

Time running out for consultation on the future of home to school transport

There are only 11 days left for parents to have their say on the proposed changes to Buckinghamshire's home to school transport policy, due to be implemented in September 2012.

The changes, likely to affect the majority of secondary school pupils, would mean that transport will only be provided to the pupil's nearest secondary school. Under the existing policy, pupils currently receive free transport to their choice of catchment school, including grammar schools, if they live over 3 miles away from the school. If a child is from a low income family and is entitled to free school meals; a family is in receipt of maximum working tax credit; a child has special educational needs, a disability, mobility problems or is eligible on specific road safety criteria, the Council will continue to provide free home to school transport where the statutory criteria are met.

Mike Appleyard, Buckinghamshire County Council's Cabinet Member for Education and Skills, has already met with parents during public meetings held across the county before Christmas. Further meetings are due to take place before the consultation ends on 31 January.

Cllr Appleyard said: "Through these meetings, I have been made aware of some specific issues that had not been fully considered when drawing up these proposals and I am now seeking solutions which will be used to form the final policy. The final policy is not a done deal and remains subject to the findings of the consultation. I'm grateful to parents for bringing these issues to my attention and I encourage as many parents to come along to the meetings as possible."

The new proposals will help achieve savings of £1.4m (or 10%) from the home to school transport budget, all part of the Council's need to cut its overall spending by 50% over the next nine years. To read the proposal in full and complete the survey online visit www.buckscc.gov.uk/schooltransport.

Further Information

Catchment schools are not always the nearest school. Set out below are examples of how parents may be affected by the policy changes. Examples are based on residents who live more than 3 miles away from their nearest school:

- * If your child's nearest secondary school is an upper school and you live more than three miles away, they would receive transport to that school.
- * If your child's nearest secondary school is a grammar school but they have not qualified for a grammar school, they would receive transport to their nearest upper school.
- * If you wish for your child to attend an upper school that is not your nearest upper school, you would be required to pay for your child's transport, providing spaces were available on relevant buses.
- * If your child has qualified for a grammar school place and the nearest secondary school is an upper school, they would receive transport to that upper school. You would be required to pay for your child's transport to go to a grammar school of your choice - this would also depend on the availability of spaces on the bus.



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE



The expected cost for home to school transport under this proposal would be around £10 or £12 per week over 39 weeks of the year.

There is an additional option within the proposals to extend free transport to grammar qualified pupils attending their nearest grammar school, so:

* If your child has qualified for a grammar school place and the nearest secondary school is a grammar school, they would receive transport to that grammar school. If your child is a boy and the nearest grammar school is a girls' school, we would then transport them to the next nearest grammar school accepting boys and vice versa for girls.

* If your child has qualified for a grammar school place and you wish them to attend a grammar school that is not their nearest, you would be required to pay for your child's transport to that school.

The expected cost for this additional service for grammar school pupils under this proposal would be between £20 to £30 per week over 39 weeks of the year.

ENDS

Notes for editors:

Parent Meetings:

Wed	25-Jan	The Buckingham School	5-7pm
		The Winslow Centre	7.30-9.30pm
Thurs	26-Jan	The Grange School, Aylesbury	5.30-7.30pm