



WEST BERKSHIRE HOME TO SCHOOL AND COLLEGE TRANSPORT POLICY 2012/13 CONSULTATION DOCUMENT – MAY 2011

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 2012/2013 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 are proposing one change to the current policy which will take effect for the 2012/13 academic year. This consultation document sets out the main provisions of the current home to school transport policy with the only change being an adjustment to the fare paid for the Fare Paying scheme. As there have been changes to government legislation regarding funding sections of the policy that are now not applicable will be removed in order to reflect correctly the provision that will be available.

2. The current agreed policy is the 2011/12 Home to School and College Transport policy which can be seen in full on the Council's website www.westberks.gov.uk/hometoschooltransport , or simplified in the Parent's Guides to Admissions which are available at, www.westberks.gov.uk/secondaryadmissions, and www.westberks.gov.uk/primaryadmissions . 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. It also outlines the discretionary assistance available through the fare-paying scheme which is a scheme available to those who are not entitled to free transport. Statutory free transport will remain as is detailed in the 2011/12 policy.

Please Note: There is no change to those who are entitled to Free Home to School Transport. The Fare paying scheme does not apply to those entitled to Free transport.

3. The only change being proposed for 2012/13 is the application of an inflation factor to the charges made for the fare-paying scheme, as outlined in the paragraph below.

Fare Paying Scheme (paragraph 4.1)

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

To ensure recovery of charges, parents/carers will be required to pay in two instalments; the first to be paid prior to issuing a travel pass and the second to be paid early in February 2012. Fares will remain discounted by 30% for additional fare paying siblings.

It is proposed that a small inflationary increase be applied as follows:

Band A, up to 3 miles --- £199.00 per year (2 payments of £99.00) (increased from £196)

Band B, up to 6 miles --- £398.00 per year (2 payments of £199.00) (increased from £393)

Band C, over 6 miles ---- £763.00 per year (2 payments of £381.00) (increased from £753)

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

4. The consultation will run until 30 June 2011. The Council will then consider the comments received and decide on the Home to School transport policy to be applied in the academic year 2012-13. There will be no individual responses, the councils 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 change you can do this on line by going to: www.westberks.gov.uk/hometoschooltransport 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 30 June 2011**.

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.

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COMMENT FORM

Please return the form as soon as possible and **no later than 22 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.

4.1.Fare paying scheme

General 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