



Dear Parents and Carers

## **Home to School Transport Policy Consultation**

West Northamptonshire Council is consulting on proposals that make certain changes in the way that it provides home to school transport. These proposals relate to the discretionary provisions currently provided by the council.

The proposals will continue to ensure that any child or young person who is entitled to travel assistance under the Council's statutory duty, will receive support for their travel to school.

The proposals included in this consultation which commenced on 31<sup>st</sup> March, relate to children up to the age of 16. A separate consultation on the Post-16 policy will take place later this year, following the completion of a public transport review which is currently being undertaken.

The review of the service is the first to take place in a decade and seeks to ensure that the services we provide are delivered in line with other local councils and at a reasonable cost. The Council is also exploring opportunities for a more flexible, environmentally friendly service that increases choices for parents and better supports the independence of young people.

The changes proposed and the responses we receive from the consultation will be considered by Cabinet in the summer and if approved, will not come into effect until September 2024. We are consulting now so that parents are aware of their entitlement to travel assistance when deciding on their child's schooling during the school admissions process this autumn. The consultation focuses on the following key areas of home to school transport policy:

1. Changes to the non-entitled (paid for) scheme including an increase in the cost from £600 to £1,000 per academic year
2. Removal of entitlement to linked schools
3. Provision of transport for rising 8's
4. Removal of transport for children under 5 for mainstream pupils only
5. Removal of travel assistance for year 11 pupils who move home during the academic year
6. Review of suitable walking route criteria

More detailed information regarding the specific changes is available here:

[https://westnorthants.citizenspace.com/cet/home-to-school-transport-2023/user\\_uploads/h2s-supporting-detail-final-4.pdf](https://westnorthants.citizenspace.com/cet/home-to-school-transport-2023/user_uploads/h2s-supporting-detail-final-4.pdf)

One of the key changes is the review of the non-entitled (paid for) transport scheme, which currently enables parents to pay for seats on Council-run school bus services for children not eligible for free places.

The existing cost of a seat is £600 which has not been reviewed or increased for over 10 years and it is proposed that this will increase to £1,000 from September 2024. This will bring the cost in line with other local authorities and better reflect the actual cost of providing a seat.

Other proposed changes to the scheme include only offering seats if spare capacity is available on existing contracted services.

The findings of the consultation will be published and presented to WNC's Cabinet later this year. Feedback will help to inform any decision by the Council on the proposed changes to the home to school transport policy and how transport assistance is delivered.

Parents and Carers can take part in the consultation in the following ways:

- [Complete the online survey here](#)
- Email: [schooltransportpolicy@westnorthants.gov.uk](mailto:schooltransportpolicy@westnorthants.gov.uk)
- Write to: Home to School Transport Consultation 2023, West Northamptonshire Council, The Guildhall, St Giles' Square, Northampton NN1 1DE

The consultation closes at midnight Tuesday 30th May, so please complete the survey before this date for your feedback to be considered.

We have already held consultation drop-in events in Northampton, Brackley and Towcester and have a further event scheduled on the 4<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> May at Towcester and Daventry (info below). Should any further events will be held, these will be advertised on the consultation webpage which can be accessed using this link:

[Home to School Transport Consultation 2023 - West Northamptonshire Council - Citizen Space](#)

Date & Time	Location
4 May, (4pm to 7pm)	Council Chamber, West Northamptonshire Council, The Forum, Moat Lane, Towcester, NN12 6AD
10 May, (4:30pm to 7:30pm)	Daventry Volunteer Centre, New Street, Daventry, NN11 4BT

For more information on Home to School Transport please visit the [School travel assistance webpage](#).