

Removal of Samford Church Fare Waiver – Term 4 2021

The information below is intended to explain the factors underpinning the current situation and provides the rationale behind our policy change.

It details the current fare structure and provides an explanation of how the QLD Transport School Travel Assistance Scheme (STAS) affects the payable fare.

How the School Travel Assistance Scheme (STAS) works

The QLD Transport School Travel Assistance Scheme provides subsidised school bus travel between home and the nearest State School.

To be eligible for STAS, the distance between home and the closest State School must be greater than 3.2km (4.8km for State High School)

Families who apply for STAS use the Bus Travel Assistance (BTA) application form. Section 6 of the application form allows parents to specify which day(s) they are applying for STAS per student, including the ability to specify AM or PM (or both).

Example

6 On what days will the service be used?

Please specify a start date for travel and tick (✓) the days travelled specifying am/pm - actual times are not needed

Student's given name (as shown above)	First date of travel on this bus this year	Monday		Tuesday		Wednesday		Thursday		Friday		Total number of days (am)	Total number of days (pm)	Is more than one service used to get to school?
		am	pm	am	pm	am	pm	am	pm	am	pm			
1. Student	01/01/2021		✓		✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓			
2.														
3.														
4.														

IMPORTANT NOTE: Once approved, the day(s) that STAS has been applied for are the **ONLY** days that a subsidy covers their travel to the closest State School.

For Families who are approved for STAS (live more than 3.2km to their closest State School) on the days specified on the BTA application:

Primary School students attending their closest State School

- If you travel on a day that you receive STAS – travel is fully subsidised
- If you travel on a day that you DO NOT receive STAS – the required fare must be paid

Primary School students attending an elective school e.g., St Andrews

- If you travel on a day that you receive STAS – travel is distance subsidised to your closest State School with an add-on fare payable for the extra distance travelled to your elective school.

- If you travel on a day that you DO NOT receive STAS – the required fare to your closest State School is payable **PLUS** the add-on fare to your elective school

The above scenarios are the most confusing when determining the payable fare, and are exaggerated with the Samford Church Fare Waiver detailed further below

For Families who are not eligible to apply for STAS (live 3.2km or less to their closest State School), or for families who may be eligible but do not to apply:

Primary School students attending their closest State School

- Each time travelled the required fare is payable

Primary School students attending an elective school e.g., St Andrews

- Each time travelled the required fare to your closest State School is payable **PLUS** the add-on fare to your elective school

Samford Church Fare Waiver

Historically, we have been able to offer a waiver of the add-on fare to students travelling between Samford Church and St Andrews – on days when they are receiving STAS.

It's also important to note that, as per above examples, if a student is not receiving STAS on the day travelled, and they only travel between Samford Church and St Andrews, then the \$1.60 add-on fare is still payable.

Rationale for removing the waiver

With the introduction of expanded morning services in the Samford area through to St Andrews there are now an additional number of alternative pickup points in Samford, much closer to home, that families can take advantage of.

As explained above, the School Transport Assistance Scheme (STAS) covers travel for eligible students who live more than 3.2 km's away from their nearest state primary school. Depending on where you live in the Samford area, this could be Samford Primary, Mt Samson Primary or even Dayboro Primary.

This means that subsidised travel for St Andrews Students is between home and your closest State Primary school in the morning and then between your closest State Primary school & home in the afternoons. With the additional travel from your closest Primary school through to Ferny Grove attracting a fare to attend St Andrews.

The existing Samford Church waiver of the \$1.60 top-up fare creates an inequity for those families who have a **need** or desire to utilise the services from alternative pickup points in Samford, for example the Mary Ring Drive Bus Stop or Camp Mountain Road. These locations are only a couple hundred metres up the road from the Church, yet students using those locations are required to pay the add-on fare.

This situation leaves Brisbane Bus Lines with two choices:

- expand the waiver boundary to include a wider range of pick up / drop off locations – in which case where to set the boundary and what other inequities will be created for families outside the boundary. Or

- remove the waiver and have a standard set fare for all families that works with our wider fare structure in line with the School Transport Assistance Scheme.

Parents who are receiving STAS from QLD Transport for bus travel between home and Samford State School and then driving students into Samford Village are encouraged to take advantage of the expanded services our school bus network now offers.

Fare confusion

With the current setup, the fare an individual student is required to pay for travel between the Samford area and St Andrews could be either: No Fare, \$1.60 or \$2.70 depending on:

- Where they travel from/to
- If they are receiving STAS for that trip

Other fares may be payable if travelling from/to outside of the Samford Area.

Going forward, and in preparation for the introduction of Cashless Ticketing in future, we will be making several policy changes to ensure the system can support our bus network and fare structures.

One of the first of these changes is the removal of the Samford Church fare waiver for STAS students.

Andy Russell
School Services Manager