

## Home to School Transport Policy

### Consultation for pupils attending mainstream schools

#### **What are we consulting you on?**

We are consulting you on a number of changes that we are proposing to make our Home to School Transport Policy. We currently offer support in addition to what we are legally required to. This is known as Discretionary Transport and it is this additional support that we are proposing to change.

#### **Why do we need to make changes?**

We currently spend £8.5m on providing home to school transport for pupils attending mainstream schools. Of that figure, £4.5m is spent on providing transport assistance that is not a legal requirement. Overall, the county council faced with making savings in the region of £300m over the next four years. We therefore need to look at all of our spending, especially our spending on services we do not have a legal requirement to provide.

#### **What free transport must we provide by law?**

The law says free home to school transport must be provided in the following cases (known as statutory entitlement):

- a) For children aged 4 but younger than 8 years old who are attending their nearest school and where the suitable walking route from home to school is over 2 miles. And for children aged 8 to 16 years who are attending their nearest school and where the suitable walking route from home to school is over 3 miles. These are known as 'statutory walking distances'.
- b) For children with a special educational need, a disability or a mobility difficulty, regardless of their condition being long-term or short-term, which means they cannot be expected to walk to the nearest appropriate school, even if this is within the statutory walking distance.
- c) For children who live less than the statutory walking distance from the nearest school who cannot reasonably be expected to walk to and from school due to the unsuitability of the route.
- d) For children aged between 8 and 11 from low income families\* where the nearest school attended is over 2 miles from their home.
- e) For children between the ages of 11 and 16 from low income families\* where any one of the three nearest attended schools is between 2 and 6 miles from their home.
- f) For children between the ages of 11 and 16 from low income families\* where the nearest school attended preferred on the parental religion or belief is between 2 and 15 miles from their home.

\*Low income families are those pupils whose parents are in receipt of the maximum amount of working tax credit or the pupils are eligible for free school meals.

1. Please read the instructions carefully.
2. Please use a blue or black pen to fill in the questionnaire.
3. Please check you have answered all the appropriate questions.
4. Please return your completed questionnaire by **29 November 2013** to **Have your say, County Hall, Preston, PR1 8XJ**, or alternatively you can complete it online.

## Transport assistance for pupils who move house in years 6, 10 and 11

When a family moves home while the pupil is in years 6, 10 or 11, we currently provide free transport, as long as the school they are attending is more than the statutory walking distance from their new home, even though the school the pupil is attending may not be the nearest school to their new home.

**From September 2014, we are proposing to withdraw this service except for families on low incomes\*. Any pupil in year 11 in September 2015 who received this discretionary assistance during the school year 2014/2015 would continue to receive the concession until the end of their year 11. This is likely to affect 80 pupils annually, with annual savings once fully implemented of £132,000.**

### Q1 How strongly do you agree or disagree with this proposal?

Please tick ✓ one box only

Strongly  
agree

Tend to  
agree

Tend to  
disagree

Strongly  
disagree

Don't  
know

## Transport assistance to faith schools

We currently offer transport assistance to pupils who attend the nearest school of their faith, even though there may be a nearer non-faith school to where the pupil lives, which is more than the statutory walking distance from that school and the pupils met the denominational criteria for admission. Since September 2011 pupils starting at faith schools, where there was a nearer school, are required to contribute an annual fee of £380 towards the travel costs. This figure has remained the same since then.

**We are proposing to increase this charge to £475 from September 2014 for all those pupils whose parents would normally pay the charge. In September 2014 pupils in reception, years 1, 2, and 3 in primary schools and years 7, 8, 9 and 10 in secondary schools will pay the revised charge. This charge will increase annually by the Retail Price Index plus 5%.**

**Pupils on low incomes\* will still be exempt from these charges and parents will still be able to pay the charge by ten interest free monthly payments. This is likely to initially affect up to 2,100 pupils and will initially bring in additional revenue to the council of £199,000 per year. This additional revenue will increase as more pupils are liable for the charge and as the charges increase annually.**

**Q2**

**How strongly do you agree or disagree with this proposal?**

Please tick ✓ one box only

Strongly  
agree

Tend to  
agree

Tend to  
disagree

Strongly  
disagree

Don't  
know

Previously we have granted assistance with travel costs where the pupil has attended the nearest faith school which serves the parish in which the pupil lives as stated in that schools admission criteria, even though this may not have been the nearest school of their faith. Where two faith schools have named the same parish in their admission criteria we have previously granted assistance to either faith school irrespective of whether this was the nearest faith school. In all cases the distance criteria must be met.

**We are proposing that from September 2015 we only provide assistance for non-low income families\* to the nearest school of the parental/pupil faith. This is likely to affect up to 20 pupils a year and result in a cost saving to the council of £10,000 per year. This will increase to 100 pupils after five years with annual savings of £50,000 per year.**

**From September 2015 any pupils currently receiving transport assistance to a faith school that is not the nearest school of their faith will continue to receive that assistance until they leave the school or until the end of year 11 in faith schools with sixth forms.**

**Q3**

**How strongly do you agree or disagree with this proposal?**

Please tick ✓ one box only

Strongly  
agree

Tend to  
agree

Tend to  
disagree

Strongly  
disagree

Don't  
know

\*Low income families are those pupils whose parents are in receipt of the maximum amount of working tax credit or the pupils are eligible for free school meals.

## Transport assistance and geographical priority areas (GPA)

A number of schools use GPA as part of their admission criteria. In some cases pupils secure places living in these GPA and sometimes this may not physically be their nearest school. We currently allow travelling expenses in these cases provided the distance criterion is met. Where a school shares a GPA, we will only pay travel costs to the nearest GPA school.

**We are proposing that from September 2015, for those pupils who start new at secondary school which is their nearest GPA school but not their nearest school, they will no longer receive transport assistance. Pupils who previously qualified for this assistance will retain it until the end of their year 11 at the school.**

**This is likely to affect up to 20 pupils per annum resulting in annual savings of £6,000. When fully implemented up to 100 pupils will be affected resulting in annual savings of £50,000.**

### Q4 How strongly do you agree or disagree with this proposal?

Please tick ✓ one box only

Strongly  
agree

Tend to  
agree

Tend to  
disagree

Strongly  
disagree

Don't  
know

## Temporary parental incapacity to accompany the child to school

When a parent is unable to accompany their child to school (mainly primary schools) due to a temporary medical incapacity and there is no other family/friend to help, we will try to help parents even if the pupil is not attending the nearest school or lives within the statutory walking distances, if satisfactory medical evidence has been provided.

**From September 2014 it is proposed to withdraw this service except for families on low income\*.**

**This will affect very few pupils per year and will result in annual savings of around £8,000.**

### Q5 How strongly do you agree or disagree with this proposal?

Please tick ✓ one box only

Strongly  
agree

Tend to  
agree

Tend to  
disagree

Strongly  
disagree

Don't  
know

\*Low income families are those pupils whose parents are in receipt of the maximum amount of working tax credit or the pupils are eligible for free school meals.

## Temporary transport assistance for children with short term medical conditions

There may be occasions when a pupil for whatever reason is unable to walk to school due to a temporary medical reason (eg, broken leg) and the pupil does not attend their nearest school. In the past we have helped pupils in this situation for up to 12 weeks, if medical evidence has been provided.

**From September 2014 it is proposed to withdraw this service except for low income families\*.**

**This is likely to affect up to 30 pupils yearly and will result in annual savings in the region of £242,000.**

**Q6**

**How strongly do you agree or disagree with this proposal?**

Please tick ✓ one box only

Strongly  
agree

Tend to  
agree

Tend to  
disagree

Strongly  
disagree

Don't  
know

\*Low income families are those pupils whose parents are in receipt of the maximum amount of working tax credit or the pupils are eligible for free school meals.

## Emergency transport provision

There are cases where we provide emergency transport provision normally on a short-term basis to assist those families in dire need. These tend to be occasions where a family may have fled domestic abuse and the family are re-housed temporary in refuges. More often than not these pupils are not attending their nearest school.

**We are proposing to continue this service. This affects approximately 12 pupils a year and annually costs about £3,000.**

**Q7**

**How strongly do you agree or disagree with this proposal?**

Please tick ✓ one box only

Strongly  
agree

Tend to  
agree

Tend to  
disagree

Strongly  
disagree

Don't  
know

## Pupils admitted to schools under the fair access protocol/managed moves

Pupils who are admitted to schools under these circumstances are provided with travelling expenses even if they do not attend their nearest school, provided the distance criterion is met. Managed moves are for pupils who have been found alternative schools as they were at risk of permanent exclusion from their previous school.

**We are proposing to withdraw this service for any pupil affected by a managed move who start at a school after September 2014, unless the pupil comes from a low income family\***

**This is likely to affect up to 69 pupils per year and result in savings of £54,000 per year.**

**Q8**

**How strongly do you agree or disagree with this proposal?**

Please tick ✓ one box only

Strongly  
agree

Tend to  
agree

Tend to  
disagree

Strongly  
disagree

Don't  
know

The fair access protocol is for pupils who move in to a new area but can't be placed in their nearest school.

**We are also planning to retain the existing policy for those pupils subject to a fair access protocol, as we have a legal requirement to find a school place for these pupils.**

**Q9**

**How strongly do you agree or disagree with this proposal?**

Please tick ✓ one box only

Strongly  
agree

Tend to  
agree

Tend to  
disagree

Strongly  
disagree

Don't  
know

\*Low income families are those pupils whose parents are in receipt of the maximum amount of working tax credit or the pupils are eligible for free school meals.

## Charging for a replacement bus pass

We currently charge parents £15 (£10 for pupils on low income\*) to replace their bus pass if it is lost (it is free for those pupils who have a statement of special educational needs). These figures have remained at this level since 2000.

**We are proposing to increase the charge to £20 (£15 for pupil on low incomes\*) from September 2014. Pupils with statements of special educational needs will continue to be exempt from these charges.**

**This is likely to affect 700 pupils per year and bring in additional revenue to the council of £3,500 per year.**

### **Q10** How strongly do you agree or disagree with this proposal?

Please tick ✓ one box only

Strongly  
agree

Tend to  
agree

Tend to  
disagree

Strongly  
disagree

Don't  
know

\*Low income families are those pupils whose parents are in receipt of the maximum amount of working tax credit or the pupils are eligible for free school meals.

## Pupils under the jurisdiction of the Traveller Education Service (TES)

There are a small number of cases where pupils move into an area and become the responsibility of the TES. These pupils are likely to be from the Gypsy, Roma or Traveller community. We currently provide short-term transport assistance (maximum of 4 weeks) to get these pupils to school, where they are either not attending their nearest school or live less than the statutory walking distance from school.

**We are proposing to continue this service. This only affects a small number of pupils each year and the cost is only minimal.**

### **Q11** How strongly do you agree or disagree with this proposal?

Please tick ✓ one box only

Strongly  
agree

Tend to  
agree

Tend to  
disagree

Strongly  
disagree

Don't  
know

## What other cost savings are being proposed?

In addition to the proposals already outlined, we would like to consult you on a number of other cost saving measures which are not contained within the Home to School Transport Policy. As these items are not contained within the policy we are not legally obliged to consult on them. However, we would be interested in your views on these proposals.



## Increasing the fares/cost of season tickets on contracted school bus services

Pupils with no legal entitlement to transport assistance can travel on school contracted bus/taxi services by paying a daily fare to the driver or by purchasing a season ticket, subject to space being available and the service not costing us any more.

Individual fare levels and season ticket costs (which are based on the fare levels) have not been increased since 2,000 and the costs are subsidised, which do not in most areas reflect commercial fare levels.

The current fare structure on our contracted school service are:

	Single fare	Return Fare
Journeys up to 3 miles	£1.10	£2.00
Journeys between 3 and 8 miles	£1.60	£3.00
Journeys over 8 miles	£2.10	£4.00

Season tickets can be purchased termly or yearly and the above costs are multiplied by 190 days for a full school year. A 20% discount is then given.

**We are proposing increasing the fare levels from September 2014 for all non-statutory travellers to:**

	Single fare	Return fare
<b>Journeys up to 3 miles</b>	<b>£1.30</b>	<b>£2.50</b>
<b>Journeys between 3 and 8 miles</b>	<b>£1.90</b>	<b>£3.50</b>
<b>Journeys over 8 miles</b>	<b>£2.40</b>	<b>£4.50</b>

This would increase annual season tickets prices as follows:

	Present Price	Proposed Price
<b>Journeys up to 3 miles</b>	<b>£304.00</b>	<b>£380.00</b>
<b>Journeys between 3 and 8 miles</b>	<b>£456.00</b>	<b>£532.00</b>
<b>Journeys over 8 miles</b>	<b>£608.00</b>	<b>£684.00</b>

This is likely to affect up to 3,900 pupils and produce additional revenue of £92,000.

**Q12** How strongly do you agree or disagree with this proposal?

Please tick ✓ one box only

Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



## Provide minimum capacities on contracted school bus services

When providing school bus services we currently provide additional capacity to cater for pupils who do not have a legal entitlement to home to school travel. Providing larger capacity vehicles can often be more expensive, even when the cost of the additional revenue received from pupils who pay the fares on these services is taken into account.

**We are proposing to undertake a review of the bus capacities we provide. In doing so, we will try to ensure that pupils will still be able to travel to and from school. However, there may be instances where there may be more costly and possibly less convenient alternative services are available. In these circumstances we are likely to propose withdrawing the contracted school services.**

**Where a service is proposed for withdrawal a consultation will take place with those affected. We will produce an equality impact assessment for any of these proposals and all decisions to withdraw services will ultimately be made by a county council cabinet member.**

**More detailed work is required before potential savings can be estimated.**

**Q13 How strongly do you agree or disagree with this proposal?**

Please tick ✓ one box only

Strongly  
agree

Tend to  
agree

Tend to  
disagree

Strongly  
disagree

Don't  
know

## Review modes of transport

For pupils who live a considerable distance from a bus route, mainly in rural areas, we normally contract taxis to take them from home to meet up with the bus route.

**We are proposing to approach these families to ask whether they would be willing to take their own children to these bus stops. We would reimburse these parents for the cost of their petrol.**

**This is likely to affect some 300 pupils and potentially result in savings of £320,000 per year.**

**Q14 How strongly do you agree or disagree with this proposal?**

Please tick ✓ one box only

Strongly  
agree

Tend to  
agree

Tend to  
disagree

Strongly  
disagree

Don't  
know

## Review of unsuitable route provision

Pupils who attend their nearest school but live within the statutory walking distance from the school are provided with free transport if we feel that the route they would have to walk to school could be considered unsuitable even if they were accompanied by an adult.

**We are proposing to review all of these cases. There may be instances where investment in a walking route could mean that it becomes suitable for pupils to walk, enabling free transport to be withdrawn. For example, a pedestrian crossing could be paid for from the savings made by withdrawing free transport.**

**More detailed work is required before savings can be estimated.**

**Q15** How strongly do you agree or disagree with this proposal?  
Please tick ✓ one box only

Strongly  
agree

Tend to  
agree

Tend to  
disagree

Strongly  
disagree

Don't  
know

## Charge for amending bus passes

Currently, if a pupil who is entitled to assisted home to school transport changes address or school then they are required to have an amended bus pass. We currently provide this service for free.

**We are proposing that from September 2014 we will charge for amending passes. We are proposing a charge of £10 per pass (£5 for low income families).**

**This is likely to affect up to 780 pupils annually and provide additional revenue to the council of up to £7800 per annum.**

**Q16** How strongly do you agree or disagree with this proposal?  
Please tick ✓ one box only

Strongly  
agree

Tend to  
agree

Tend to  
disagree

Strongly  
disagree

Don't  
know

\*Low income families are those pupils whose parents are in receipt of the maximum amount of working tax credit or the pupils are eligible for free school meals.

## COMMENTS

If you have comments about any of the county council's Home to School Transport policy proposals please write them in the box below.

### About you

Please answer the following questions about you where applicable. We will use this information to make sure the services we provide meet the needs of different types of people – it will not be used to identify you individually.

#### **Q17** Are you...?

Please complete as many as apply

A parent/guardian of a pupil at

A parent/guardian of a future pupil at

A pupil at

A member of staff at

A school governor at

Other (please write in)

**Q18****Are you...?**

Please tick ✓ one box only

Male Female **Q19****What was your age on your last birthday?**

Please write in below

 years**Q20****Are you a deaf person or do you have a disability?**

The Equality Act 2010 defines a disabled person as someone who has a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on his or her ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

Please tick ✓ one box only

Yes No **Q21****Which best describes your ethnic background?**

Please tick ✓ one box only

White Asian or Asian British Black or Black British Mixed eg White and Asian Other 

**Thank you for taking part in this consultation. Please send your response by 29 November 2013 to:**

Have your say, Lancashire County Council, County Hall, Preston, PR1 8XJ