

Date: 22/03/2024

Dear parent/carer

Make sure you have had your say on proposed changes to Central Bedfordshire Council's Home to School Transport policies.

There are only a few weeks left for you to have your say on proposed changes to two of Central Bedfordshire Council's Home to School Transport policies.

We are proposing changes to the following policies:

- **Travel Assistance for Children and Young People Attending School** – this is for all children of compulsory school age, including those with Special Educational Needs, Disability (SEND) or other mobility difficulties.
- **Travel Assistance for Young People aged 16-19** – this is known as post-16 transport.

Both policies have been reviewed and amended to make them clear, make them easy to understand for people who are thinking about or applying for transport and ensure they are aligned with the Department for Education's (DfE) revised guidance on Home to School Transport, which was published in June 2023.

It is important to note that if the changes are approved, they will not affect current transport entitlement. We will honour existing commitments for transport.

The revised policies will apply only to new applications for home to school transport and would be effective for in-year school applications from the start of 2024/2025 academic year and at the start of the 2025/26 academic year for new compulsory school transport applications and post-16 transport applications.

What are we proposing?

One of the main changes we are proposing is to develop an independent travel training scheme for children and young people with SEND, to help those who can develop the necessary skills and knowledge to travel independently and provide parents or carers with peace of mind that they are travelling safely.

Another key change is around the system we currently use when parents are applying for school transport. We are proposing changing this from the school's 'catchment area' to the student's 'nearest school'.

There are further proposed changes to other parts of the policy to make them clearer or bring them up to date. More details about all the proposed changes can be found by visiting: www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/consultations.

One of the pressures on our budget is the ever-increasing cost of school transport. Every day we transport around 6,500 children to and from school across Central Bedfordshire, on around 750 routes, and we're predicted to have spent 19 million on school transport this year. Some of the proposed changes to our policies will reduce costs, but we will continue to provide school transport to those who need it.

It's important that parent or carers of children who use our home to school transport service have time to have their say on these proposed changes.

The consultation is open until Wednesday 3 April 2024. Have your say and read more in-depth information by visiting: www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/consultations.

Yours sincerely,

The Central Bedfordshire Council School Transport Team

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