

Appendix C - Home to School Transport Policy consultation responses

Home to School Transport Policy Consultation

49 responses

Q1. How far do you agree or disagree with the proposal to support 4 year olds with transport provision?

	Count	%
Strongly agree	25	51
Tend to agree	11	22
Neither agree or disagree	5	10
Tend to disagree	4	8
Strongly disagree	3	6
No answer	1	2
Total	49	100

Q2. Do you have any comments to make about the proposal to support 4 year olds?

4 years olds should still be under responsibility of parent/carers and are too young to travel on their own, even if escort is provided. However transport cost payable to parent would be acceptable.
Due to age of children but agree with travel cost being made available to parent/carers
Entirely appropriate otherwise they might be disadvantaged against other children
Fully support proposal to provide transport for 4 year olds who are attending school(in reception class).
I do think it is too young. I don't think many parents would want to send such young children on Council transport. A parent taking them to school during their first year is better, during a potentially unsettling time.
I find it hard to imagine 4 year old travelling on a bus with older children. If this was the case then the cost of providing a small vehicle/taxi would cause considerable cost to the education budget and in turn the schools would lose funding.
If they have to go to school transport should be paid for
In these tight financial times this is an unnecessary extra burden on council tax payers and will result in further cuts elsewhere in the council's budget
No
Pupils with statements of special educational needs may start school as young as two years of age. Will they still be eligible for free school transport within the confines of the distance criteria.
Section 1.3 - drivers are not covered in the safeguarding statement. How do you ensure that bus, taxi drivers meet the standards expected by the council?
There must be a consort on the bus to help the children and to keep them safe. It is not fair on the driver to have to supervise the children and to drive the bus at the same time!!
These children are very young and appropriate supervisory provision needs to be included on the transport provided, especially where that provision is a bus used by older children
This is vitally important re oversubscription in our local area and several in yr 8 offered places 5/6 miles away from their local school. Without this the pupils will become at risk of being a vulnerable pupil as they could be of education if transport
Very important to us. We have had situations where hard pressed parents do not use transport for older siblings, because they have to make a car journey anyway with 4 year olds.
We fully support the proposal to provide transport for 4 Year olds who are in school.
We would need an American style school bus to make parents feel happy about letting such young children travel alone
Would that many parents be happy to send a 4 year old off to school without them? Especially as some "school buses" also allow members of the public to board for a fee; I certainly would not. Surely supporting the children in

the sixth form would be a better use of funds.

You also need to change the age group from 4-16 to 4-18. By law children now have to be in full time education until they are 18 so your policy should reflect this.

Q3. How far do you agree or disagree with the proposed new appeals process?

	Count	%
Strongly agree	11	22
Tend to agree	17	35
Neither agree or disagree	18	37
Tend to disagree	0	0
Strongly disagree	2	4
No answer	1	2
Total	49	100

Q4. Do you have any comments to make about the proposed appeals process?

Each Appeal to be dealt with on individual merit, having regard to all family of child circumstances or consider complete family picture rather than purely educational i.e. there needs to be flexibility for implementation to sort HR rather than prescriptive slavish adherence to policy

Not clear what the assessment for walking to school would be

The proposed appeals process seems to be more transparent than the previous system.

This is needed asap as i have been repeatedly asking for my sons walking route to school to be assessed for safety and the council is refusing to do one soon. A structured process with timing guidelines is needed so that the council has to respond to parent appeals within a given time frame rather than ignoring us and hoping we go away.

This proposed appeals process seems to be more transparent

This was not easy to need as it was too wordy. I am sure that if it was written as bullet points and as produced everyone who needed to understand your proposals then there would not be so many appeals to process.

You haven't made provision for the increased age to which children are now required to stay in education. Paying for children to travel to school or another establishment when they are at sixth form age is utterly outrageous.

Q5. How far do you agree or disagree with the proposed approach for removing transport if it has been provided in error?

	Count	%
Strongly agree	14	29
Tend to agree	14	29
Neither agree or disagree	8	16
Tend to disagree	6	12
Strongly disagree	4	8
No answer	3	6
Total	49	100

Q6. Do you have any comments to make about the proposed approach for removing transport if it has been provided in error?

A school choice might have been made on the basis of your error and therefore to withdraw free transport would seem very unfair

As long as enough notice has been given to parents & parents must be kept informed if a road is now deemed safe & how

Governors were very concerned about this proposal. Removing transport where a route has been improved is likely to cause chaos if only 12 weeks notice is given to parents.

I think each case needs to be reviewed before the transport is removed, or at least give some time for the family to make alternate arrangements.
No
Once again there are too many words used to explain what you are proposing. If the explanation on who can clear was clearer then Peter would not make the mistake of claiming when they were not entitled and you would not need to remove it or reclaim the pay
Please make an informed decision BEFORE stopping any bus - please consider Road Crossings. Are we aware of the waste of money last year when a long awaiting pavement was laid and then days later dug up. If buses are stopped more people will be walking and more driving and this could result in more accidents.
Removing transport where a route has been improved is likely to cause chaos if only 12 weeks notice given to parents
Should be no error
The notice period appears reasonable.
Transport should only be withdrawn if the error was on the part of the applicant family. If the error was made by the council and the family based their school choice on that decision then transport should not be withdrawn whilst the child attends that school
Very fair giving more than adequate time for alternative provision to be made

Q7. How far do you agree or disagree with the proposed parent/carers agreement?

	Count	%
Strongly agree	16	33
Tend to agree	21	43
Neither agree or disagree	9	18
Tend to disagree	1	2
Strongly disagree	1	2
No answer	1	2
Total	49	100

Q8. Do you have any comments to make about the proposed parent/carers agreement?

However this particular document (ref.Doc 1: parent /Carer School transport agreement) only seems suitable for special schools. If transport is provided because of an unsafe route - this agreement does not seem fit for purpose.
I agree. There have been times when other children have behaved poorly on my child's bus - which upset my child and should not be tolerated by the driver.
If the parent carer agreement is to apply to SEN transport some clauses will need to be amended. Points 3 & 4; May not be achievable for all pupils. Point 5 is this for charging purposes? Do parents/carers have a responsibility to inform the provider before pickup time to avoid unnecessary journeys? Point 12 Review the language. Either All medicines must have the pharmacy labels or Ensure all medicines have the pharmacy labels. Point 15 Reconsider the phrase "bad behaviour" in relation particularly to pupils with Statements.
If there is a commitment from parents via this agreement, I can not see in the document any commitment from the Bedfordshire council related to the quality of the service delivered : duties should be shared on both sides (e.g. Bedfordshire council should provide enough seats/ bus for children who are entitled to transport and not ask them to get off the bus !)
It sounds really punitive the way it has been written about children's behaviour, sometimes, children are not in control of their behaviour, doesn't mention about steps being taken with parents/carers to address the issues. Some children may not understand about seatbelts
The draft agreement seems to focus on medical needs. If transport is provided because of an unsafe walking route, the agreement does not seem fit for purpose.

Q9. How far do you agree or disagree with the proposed pupil code of conduct?

	Count	%
Strongly agree	29	59
Tend to agree	10	20

Neither agree or disagree	6	12
Tend to disagree	1	2
Strongly disagree	0	0
No answer	3	6
Total	49	100

Q10. Do you have any comments to make about the proposed pupil code of conduct?

Children should be responsible
I agree. There have been times when other children have behaved poorly on my child's bus - which upset my child and should not be tolerated by the driver.
It should be made very clear that sanctions will be imposed if not followed, in order to protect drivers , escorts and the other children
The code of conduct would need to be enforced for it to be effective.
The Code of Conduct would need to be enforced for it to be effective.
The driver and or escort should be able to use their professional judgement and bans should be the following day IF necessary. There should not need to be a delay waiting for a letter. The consequences and time implementation need to meet the needs of bus
This was covered reasonably well and is one item that needs to be correct so pupils are well aware of what is expected. Again I feel that the list on the attachment maybe the correct way to show what is expected and the document I
Written a negative way, instead should be more positive intructions , like nos 15 and 16

Q11. How far do you agree or disagree with the proposed approach to proving transport to Looked After children?

	Count	%
Strongly agree	10	20
Tend to agree	9	18
Neither agree or disagree	22	45
Tend to disagree	3	6
Strongly disagree	3	6
No answer	2	4
Total	49	100

Q12. Do you have any comments to make about the proposed approach to proving transport to Looked After children?

I think you have to extend this further. We are all told by the Government that we have to work so you have to change the out of date stance about only collecting & dropping off at home addresses. There has to be some common sense applied to your policy. People do not have 9-5 jobs so quite often children are at childminders/ relations or friends. No one would expect the council to have to arrange for the transport to go miles but if it is in the same town or village to the home address what is the problem? Your policy should show that parents have the opportunity to request a different collection & drop off point.
If a looked after child has been placed with a family far from their home/school, it may be beneficial for them to travel to their school to aid continuity
Looked after children should be treated in exactly the same way as other children. I appreciate that they need extra care but unless they fall into SEN category.
Often a child's school is the only place offering continuity and stability to a child experiencing considerable stress and trauma. The council should provide transport to the child's current school for as long as it is considered to be in the child's best interest. Taking away this stability will cause further damage to the child's emotional well-being, self esteem, education and already diminished life chances. The council should do all in its power to support our most vulnerable children.

Provided a consort is on the bus to supervise the children, these children should be provided with transport as this will help them maintain a regular education.

No

Q13. The eligibility criteria have not changed but we have improved the explanation of this criteria.

Q13.a Catchment areas

	Count	%
Explanation is clear	30	61
Explanation could be clearer	12	24
Explanation is not clear at all	3	6
Missing	4	8
Total	49	100

Q13.b Qualifying schools

	Count	%
Explanation is clear	30	61
Explanation could be clearer	13	27
Explanation is not clear at all	3	6
Missing	3	6
Total	49	100

Q13.c Road safety

	Count	%
Explanation is clear	24	49
Explanation could be clearer	16	33
Explanation is not clear at all	6	12
Missing	3	6
Total	49	100

Q13.d Medical or special education needs

	Count	%
Explanation is clear	33	67
Explanation could be clearer	10	20
Explanation is not clear at all	2	4
Missing	4	8
Total	49	100

Q14. Do you have any comments to make about the explanations of catchment areas, qualifying schools, road safety or medical or special education needs?

A route is not safe if it is in woods with no street lights - parents have been told that this is a safe route!

Eligibility criteria on pg 10 states severely restricted communication skills. What is meant by severe? Significant learning disability. How is severe learning difficulties measured?

I don't understand the road safety criteria. Examples should be provided to clarify why and how a route would be deemed unavailable.

I have a major concern in the way that special needs transport is allocated - someone's son in our village goes to a special school - I believe in Biggleswade - and for which they have a free taxi each morning and afternoon to take their child to and from school, and yet the parents are quite capable and available to take their own child to this school and collect their child at the end of the school day. What irritates me more, is that one parent is a big smoker, and yet this, and the fact that they are both quite capable and able to see to their own child's transportation needs is not taken into consideration and it is seen by these parents as a gift and a "benefit". If the parents had their child's interest at heart and were not offered this "freebie" they would make every attempt to give their child the best education possible, and get their child to the necessary school in anyway possible. How can someone who smokes, and who hardly works, and has no intention of working (and can still smoke) qualify for this benefit? There are two people's wages my council tax payments are paying, being the taxi driver and a chaperone - along with fuel costs, and this should be seriously reviewed for parents who can quite clearly afford to provide this service themselves for their children... if they cared and as they smoke, and as they don't work! Living on Chicksands we have had the issue before where the school transport to Robert Bloomfield Academy was nearly stopped due to the A507 road/junction with the roundabout being declared "safe" - What is 'safe' - please define. Furthermore, if the nature of the route is such that the child cannot reasonably be expected to walk to school, EVEN WHEN ACCOMPANIED BY AN ADULT, then the Council will deem it 'unsuitable for walking' and therefore not available. This is not practical in the majority of cases, and unfair to encroach upon Parents (who most of us work full time) to have this responsibility and ownership. If a child's parent who sits at home all day and smokes qualifies for special educational needs transport then why should children with roads to cross deemed as "safe" have to rely on parents (working full time) to get them across these roads.

I would like to know at what point a road goes from being unsafe to safe.

Medical conditions, may be those where pupils need support to walk, or with their personal care

No

Only that none of these rules apply to children in 6th form!

Parents need to be made aware (if their catchment school is full) that, if they accept a place in another school and don't remain on the catchment school's waiting list, they will not receive free transport. At present parents can agree to an alternative school placement without realising the full implication of their decision. The new proposals do not make this any clearer.

Parents need to be made aware that if they decide to accept a place at another school (rather than remain on the waiting list for their catchment school - if full). That they will not receive free transport. At present parents seem unaware of this and it is not made clear in the new proposals.

Road safety - roads need to be looked at on a few days as one day there may be no traffic issue and NOT at 5pm 8.30 - 9.00 & 3 - 3.30

Section 4.3 - it is not clear how you will communicate a change, especially in short notice situations - putting a letter in the internal post system and hoping it gets there is the current approach and doesn't work. This should be specified in the policy, eg by phone, text, email, post with timelines.

The wording and length of explanations!! Is too long and a briefer and much simpler use of English language would make it clearer than it is at present.

This needs to be much clearer. Some parents do not feel they have much choice but to accept a place at the nearest school if the catchment school is full or they have more than one child.

Though not in your policy. You need to stop wasting people's time by sending out a form every year that we, the parent, the school & Doctor has to sign confirming transport is required. This is not needed when it is a condition that can not be treated or healed such as Cerebral Palsy. It is a waste of time & money for all concerned.

You need to provide copies of Road Safety GB's guidance if that is what you are using.

Q15. Do you have any comments to make about the explanations of catchment areas, qualifying schools, road safety or medical or special education needs?

	Count	%
Parent of a child who currently receives transport from the school	21	43
School	14	29

Parent of a child who does not receive transport from the school	6	12
Resident of Central Bedfordshire	4	8
Other (please write in below)	3	6
School Governor	1	2
Total	49	100

Q15. Other specified:

All of the first three options, but the form did not allow multiple selections.
I am a parent of an 11 year old now looking at secondary schools. I think you need to lower the age range as I do not think it suitable for an 11 year old to walk 3 miles to our nearest school. With all the weird people praying on youngsters I think it disgusting you haven't taken into consideration the immaturity of 11 years olds and what's expected of them.
Parent of child who has a concessionary bus pass

Q16. If you are responding on behalf of a school please write in the name of the school?

Aspley Guise
 Campton Lower
 Campton Lower (response from head teacher and governors)
 Church End Lower School Marston Moretaine
 Clipstone Brook lower school
 Fairfield Park
 Gravenhurst Academy
 Langford Lower School
 Leighton Middle
 Linslade Lower School
 Ridgmont Lower
 Silsoe Lower
 The Chiltern School

Q17. Are you:

	Count	%
Male	8	16
Female	32	65
No answer	9	18
Total	49	100

Q18. What is your age?

	Count	%
Under 16	0	0
16 - 19	0	0
20 - 29	0	0
30 - 44	18	37
45 - 59	17	35
60 - 64	4	8
65 - 74	0	0
75+	0	0

No answer	10	20
Total	49	100

Q19. Do you consider yourself to be disabled?

	Count	%
Yes	0	0
No	36	73
No answer	13	27
Total	49	100

Q20. To which of these groups do you consider you belong?

	Count	%
White British	32	65
Asian or Asian British	3	6
Black or Black British	0	0
Chinese	0	0
Other	3	6
No answer	11	22
Total	49	100

Q20. Other Specified:

English
white non British

Q21. What is your home postcode?

	Count	%
Aspley Guise	1	2
Barton-le-Clay	1	2
Campton & Chicksands	5	10
Clifton	1	2
Cranfield	1	2
Eggington	1	2
Flitwick	2	4
Harlington	1	2
Heath and Reach	1	2
Leighton Linlade	2	4
Maulden	1	2
Northill	1	2
Sandy	2	4
Silsoe	2	4
Southill	1	2
Stotfold	2	4
Toddington	1	2
No answer / not recognisable	23	47
Total	49	100