

schoolorganisation

From:

Sent:

To:

[REDACTED]
19 June 2018 13:31

schoolorganisation

Subject: Fwd: Dorset County Council Home to School Transport Policy 2019/2020

Please can I request that the commitments from Dorset County Council are added to this? At present it only seems to request commitments from parents/children and set out eligibility criteria.

In particular the commitments I'm thinking of are that sufficient transport will be provided to cover all children who are in receipt of a bus pass. Also that Dorset County Council will provide services that get children to school on time. The provision of service at present makes a mockery of the national school attendance policy, with my child frequently late to school despite being on time to the bus stop. I would like the relevant organisations to work together to rectify this and a commitment that Dorset County Council consider this transport to be an important part of enabling education will help support this. It needs to look at the big picture in terms of service provision and become a more encompassing document.

Many Thanks,

[REDACTED]

----- Original message -----

From: [REDACTED]

Date: 19/06/2018 12:53 (GMT+00:00)

To: [REDACTED]

Subject: Dorset County Council Home to School Transport Policy 2019/2020

Dear Parents/Carers,

Please be aware that Dorset will be consulting on the Home to School Transport Policy and the Post 16 Transport Policy for 2019/2020 with effect from Tuesday 19th June to Monday 16 July 2018. Details of the consultation are available to view at <https://www.dorsetforyou.gov.uk/education-and-training/schools-and-learning/schools-and-learning.aspx#/>.

All comments (both negative and positive) should be sent to schoolorganisation@dorsetcc.gov.uk

Richard Steward

Head Teacher

This email and any attachment to it are confidential. Unless you are the intended recipient, you may not use, copy or disclose either the message or any information contained in the message. If you are not the intended recipient, you should delete this email and notify the sender immediately.

Any views or opinions expressed in this email are those of the sender only, unless otherwise stated. All copyright in any material in this email is reserved.

Please do not reply directly to this email, this address is not monitored. Any queries regarding reviews/reports direct to the relevant person(s)

schoolorganisation

From:

Sent:

To:

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

schoolorganisation

cc: DorsetPassengerTransport

Subject: Woodroffe School Route A071A

Good afternoon

I have just been notified by Woodroffe School in Lyme Regis, that this email address would like feedback on the school bus network at Woodroffe School in Lyme Regis for the coming school year.

I would like to know what Dorset County Council is planning with regards to the Surplus Seat Scheme for this coming year. The paperwork sent by the school today says we can expect surplus seats can be withdrawn at short notice, but as you will read in the information to follow, we received no notification and have incurred dramatically elevated running costs as a result of having our seats removed on the eve of the school year in August 2017. I have been forced to change working hours and to travel a round trip of 20 miles a day for four children from three families, to catch the public bus from Axminster Station to Lyme Regis every day!

The whole saga was unexpected (as renewals were usually quite simple as a repeat customer, yes we need a seat, pay some money and the bus pass would arrive by October). In the end, it just became irritating as we were all left with children about to enter a two year GCSE course, being potentially forced to change schools to one which was running a 3 year programme and would leave our children massively disadvantaged.

Quite frankly, shambolic is my reply to this year's school bus route in our area and all associated communications from Dorset & First, (of which there are minimal), since the decision was taken to move to First Bus Group. We had no issue with Dorset or Damory Coaches for the three years previous to this.

My son has caught the A071A bus since he started in year 7 at Woodroffe — he is now in Year 10. The bus collected a small group of pupils from the corner of Kents Lane in South Chard as the first stop of the day at about 7.20 on the A071A route and dropped them home again to the same spot at 5pm. This location, is three fields from the railway line that forms the Dorset/Somerset County boundary. From our home we are half a mile in either direction from Devon and Dorset. About two years ago, another stop was introduced collecting one extra pupil from Holditch prior to the Kents Lane collection.

We received no and I repeat NO communication from Dorset County Council's Transport Department to inform parents that the 2017 2018 bus route had been amended to (a) another company and (b), that they were no longer picking up from any points other than Chard Junction. We were told to contact First and were then informed we were out of catchment, no surplus seats were available and left in limbo how to take our children to school every day. We only discovered this information the week before school started.

Despite multiple email conversations and telephone calls from the parents concerned, we have had no further communications since August, to this day other than informing us of ridiculous and unrealistic plans to run a double decker on the route (have they driven any of these narrow lanes??) and that they were waiting for hedges to be trimmed which could take up to eighteen months.

schoolorganisation

From:

Sent:

To:

Perhaps you can obtain an update for the coming school year please and let me know more information so we can pass it along to the other parents that rota the car share & bus journey with me every day. This will effect three Woodroffe pupils from September and involves four pupils currently.

Kind regards

[REDACTED]

To Whom it may concern

The AI Bus service from Pilsdon to The Woodroffe School has been run by First this year and has provided a poor service compared with previous providers. The bus provided for this service is far too big for driving around our country lanes. The bus driver often has to reverse long distances and to negotiate the narrow lanes with tractors with trailers and other large vehicles passing. It is essential to have a vehicle that can negotiate lanes and steep hills.

The large bus used by First for this service is not fit for the purpose and the driver will not drive the bus up Pilsdon Lane to Pilsdon Pen, taking an alternative much longer route for my son to be dropped off home which takes an extra half an hour. My son is a type 1 Diabetic and already has a long school day and journey to and from school.

We have also experienced bus cancellations and late buses due to the threat of cold weather even when there was no snow and ice.

Here is a diary of problems we have encountered with the First AI Service:

Week starting 26th Feb - cold weather but no ice on the lanes since the weather had been dry. Collection at Shave Cross only.

Wednesday 28th Feb - bus cancelled in the afternoon due to ice between Whitchurch Canonicorum and Shave Cross. Gassons Lane was almost ice free and easily passable but no alternative route was attempted and the bus was cancelled.

Tuesday 20th March - bus collection at Shave Cross only despite the lanes being clear of snow and quite passable.

Tuesday 17th and Friday 20th April - bus late to collect due to being held up, stuck in the narrow roads with other vehicles because the bus is too big.

schoolorganisation

From:

Sent:

To:

Monday 23rd April - bus driver would not take the bus over a temporary ramp set up by a farmer to cover a pipe leading to his field. The bus driver eventually took another route. Illustrating how the vehicle is unsuitable for our lanes.

schoolorganisation

From:
Sent:
To:
Subject:

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
schoolorganisation
2019/2020 School transportation policy

Dear Sir/Madam

May I please make a recommendation regarding the above.

That school transportation is considered for families on low income for years lower than year 5. My daughter is in Year 1 and I support her, entirely unexpectedly, on my own. I am not clear why I have to wait to year 5 to even be considered for help with transport to school. I know I chose a school out of catchment by a few miles but that is because I wasn't happy with the teaching or practices at our local school.

Best wishes

[REDACTED]

schoolorganisation

From:
Sent:
To:
Subject:

[REDACTED]
19 June 2018 19:56
schoolorganisation School
transport

Good evening, surely with the number of pupils travelling from Portland to All Saints, would it not be viable for a school bus. Pupils could pay for this service and I'm sure it would be cheaper than the public transport.

Regards
[REDACTED]

Sent from Samsung Galaxy smartphone.

From:

Sent:

Subject:

[REDACTED]
20 June 2018 10:21
schoolorganisation school
transport consultation

Dear Sir/madam,

We are incredibly impressed with our school transport arrangements for [REDACTED] and I'm writing to let you know the huge impact this has had for our family. We moved to Dorset last year (we're an army family) and the Council and school worked together to help us settle my autistic son into school as best as they could, given that our move was just before schools broke up.


The transport has been key to my son Jame's success this year. He has a taxi driver, [REDACTED] and PA, [REDACTED] who have been utterly reliable and so friendly. I called up the Council to complement them this year. Without them I know that I would not be able to get my son from Bovington to Purbeck as I have 3 autistic children in different schools and I can be away for work. Knowing that [REDACTED] taxi will always collect him has helped him enormously as he needs routine and security. If he has had a bad day in school he will retreat to the sanctuary of the taxi. To put it into context, in his previous school he would go missing or be immovable, so I know he sees the transport as a safe space.

For [REDACTED] the bus would be absolutely overwhelming, particularly if something had gone wrong for him at home or school before the journey. It would lead to school refusal and behavioral problems and extreme stress. At the moment he's thriving and achieving high grades. I can't express enough how vital this service is to us to ensure [REDACTED] is set up well for each day.

[REDACTED]

schoolorganisation

From:
Sent:
To:
Subject:


20 June 2018 20:18 schoolorganisation
Transport Consultation

Dear Sir/Madam

I would like raise the following; as a Verwood resident of a current Yr 7 child I will be making my decision and application about upper school this calendar year with a decision before the 2019/2020 school year when this policy may become reality. With this uncertainty what reassurance is there that we would not have to pay f 715 per year to send our child to the school we may/may not choose.

If this policy is approved it is discriminating against children who are living in Verwood and wishing to attend a Wimborne school. Why is the rest of the Dorset area not forced to make this decision? You are forcing working families on a living income to opt for a school that isn't their first choice. This seems to be a political decision to swell numbers in Ferndown Upper by penalising Verwood children who wish to follow their siblings to QE.

Thank you

From:
Sent:
To:
Subject:

[REDACTED]
20 June 2018 21:18
schoolorganisation
20180620-School transport post 16

To whom it may concern,

Having read the policy statement on the Dorset for you website:

<https://www.dorsetforyou.gov.uk/education-and-training/schools-and-learning/schools-andlearning.aspx#/>.

The guidelines state that if you reside more than 3 miles away you will not be entitled to free transport post 16 although it is central government insisting that a child is in full time education at a sixth form school or college or alternatively in a full time apprenticeship. I think the decision of Dorset Council to remove free bus travel in sixth form may put undue hardships on most families irrespective of whether families are in receipt of tax credit or not and should consider perhaps having a reduced fee for 16 — 18 year olds whilst in full time education to ease the financial burden on families that only have the option of using organised transport to get their child/children to school due to work commitments.

It mentions that the availability and fees will be at the discretion of the bus company. This concerns me in that there may not even be a seat available for my child and the cost is not regulated to ensure that the bus company, that have the monopoly over transport, do not exploit the sixth form students to recuperate moneys lost to subsidising the other years.

I trust you will take these points into consideration and would welcome your thoughts on them.

Regards,

[REDACTED]
Concerned Parent

~~schoolorganisation~~

From:
Sent:
To:
Subject:

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
2018 1 1:44 schoolorganisation School
transport

I presume that there is no official consultation form and that you are just wanting comments.

I would like to see 1.1.8 made clearer for parents moving into an area. They do not have access to the school admissions process unless they move by October for Secondary Schools and January for primary schools and so may well find their local school full when they arrive in their new accommodation from afar. Can it be made clear that if they are unable to get a place in their nearest school because it is full, then they will be able to get free transport if they meet the distance criteria?

I was appalled that we were going to penalise children when they were in homes that were potentially breaking up and if they stayed in the house nearest the school they could be seriously suffering. Can para 1.1.9 be seriously reviewed so we did whatever was necessary in the best interest of the child?

Para 1.4

The government is keen that work-experience again becomes the norm for all secondary age students and we must again ensure that students in deprived areas or in isolated areas are not limited in the choice of options they have for this activity. Weymouth and Portland is the third worst Borough for Social Mobility and if the only option they have for work experience is the local B&B as a cleaner then they will never break out of this cycle. Someone living in Littlemoor and going to Wey Valley may well get inspired if they could do some work experience with SunSeeker at Osprey quay but cannot get there without subsidised transport. Can this whole paragraph be rethought so we can raise aspirations for all who need this?

Thanks

[REDACTED]

From:
Sent:
To:
Subject:

[REDACTED]
21 June 2018 15:44
schoolorganisation
School transport consultation.

Dear Sir/madam,

From the policy I note that students travelling on school buses must behave appropriately.

I would like to see some reference to the conduct of bus drivers and companies.

My son recently said to me 'we have a great bus driver at the moment' To which I replied 'Why do you think he's so good?' His response included these points:

He waits for us to sit down before driving off.

He doesn't swear or shout- he is polite

He seems to actually like children and driving a bus.

He doesn't speed .

The annoying children behave much better when he's driving as he has developed a good relationship with us.

This was lovely to hear and I passed this on to the bus company so they could praise this driver. Unfortunately the implication is that the other drivers don't behave appropriately or always drive safely. Buses often break down or are late. Companies should check conduct regularly and monitor bus speeds. If these measures are already in place , does someone from the council monitor quality of service?

I'm sure many parents would like to see a code of conduct for drivers as the safety of school children is paramount. I would welcome your comments regarding these issues.

Many thanks,

[REDACTED]

From:
Sent:
To:
Subject:

21 June 2018 20:59
schoolorganisation
Home to school consultation

To whom it may concern,

I am writing to give my view regarding the

Home to School Transport Policy and Post 16 Transport Support Policy for 2019 to 2020

My 16 year old son will be returning to his present school in September to continue his education and study A levels. He currently receives free transport from Bere Regis to Lytchett Minster School on the L3 service with Damory.

Whilst I accept that a fee would be due for post 16 travel, I was disgusted to discover that this will cost E770 for the academic year. My husband and I both think that this is an extortionate amount of money to pay for a child/young adult to attend school. Lytchett Minster School is the catchment school for our address in Bere Regis and to have to pay almost €800 to get him there is really quite devastating. The school is 8.4 miles from our address, walking or cycling is out of the question and both my husband and myself begin work before the start of the school day so travelling by bus is his only option.

To further add insult to injury, when I followed the link provided on your website for bus operators that provide a service for lytchett minster school (<http://passes.gosouthcoast.co.uk>)

I followed the instructions and realised that our required bus route wasn't even listed as an option therefore I have had to email Damory directly to request a bus pass. The customer service response from Damory was very quick, however I then discovered that a seat on the bus is not guaranteed for children aged 16 and above and that we will be notified "nearer the time" if our son has a seat on the bus. This is not really an acceptable answer! How near is nearer?? !! A month, a week, a day?? !! I appreciate that children aged 11 15 get priority but surely there are deadlines for applications etc.. and therefore perhaps a date could be given with confirmation for students aged 16 and above.

All in all I'm not at all impressed with the policy for home to school transport post 16. In my opinion, the fees are very expensive, the process is unprofessional and even though our catchment school is over 3 miles away from home I understand from the guidance that we do not qualify for a reduction in cost because we do not receive any working tax credits.

schoolorganisation

From:

Sent:

To:

Subject:

The start of a new school year always presents extra costs, for example, uniform, equipment etc.. and now we are also faced with the dilemma of finding an extra E 770 to send our child to school!! ... That's if a seat is even available of course!

From a concerned parent,

[REDACTED]

schoolorganisation

From:
Sent:
To:
Subject:

[REDACTED]
23 June 2018
10:23
schoolorganisation
Post 16 transport

To whom it may concern

I am writing to express my opinion on the post 16 transport from Verwood to QE School , Wimborne. I have had 2 children go to QE sixth form and another who will be due to start in 2019. The sixth form bus for the year 2016-2017 was expensive however you were able to pay daily. When it came to 2017-2018 academic year the cost rose hugely putting it at least 7.00 per day (almost two pounds a day more expensive than the previous year), more expensive than general bus travel and making it more expensive than most other school buses including to Brockenhurst. The pay daily option was also withdrawn. Most families will not qualify for financial support and having to find many hundreds of pounds for a bus pass is very difficult. Any child wanting to do A levels has no option but to travel as there are no facilities for this in Verwood. The bus company has a captive audience for its services and I feel has taken unfair advantage of this, there is no public bus to Wimborne. It would be very helpful if they could reintroduce the daily pay option at the least. It would also be interesting to see the justification the bus company give for such expensive bus pass costs as it seems to me that on most occasions a normal bus is used, not a coach or one with seatbelts and I am sure these buses have the facilities on them to issue pay as you go tickets. It would be great to receive some answers to the points I have raised.

Yours sincerely

[REDACTED]

schoolorganisation

From:
Sent:
To:
Subject:

[REDACTED]
25 June 2018 1 1:42
schoolorganisation
Help with School Transport

Good Morning

I have a daughter currently at the Gryphon School and unfortunately all being it a Dorset School and we living in Stalbridge which is in Dorset we are based as out of catchment therefore have to pay for school transport. This has increased considerably this year to E950 each, which brings me to my second daughter who is also going to The Gryphon School in Sept. I have applied for places on the bus for both but this is a considerable amount of money each year is there any help that I can get to pay for this big sum of money.

I look forward to hearing from you

Kind regards

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

schoolorganisation

From:
Sent:
To:
Subject:

[REDACTED]
26 June 2018 13:56
schoolorganisation
School Transport Holtwood to St Michael's

Dear Sir

We have used this service this year and the driver we have had for most of the year has been great.

We are getting to know our new driver.

Service good, only comment continues to be why it is necessary to go via qe when by pass St Michael's. This unnessecarily elongates the jeorney for the younger ones. We are happy to be collected early if this is easier?

Kind regards

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

schoolorganisation

From:
Sent:
To:
Subject:

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
21:37 schoolorganisation School
transport

My son is technically out of catchment for the school he attends (st James's first school in Gaunts Common) by a very small distance.

Please can the option of a school bus be expanded to include a bigger distance please therefore more children eligible? This will reduce the carbon footprint and help improve the traffic situation at drop off/ collection time.

Plus my son really wants to go on the school bus with his friends as it's a novelty to them. We really needed option of the school bus last June as my mum who often does the school run for me, had a small stroke out of the blue, rendering her unable to drive for a month. It caused me huge logistical stress and a complete nightmare! Please put forward my comments during the planned discussion and I would be grateful for feedback. Thanks in advance. Kind regards,

[REDACTED]

Sent from my iPhone

From:
Sent:
To:
Subject:

[REDACTED]
01 July 2018 09:35
schoolorganisation
Transport consultation

Re: Transport consultation- Children's walking route Lytchett Matravers to Lytchett Minster School

I live in lytchett Matravers and am very frustrated at the lack of options available for my children to get to school in the next village (Lytchett Mister school).

I have asked DCC for a risk assessment to be done on the walking route but was told this had already been done and was rated "safe". The conditions of this route were that children walked with an adult and that they were wearing high visibility vests. The reality of these conditions are not realistic. It is often the case (as it is with me) that both parents are required to work so walking my children to school is not an option especially as it takes 45 mins one way (round trip of 1 hour 30mins twice a day, total 3hours)! So ruling out the option to walk with my children, the safety aspect of the walk comes into play. From the top of the village (where I live) it is a 20 min walk to the start of the footpath, along a stretch of road (foxhills road) where there is no pavements and 2 cars struggle to pass each other without using the verge. Also the time of day that this road would be used by my children (8-8.30 am) is peak time where people in the village are setting off to work. Once on the footpath (at the bottom of Foxhills road) the children's safety is questionable again as this is a secluded path, no lighting and away from any roads or houses. I am not happy for my 12 year old daughter to walk along this path especially in the winter months when it is getting dark.

At the school end of the path the children are then required to deal with a dangerous stretch of road (post Green Road); no pavement, no street lighting, sharp bend in the road and high volume of school traffics including cars and buses.

For all the reasons listed above, my children do not have the option to walk to school.

The only option left for me is to put them on the bus. The bus option is preferable but very expensive. The bus company (Damory bus number L 1) do not offer many options for me and having a flat rate payment (€2.80) doesn't take into account the short amount of time the kids are on the bus (5mins). This bus service should be provided free for children in Lytchett Matravers as it is for children living over 3 miles away. I live 2.3 miles away so do not automatically qualify. In summary I think DCC should either drastically improve the safety of the routes available for children to independently get to school or provide free bus passes.

At the very least DCC should reassess and reevaluate the routes including a full new risk assessment. A full Consultation with the parish council and Damory should also be conducted.

Any feedback from my comments or the consultation would be gratefully received.

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Sent from my iPhone

schoolorganisation

From:
Sent:
To:
Subject:

[REDACTED]
02 July 2018 14:1 1
schoolorganisation
Fwd: School transport consultation

Sent from my iPhone

Begin forwarded message:

[REDACTED]
Date: 30 June 2018 at BST
To: schoolorganisation@dorsetcc.gov.uk
Subject: School transport consultation

Dear Sir or Madam

Provision of free transport to eligible children should continue until the end of the academic year in which they turn 16, not cease when they turn 16. It is in everyone's interests that children are encouraged and facilitated to complete their education to GCSE.

Subsidised Transport should also be provided for all children who remain in unpaid education or training at ages 16-18. It is in Dorset's interest that our children receive higher education and training and will contribute to the economy in the longer term. Putting financial obstacles in their path is a short-sighted, short-term solution. The charge for subsidised transport should be significantly lower than the proposed E700+ for surplus seats. Such an excessive charge in a rural county will deter young people from continuing their education and encourage them into low paid jobs.


Yours faithfully

[REDACTED]

Sent from my iPhone

schoolorganisation

From:
Sent:
To:
Subject:


2018 10:33 schoolorganisation Post 16
Transport

Dear Sir/Madam,


I have read with interest the latest consultation documents regarding school transport.

As always the Education Authority has made it extremely difficult to get post 16 travel. In my personal experience we were told my son could not stay post 16 at the school he had attended for 11 years and that we should go and find a school for him to attend, we were not told at the time he would not be eligible for transport, the one we decided on was not the local one.

After application to the Authority we were told he could not get help and needed to go to the local school as he was not eligible for transport. We would have had no issue in paying for transport but were told no.

At a later point we were offered spare seat option. How can you use spare seat option when a place is not guaranteed, he would have to stand at the end of the street in whatever weather and we were also told by a different source that the transport assistant on the bus is responsible for only 1 person. What about my son? Frankly I am horrified. We seem to be able to pay for buses to take older people out to day centres, 2 of which come into my street daily, but not to help our young disabled people ?

As always the County Council make excuses, money etc but it is not their lives that are being made ever more difficult. Things need to change but as long as disabled people are being ignored in the name of money lives will continue to be blighted.



Sent from Samsung tablet

schoolorganisation

From:

Sent:

To:

Subject:

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED] 06 July 2018
20:16 schoolorganisation
School Transport policy

I am writing as a parent of The Purbeck School, I would like to know what changes are in this new proposed policy and exactly what this phrase means:

Catchment/nearest school or 'nearest suitable school with places available considering efficient use of resources'. What makes a school suitable, and what resources are considered?

This phrase concerns me because I believe all Swanage residents should have a choice of the current 2 secondary schools as they offer extremely different educations and Purbeck School only becomes a viable choice if free transport remains.

I strongly urge all involved to think about the future of our young people and how important the buses to the Purbeck School are, especially as a significant proportion of Swanage students choose Purbeck. [REDACTED]

Sent from my Huawei Mobile

schoolorganisation

From:
Sent:
To:
Subject:

[REDACTED]
07 July 2018 1 5:46
schoolorganisation
Post 16 Transport Policy

As Chairman of the Purbeck Area Meeting for the Dorset Association of Parish & Town Councils, the topic of transport has been discussed for those wanting to attend colleges rather than remain at school.

Members feel that the county council should be lobbying all MPs requesting funding from central government to provide transport as the department clearly did not think through the impact of insisting young people stay on in some educational institution until they are 18yrs of age. Families with more than 1 child will find it difficult to ferry their children to different schools/colleges to get them there on time and the cost of £715pa equates to £18pw which is a lot for a family to find each school week. Also the criteria of 3 miles as the crow flies is somewhat unfair when the actual journey can be up to 50% more due to roads winding round estates, villages etc. The barriers being put up to reduce the number of young people getting help with transport are understandable due to lack of funding; this was an extra expense that was unexpected and should strengthen the case being put to MPs that money should be put to one side to help county councils/unitary authorities get the 16+ pupils to their educational facility of their choice.

Regards

[REDACTED]

Chair

www.warehamstmartinpc.org.uk
Wareham St Martin Parish Council, 5 Border Drive, Upton, Poole BH16 5DU

Confidentiality: This email message and any attachments may contain confidential and/or privileged information. It is intended for the addressee only and if you are not the intended recipient you should not copy or use the contents nor disclose them to anybody else. In such a case please notify the sender by return email immediately and delete this message and its attachments together with all copies in whatever form.

Viruses: This email and any attachments have been checked for viruses, but Wareham St Martin Parish Council accepts no responsibility for any viruses not revealed by such checks and in accordance with good computing practice, recipients should ensure they are actually virus free.

Consider the environment. Please do not print this e-mail unless you really need to.

This email has been checked for viruses by Avast antivirus software. <https://www.avast.com/antivirus>

[REDACTED] 10 July
2018 06:25 schoolorganisation

From:
Sent:
To:
Subject:

Home to school transport

Good morning,

I wish to pass comment on the plan as follows.

The policy seems to imply a child of middle school age can be asked to ride a public bus to school. There is provision for the child to be accompanied but this is not a suitable solution and makes it impossible for parents to continue working full time.

I request retraction of the parent accompanied pass on public services to be replaced with a safe private school bus for eligible children of first or middle school age.

I look forward to your reply.

Best regards

■

schoolorganisation

From:
Sent:
To:
Subject:

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED] 10 July 2018
08:05 schoolorganisation School transport

I am writing this email to oppose the proposal that children as young as 4 years old I believe should not be getting a public bus in home to school transport.

When children have no choice but to use transport to attend their catchment school there should be private bus to do so to keep them safe.

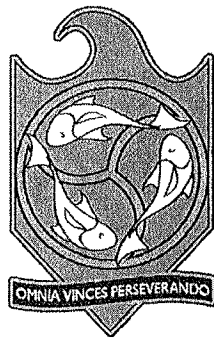
I hope my opinion is taken in to consideration.

Yours faithfully

[REDACTED]

Get [Outlook for Android](#)

High Street, Swanage
Dorset BH19 2PH
01929 500599
www.theswanageschool.co.uk



THE SWANAGE SCHOOL

*A human-scale
11-16 community school
run by a cooperative trust*
Headteacher Tristram Hobson

13th July, 2018.

School Organisation Dept.
Dorset County Council
County Hall
Dorchester
DT1 1XJ

REF.: Consultation regarding the Home to School Transport Policy 2019 to 2020.

To whom it may concern,

This is Swanage School's interim response to the Council's response on home to school transport. It is informed by legal advice from David Wolfe QC of Matrix.

We understand from him that, for a consultation process and decision to be lawful, the consulting body must let those who have a potential interest in the subject matter know in clear terms what the proposal is and exactly why it is under positive consideration, telling them enough (which may be a good deal) to enable them to make an intelligent response: see *Coughlan v North and East Devon Health Authority* [2001] QB 213 at [112].

Here, the Council has proposed to adopt home to school transport arrangements for Swanage School which are different to those in place for most other schools in the County. But it has given absolutely no explanation as to why it is doing that. In simple terms the Council has completely failed to explain why (let alone exactly why) it is proposing that discrepant approach. And so it has completely failed to provide us with anything (let alone enough) to enable us to respond to that proposal. The simple point is that, without knowing the Council's thinking in putting this forward, we cannot properly respond to the consultation. And that means that the Council is not in a position to take a lawful decision.

That is not changed by the fact that what is proposed is similar to the arrangements in place in previous years. That is first because each consultation is a fresh one which must be conducted lawfully; secondly, because explanations were not given in previous years either; and thirdly, even if they had been, then they could not apply now because circumstances have changed including in that the school is no longer in its early days and without a track record, it now has a strong track record.

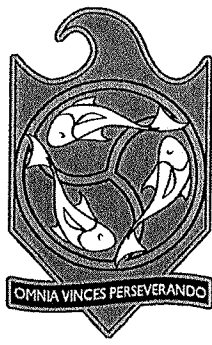
Anyway, in the light of those things we would ask that the Council now provide a full and complete explanation of exactly why it is proposing these new arrangements. The Council then needs to extend (or re-open) the consultation to enable the School and others to respond to the consultation with sufficient time and on a properly informed basis; and the Council then needs to consider its position in the light of those further responses. To be clear, this is only an interim response from the school.

We are advised that, if the Council were to proceed to make a decision without providing the information in question and a proper opportunity for response, then that decision would be an unlawful one which could be challenged by way of judicial review. Obviously, the School does not want to be in a position where it feels it has no choice but to bring such a challenge.

I look forward to the Council's action to regularise the position.

Tristram Hobson
Headteacher

High Street, Swanage
Dorset BH19 2PH
01929 500599
www.theswanageschool.co.uk



THE SWANAGE SCHOOL

*A human-scale
11-16 community school
run by a cooperative trust*
Headteacher Tristram Hobson

13th September 2018

By Post & Email (e.denham@dorsetcc.gov.uk)

Mr Ed Denham
Dorset County Council
County Hall
Colliton Park
Dorchester DT1 1XJ

Dear Mr Denham

Response to consultation on Dorset County Council Home to School Policy 2019-20

I am writing to you with reference to the Dorset County Council Home to School Policy.

It is my view that the Dorset home to school transport policy actively discriminates against The Swanage School.

The Dorset home to school transport policy means that children who live (literally) next to The Swanage School are provided free transport to Wareham (10 miles away), whilst children in Wareham aren't provided free transport to Swanage. This situation is not the case for other schools in the County or indeed the Country.

I have raised this issue on many occasions with many people with no impact:

- I responded to a consultation document in full in Nov 2016.
 - I had meetings with the LA officer responsible for the policy (Ed Denham) - March 2017
 - I met with the LA officer responsible for schools (Jay Mercer - who left LA employ in March 2018) - May 2017
 - I raised it and met with the Director for Children's Services (Sara Tough - who left LA employ in July 2017) - May 2017
 - I raised it and met with the DCC Councillor for Swanage (Bill Trite)
 - I raised it with the MP for Swanage (Richard Drax)
 - I raised it and then met with the DCC Cabinet member with responsibility for schools (Deborah Cronney) - July 2017
 - I had sporadic email communication with Deborah Cronney and Ed Denham in which they clearly state that DCC will be carrying out a full consultation about this. September 2017 to April 2018
 - I met with the Director for Children's Services (Nick Jarman), who told me that the policy was not going to be changed - July 2018
 - After taking legal advice I submitted a statement concluding that the consultation that had taken place to date was not lawful. July 2018.
-

I assume the newly published paper "Changes to Transport Entitlement for The Swanage School" was written to address the issues The Swanage School had raised regarding the consultation process.

Unfortunately this paper does not address any of the concerns raised to date.

The Swanage School has therefore compiled a response to the proposed policy (enclosed for your information).

As stated in the formal response, we are advised that, if the Council were to proceed with the policy as proposed in the consultation document, then that decision would be an unlawful one which could be challenged by way of judicial review. Obviously, the School does not want to be in a position where it feels it has no choice but to bring such a challenge.

I hope that reason will prevail and the Dorset Home to School Transport Policy will be amended appropriately.

If you would like to discuss the matter with me in person I would welcome the opportunity to do so.

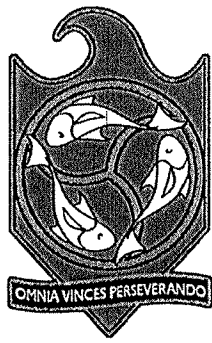
Yours sincerely



Tristram Hobson
Headteacher

Copies to:

Rebecca Knox DCC Chair
Steve Butler DCC Cabinet member
Tony Ferrari DCC Cabinet member
Jill Haynes DCC Cabinet member
Andrew Parry DCC Cabinet member
Daryl Turner DCC Cabinet member
Peter Wharf DCC Cabinet member
Bill Trite DCC County Councillor for Swanage
Debbie Ward DCC Chief Executive
Nick Jarman DCC Director for Children's Services



12th September 2018

Response to: “Changes to Transport Entitlement for The Swanage School”

This is the response by The Swanage School to the document entitled “Changes to Transport Entitlement for The Swanage School” and the consultation on the Dorset County Council Home to School Transport Policy 2019-20.

Context

Currently students from Swanage and the surrounding area are provided free home to school transport to The Purbeck School, which is not their nearest school, rather it is c.10 miles away in Wareham. In some cases children living within a few hundred metres of The Swanage School are enabled to travel needlessly over twenty miles a day, at council taxpayers’ expense. As a result of this policy The Purbeck School is oversubscribed and this has had the perverse knock-on effect that some students are being transported, also at council taxpayers’ expense from Bovington, past The Purbeck School to The Swanage School.

Specifically, The Swanage School objects on the following grounds:

1. Home to school travel and transport statutory guidance – issued by DfE, July 2014, updated 2017

This guidance is statutory and thus should be complied with.

1.1 Ref. Page 6. Second Main point

The guidance states that there is a “*need for local stakeholders to work together in partnership to agree and deliver transport policies that meet the particular needs of the area*”.

The Swanage School has not been involved in the development of the home to school transport policy at any stage. Indeed, since opening DCC has not directly sought the input from The Swanage School or its stakeholders. In November 2016 The Swanage School responded in writing to the admissions policy consultation, but none of the issues raised in that initial response have been taken into account. Indeed, the Headteacher was not contacted directly to draw attention to the fact that a specific paper had been written regarding the updating of the policy!

1.2 Ref. Page 6 Fifth main point

The guidance states that “*Local Authorities should review travel policies, arrangements and contracts regularly to ensure best value for money is achieved*”.

Currently the policy needlessly enables children to be transported away from their nearest school thereby incurring unnecessary transport costs. The policy is therefore in breach of the statutory guidance.

1.3 Ref. Pages 7 to 9. Section 1.1, sustainable school travel. Also Education Act Section 508a (3).

The guidance states that there is a requirement for transport policies to be sustainable:

“The sustainable school travel duty should have a broad impact, including providing health benefits for children and their families, through active journeys such as walking and cycling. It can also bring significant environmental improvements, through reduced levels of congestion and improvements in the air quality to which children are particularly vulnerable”.

The Education Act clarifies this as follows:

This is defined as *“an improvement to either or both of the following:*

- *The physical well-being of those who use them*
- *The environmental well-being of the whole or part of their area.”*

The current policy needlessly transports children from Swanage to Wareham (approx. 10 miles each way). This does not improve individual student physical well-being. Indeed, by changing the policy it would encourage more children to walk or cycle to their local school. Also, by having several unnecessary bus journeys there is a currently negative impact on the environment in the local area.

It is clear therefore that the policy is not sustainable and is therefore in breach of the statutory guidance.

1.4 Page 16 and 17. Discretionary Arrangements

The minimum requirement for home to school transport as required by the Department for Education is to:

“provide free transport for all pupils of compulsory school age (5-16) if their nearest suitable school is:

- *beyond 2 miles (if below the age of 8); or*
- *beyond 3 miles (if aged between 8 and 16)”*

The DCC home to school transport policy satisfies this requirement for almost all schools in Dorset.

However, for the Isle of Purbeck DCC have chosen to have a different policy. To be compliant with the statutory guidance the DCC home to school transport policy must conform with the guidance on discretionary arrangements.

- There is no explicit guidance to allow for the provision for children in a particular location.
- The guidance states that *“Local Authorities will need to be aware of their obligation not to discriminate under article 14 of the ECHR.”*

The current DCC home to school transport policy discriminates against children of secondary school age who live within the Dorset Education Authority, outside Swanage by providing free transport to a school which is not their nearest school. Children in Swanage are 'advantaged', whilst others outside the area are accordingly therefore disadvantaged.

The guidance states that: *“It is recognised that local authorities will need to balance the demands for a broad range of discretionary travel against their budget priorities.”*

The example given for use of discretionary powers in the guidance is on grounds of religion, low income, SEN and disabilities. None of these are appropriate in this case and therefore, again the LA is not complying with the need to balance their budgetary priorities.

2. Local Government Act 1999 Section 3

In addition to the Home to School statutory requirements DCC also have a legal responsibility to comply with the Local Government Act 1999. In particular there is a duty to comply with section 3:

“to secure continuous improvement in the way in which its functions are exercised, having regards to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness.”

By transporting children needlessly away from their local secondary school, the current DCC home to school transport policy is clearly in breach of this requirement in law.

3. In response to paper entitled: “Changes to Transport Entitlement for The Swanage School”

3.1 The paper identifies a “school transport catchment area” for The Swanage School. The diagram on page 3 is misleading because it fails to indicate that “the school transport catchment area” for The Swanage School is overlapped by “the school transport catchment area” for The Purbeck School. The points raised above indicate that there should be no overlap between the two schools’ transport catchment areas.

3.2 The paper refers to the PAN for local primary schools as being 105 and that The Swanage School has a PAN of 84, thus requiring children to be transported away from The Swanage School. The Swanage School is willing and able to increase its PAN to meet the local need. Therefore there is no need, now or in the future, for the LA to provide free transport away from The Swanage School. If there should be an increase in the local demographic, then there would still be no need for the current overlapping school transport catchment areas. Instead, the standard statutory policy to provide transport to the nearest available school would still apply.

3.3 The paper refers to the “right of families to continue to gain transport to their historical KS3 and KS4 school provision”. The Swanage School contests that there is no “right” enshrined in law or by convention that families can access free transport to any school of their choice. Indeed across the county and the country the opposite is the case – children are entitled to free transport to their local school only.

Conclusion

We are advised that, if the council were to proceed with the policy as proposed in the consultation document, then that decision would be an unlawful one which could be challenged by way of judicial review. Obviously, the School does not want to be in a position where it feels it has no choice but to bring such a challenge.
