



HOME TO SCHOOL AND COLLEGE TRANSPORT POLICY 2013/14 CONSULTATION DOCUMENT – MAY 2012

Annual consultation on proposed changes to how help will be given by West Berkshire Council with free or subsidised home to school and college transport to pupils and students for the 2013/2014 school year.

1. West Berkshire Council's Home to School Transport Policy sets out the circumstances in which it will provide free or subsidised transport to help children and young people get to school or college. It therefore relates to West Berkshire residents of statutory school age (from the term following 5th birthday to the end of Year 11).

Local Authorities are required by law to provide help for some pupils but may also provide help for others on a discretionary basis. In order to run an effective and efficient best value home to school and college transport service within financial constraints, West Berkshire Council reviews its policy each year to consider whether or not changes are needed.

Any policy is subject to any change in government legislation when they occur. West Berkshire Council implements all mandatory requirements and subsequent operational changes that are necessary following new government legislation.

The Council is proposing some change to the way the current policy is applied as highlighted in the proposed policy document published on the website at www.westberks.gov.uk/schooltransport

2. Statutory Free Home to School Transport

The current agreed policy is the 2012/13 Home to School and College Transport policy which can be seen in full on the Council's website www.westberks.gov.uk/schooltransport. A copy is also available from the Council, through the contact given at the end of this consultation document.

The policy covers the eligibility to receive statutory free transport assistance. This is subject to age, the school attended, availability of walking routes and distances involved, as well as the level of family income. Statutory free transport is unchanged and remains the same as the 2012/13 policy which is in accordance with legislation. There are a few clarifications regarding the application of the policy.

3. Fare Paying Scheme (paragraph 4.1)

The policy also outlines the discretionary assistance available through the fare-paying scheme. This is a concessionary scheme which may be available to those who are not entitled to free transport. It is not an entitlement. There are some changes proposed that will affect the Fare paying scheme in 2013-14.

The Council will continue to apply a graded fare charging system based on radial distances from home addresses to the schools concerned.

Parents/carers will be required to pay for the pass in advance. This is a change from the previous policy where parents paid in two instalments.

The pricing is under review. The charges for 2013-2014 have not been confirmed but will be published in the Admissions Guides. It is anticipated that the increase will take account of commercial rates as well as inflation. Therefore, the price of the fare-paying scheme will be less than or equal to commercial rates, but is likely to represent an increase greater than the rate of inflation when compared to 2012-2013 rates.

The paragraph number 4.1. refers to the full policy document and should be quoted on the consultation response form if any comments are made.

4. The consultation closes on 15 June 2012. The Council will then consider the comments received and decide on the Home to School transport policy to be applied in the academic year 2013-14. There will be no individual responses, the council's decision will be published on the website at www.westberks.gov.uk.

A short version of the policy is published annually in the Parents' Guides to Admissions for Primary and Secondary Schools published each September to enable parents to make informed decisions on preferred schools.

5. If you wish to comment on the proposed policy, you can do this on line by going to: www.westberks.gov.uk/schooltransportconsultation where an online response form is provided. The response form is also available from the Council's website and can be printed and posted or e-mailed to the email address given below **by 15 June 2012.**

Any queries regarding the consultation process can be emailed to accesspolicies@westberks.gov.uk , or you can write to: Home to School Transport Section, West Street House, West Street, Newbury RG14 1BZ.

WEST BERKSHIRE HOME TO SCHOOL TRANSPORT POLICY 2013/14

COMMENT FORM

Please return the form as soon as possible and **no later than 15 June 2011** to Home to School Transport Section, West Street House, West Street, Newbury RG14 1BZ.

Please refer to the Policy paragraph number if applicable followed by the comment in each case.

Comments:

Which of the following best describes you?

Please tick all applicable and fill in names of school/s

Parent currently receiving transport? Yes No

School *

Governor*

College *

Parish Council

Other (Please Specify)

Authority *

Your Name and address are not required, but will be useful to us in assessing responses and participation

Name

Address