place.

How much will the charge be?

Charges will vary depending on the route. For all pick up points within the Darlington Borough Council boundaries, (including Heighington, Aycliffe Village and School Aycliffe) there will be a charge of approximately £5.60 per day. Routes out of town will vary from approximately £6.95 to £8.00. If a family has more than one child that obtains a place on a coach, the eldest will be charged full price, with the second child being entitled to a reduction of 10%. Subsequent siblings will be entitled to a reduction of 20%

Will there be a reduction for sickness absence, holiday absence, exclusion, exam periods etc?

No.

4. What do I do if I no longer require the seat on the bus?

The contract that we ask you to agree to is for the whole academic year. It will only be in exceptional circumstances ie moving house that any refund is awarded. Payment will be required for the full academic year.

5. How can payment be made?

Carmel College will make arrangements with you to collect payment for the transport if you are successful in obtaining a fare-paying place. We offer parents a variety of ways to make payments, including, cash, cheque and online via MCAS online services. Passes will not be issued until payment has been received.

Payments must be kept up to date as per instalment plan.