

North Yorkshire Council

24 July 2024

Proposed Changes to the Council's Home to School Travel Policy

Report of the Corporate Director Children and Young People's Service

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To enable Council to consider the proposed changes to the Home to School Travel Policy as recommended to the Council by the Executive at their meeting on 16 July 2024.

2.0 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 On 16 July 2024 the Executive considered a report proposing changes to the Council's Home to School Travel Policy, a copy of which is appended to this report, and recommended that the Council should adopt the proposed policy at its meeting on 24 July 2024.
- 2.2 The Council adopted its current Home to School Transport Policy in 2019. Statutory Guidance published in June 2023, and amended slightly in January 2024 required that the Council review the policy and to undertake consultation in the event that changes were proposed.
- 2.3 The overall cost to the Council of the provision of home to school travel is significant and rising at pace. The current policy makes provision for eligibility above and beyond the statutory requirements and which have associated cost.
- 2.4 The appended report provides details of the proposed changes to the policy, of the consultation exercise that was undertaken and of associated issues. It seeks the approval of the Council of the proposed Home to School Travel Policy.
- 2.5 The Executive report referenced at paragraph 5.22 "The Council will be publishing a sustainable modes of travel plan annually setting out its vision for sustainable travel to school and will be working with schools and other educational settings to identify how this can be promoted and facilitated. The draft plan for September 2024 will be appended to the Full Council report on 24th July". This is included as Appendix H.
- 2.6 The minutes of the meeting of the Executive on 16 July 2024 will be available prior to the meeting of Council here - [Agenda for Executive on Tuesday, 16th July, 2024, 11.00 am | North Yorkshire Council](#)

3.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 These are covered in the appended report that went to the Executive on 16 July 2024 in sections 4.7 to 4.10; 5.17 to 5.18 and section 7.

4.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 These are covered in the appended report that went to the Executive on 16 July 2024 in section 8.

5.0 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

5.1 These are covered in the appended report that went to the Executive on 16 July 2024 in section 9.

6.0 CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS

6.1 These are covered in the appended report that went to the Executive on 16 July 2024 in section 10.

7.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 That the Council consider the appended report on Proposed Changes to the Home to School Travel Policy and adopt the policy with effect from 1 September 2024 as recommended by the Executive, including consideration of each of the following recommendations:

i) to retain this extended eligibility in reception year as part of the future travel policy.

ii) to retain this extended eligibility in Year 3 as part of the future travel policy.

iii) to remove transport assistance to second address as part of the future travel policy.

iv) to remove travel assistance to children attending designated religious character primary schools as part of the future travel policy.

v) a proposal that travel on transition is assessed on a case-by-case basis in accordance with the EHCP as part of the future policy.

vi) amend the criterion to match the statutory requirement, meaning that in future eligibility on catchment grounds would no longer apply as part of the future travel policy.

vii) use its discretionary powers to extend the eligibility for travel assistance for secondary age pupils from low income families to attend one of their three nearest suitable schools provided it is more than 2 miles but not more than 12 miles (an increase from 6 miles) from their home as part of the future travel policy.

Stuart Carlton
Corporate Director Children and Young People's Service
16 July 2024

Appendix H - North Yorkshire Sustainable Modes of Travel to School (SMOTS) Plan

Proposed Changes to the Council's Home to School Travel Policy

North Yorkshire Sustainable Modes of Travel to School (SMOTS) Plan, Summer 2024

Reason for Plan

Statutory guidance for local authorities on 'Travel to school for children of compulsory school age', was updated in January 2024. This new guidance set out the requirements on local authorities regarding home to school transport, but also clarified the duty on all local authorities to promote sustainable and active travel to school. The Council is under a statutory duty under Section 508A of Education Act 1996 (the 1996 Act) to promote the use of sustainable travel and transport.

Purpose of this document

This document sets out how we as a local authority with responsibility for both education and transport meet the requirements and duties set out in the statutory guidance. We will provide details of our initiatives and approaches and set out the recent data we hold related to this.

We will also look at possible future initiatives which we may wish to work towards during future iterations of this Plan.

Our current position

The Council has a statutory duty to provide home to school travel for eligible children of compulsory school age in accordance with Statutory Guidance issued by the Department for Education (DfE).

In the academic year 2023/24, children supported to travel to school in North Yorkshire through the free home to school transport scheme are as follows:

The current population at compulsory school age (5 to 16) of schools in North Yorkshire is c.75000 pupils and the number of those accessing free home to school transport is c.10000. Of the c.600plus services provided to transport children accessing 'mainstream education', approximately half are provided by vehicles with 8 seats or fewer.

With regards to those children accessing transport support due to SEND, there are approximately 1800 children, of which approximately 250 receive a parental allowance, and the remainder have transport provided via a contracted service.

Current modal split (distribution of travel across different modes of transport).

We do not currently hold any figures for the split of how children across the county travel to school, nor do we have any understanding of the latent demand for various travel options. At this stage, beyond the provision that is made for allocation of home to school transport, we do not fully understand the extent of the desire for families and young people to travel to school by sustainable modes.

NY SMOTS Plan objectives and how they fit with the guidance.

Where schools, transport infrastructure and public transport can reasonably facilitate, support children and young people being able to access education in a healthy, sustainable and safe way. This will help to support healthier lifestyles and communities, reduce congestion and the impacts of vehicles on our places, including safety, and reduced air quality, and ensure all children and young people are able to be fully included in all aspects of school life.

North Yorkshire is England's largest council by geography. We are a diverse and special area with a range of places including towns and a Cathedral city, rural areas, market towns and coastal communities. We have two national parks in our area, and three National Landscapes (formerly areas of outstanding natural beauty). We have more than 350 schools providing education for more than 80,000 pupils, of which over 5,000 have an education and health care plan.

Vision

Council plan vision – *“We want to build on North Yorkshire’s natural capital, strong local economy and resilient communities, to improve the way local services are delivered and support a good quality of life for all.”*

Being Young in North Yorkshire - *“All children and young people are safe, happy, healthy and able to achieve in North Yorkshire”*

Council Plan, vision for Place and Environment - *“To encourage and support sustainable living in our communities and towns as well as the transport in between, including making it easier to charge electric vehicles, access public transport that meets the needs of the user and promoting and encouraging active travel including walking, wheeling and cycling.”*

Local Transport Plan vision: *“Our vision is that we want North Yorkshire to be a thriving county which adapts to a changing world and remains a special place for everyone to live, work and visit.”*

What does the guidance require?

There are four distinct elements to the duty that Local Authorities must meet, as follows:

- assess the school travel needs of children of compulsory school age and persons of sixth form age resident in their areas.
- assess the facilities and services for sustainable modes of travel to, from and within their area.
- promote the use of sustainable travel to places of education in their area; and
- publish a document which sets out their strategy to promote the use of sustainable travel to places of education in their area.

Our current approaches to meeting these duties are as set out below.

Duty	Our approach	Opportunities
Assess the school travel needs of children of	Following the allocation of school places and	Our current approach considers need based on

<p>compulsory school age and persons of sixth form age resident in their areas.</p>	<p>identification of the number of children who are eligible for assistance with transport the Council's Integrated Passenger Transport (IPT) team establish the most appropriate travel arrangements for individual pupils. Where relevant, in determining the most appropriate arrangements IPT, in consultation with transport providers when relevant, take account of a range of issues. For context, there are almost 1300 home to school transport services operating for 190 days per academic year.</p>	<p>our statutory responsibilities.</p> <p>We would like to be able to consider looking at need from a wider, more aspirational perspective, but this may require additional funding.</p> <p>There are opportunities to understand this need better via a variety of means including, but not limited to, engagement and formal consultation with schools and education providers, and children, young people, and their families. This could take a variety of forms, tailored as necessary.</p>
<p>Assess the facilities and services for sustainable modes of travel to, from and within their area.</p>	<p>The Council use mapping software to understand the transport options for each child that makes an application for admission in the 'standard points of entry' i.e. Year R (reception) and Year 7. This process includes assessing the shortest appropriate walking routes and use of existing contracted transport services.</p> <p>Where, on the rare occasion, a child lives in an area that falls outside these mapped areas, manual intervention from officers may be needed to supplement the software analysis.</p> <p>Similarly, if a parent, or school suggests that a walking route may not be</p>	<p>Enhancements in transport mapping could help to provide more detailed travel information tailored to individual schools and locations. A more detailed assessment of active travel routes, plus public transport services, and facilities to support use of sustainable modes could also be detailed to provide details of feasible travel options. Schools and their pupils could be canvassed about what facilities might encourage them to travel sustainably, and what barriers currently exist to that.</p> <p>This is not a current programme of work, but could be investigated to understand the cost and resources required to</p>

	<p>suitable for a child to use, officers will assess that route via a site visit, taking into account the parameters of the statutory guidance and that from Road Safety GB, on Assessment of Walked Routes to School.</p>	<p>deliver a suitable level of information. For an enhanced, more detailed level of information, additional funding beyond currently identified budgets would be likely.</p>
<p>Promote the use of sustainable travel to places of education in their area</p>	<p>Our home to school transport policy, details of bus timetables, travel passes and support for pupils is available at www.northyorks.gov.uk</p> <p>There is also travel information provided in the roads, parking and travel section of our website, although this is not specific to schools and places of education.</p> <p>We provide Bikeability training to a number of schools in our area, aimed at giving children in years 5 and 6 the opportunity to learn safe cycling skills.</p> <p>We administer and promote the Modeshift stars programme within North Yorkshire. Approximately 60 schools are current active participants. Those schools work towards a gold, silver or bronze award, which includes them using an online tool to develop a travel plan and promote sustainable transport.</p>	<p>There are opportunities to provide schools and their pupils and students with more detailed information about the travel options available to them. This could be by way of an individual travel planning approach, by rolling out Modeshift stars to a greater number of schools, through a more general area-based advice service, or by promoting travel advocates and specific support to particular schools and even particular pupils based on their needs.</p> <p>Such initiatives can be very successful, but may require funding beyond current budgets, and in particular a focus on revenue-based spending and resources.</p>
<p>Publish a document which sets out their strategy to promote the use of sustainable travel to</p>	<p>This document sets out what we are currently doing to meet the requirements of the</p>	<p>This document is the starting point for our SMOTS plan. We are required to update this</p>

places of education in their area.	guidance, and sets out, at a broad level, the future steps we could take to further develop and promote sustainable travel options for children and students.	strategy annually, and we intend to consider future opportunities, working in a cross-organisational manner, to secure additional funding to enhance this plan.
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Possible future initiatives – next steps

In addition to the opportunities outlined above, there are many initiatives and programmes which could help to promote and encourage the use of sustainable transport to schools. In recommending these approaches to schools and educational establishments, partnership working, and engagement would be imperative in ensuring the most suitable approach.

Initiatives which could be considered as part of a future work programme include, but are not limited to:

- Further roll out of Modeshift stars and school travel planning.
- Further roll of out of Bikeability cycle training, and pedestrian training.
- Consideration of ‘pluggable’ gaps in otherwise walkable/cyclable routes to school.
- Travel buddy scheme/travel training.
- Consideration of young people’s travel passes and how these might be expanded.
- Gamification of travel behaviour (i.e. rewards and incentives using schemes like Walk on Wednesday).
- Audit of secondary school and college travel routes and options including consideration of LCWIPs where appropriate and also traffic management such as school parking zones.
- Audit of school travel facilities (e.g. bike/scooter storage).
- Annual school travel survey to provide measurable data.

Resources for programmes would need to be identified and budgets secured before any commitments could be made to delivering initiatives beyond those currently established.

It is important to ensure alignment between future iterations of this plan, and emerging and linked complementary workstreams such as the new joint North Yorkshire and York Local Transport Plan, the North Yorkshire Local Plan, and public health and sport initiatives. Many of these are currently in development, or being revised at present.

North Yorkshire Council

EXECUTIVE

16 JULY 2024

REPORT OF THE CORPORATE DIRECTOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SERVICE

PROPOSED CHANGES TO THE COUNCIL'S HOME TO SCHOOL TRAVEL POLICY

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 This report is presented to Executive for recommendation to Full Council for approval on the proposed amendments to Home to School travel proposals following public consultation, together with a final draft of the amended home to school travel policy recommended for consideration of adoption by Full Council on 24 July 2024.

2.0 SUMMARY

- 2.1 The Council has carried out a consultation upon the current home to school travel policy. This report is brought to update the Executive as to the officers consideration and recommendations for the Executive to consider recommending to Full Council to consider and adopt the draft policy.

3.0 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The Council has a statutory duty to provide home to school travel for eligible children of compulsory school age in accordance with Statutory Guidance issued by the Department for Education (DfE).
- 3.2 In 2023 the DfE published a revision to their statutory guidance entitled 'Travel to school for children of compulsory school age, Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities, June 2023'.
- 3.3 The Council sets out its policy in a document that is currently called the North Yorkshire Council Home to School Transport Policy (referred hereafter as the 'current policy') that was previously subject to consultation and implemented in 2019.
- 3.4 The current population at compulsory school age (5 to 16) of schools in North Yorkshire is c.75000 pupils and the number of those accessing free home to school transport is c.10000. Therefore, it can be said that the Council's policy and provision of free transport services is currently a factor for broadly 13% of the pupil population aged 5-16, and for c.87% it is not.
- 3.5 The Council is required to consult and implement policy changes to ensure compliance with the revised statutory guidance. In future it is intended to rename the revised policy document to be the 'North Yorkshire Council Home to School Travel Policy' (referred hereafter as the 'new policy') in accordance with the language used by the DfE in their statutory guidance.

- 3.6 The overall cost to the Council of the provision of home to school travel is significant and rising at pace. Expenditure has broadly doubled since the last revision of the policy in 2019. The current policy makes provision for eligibility above and beyond statutory requirements that have associated costs, and the consultation provides opportunity to review these 'discretionary' elements.
- 3.7 There is a separate North Yorkshire Council Post 16 Transport Policy Statement 2023-2024 that is supported by stand-alone DfE guidance. The Council is to wait for the next update to that DfE guidance, which is anticipated later in 2024, before considering whether consultation is required on any Post 16 changes. The exception to this will be the subsidised charging rate that is contained in the Post 16 Policy Statement, and which is adopted via a report to the Executive Member in the spring of each year.

4.0 ISSUES

- 4.1 The Council's existing home to school transport policy was adopted by the Council at its meeting on 24 July 2019 following an extensive consultation exercise. A copy of the existing policy is attached to this report at Appendix A.
- 4.2 In June 2023 the Department for Education (DfE) published revised Statutory Guidance on travel to school for children of compulsory school age. This guidance (referred hereafter as 'the guidance') was re-published in January 2024 with minor amendments. A copy of the guidance is attached to this report at Appendix B.
- 4.3 Part of the rationale for the updated guidance was the result of a fatality in 2016 on school transport, and recommendations from the inquest that reflected the medical needs of pupils and duty of care within the home to school travel framework. The guidance therefore places greater emphasis on the responsibility of Local Authorities in respect of children with SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities), mobility and medical needs.
- 4.4 The guidance includes these additions and points of clarification which the Council is required to prioritise.
- Greater emphasis placed on local authorities to assess eligibility of pupils with SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities) or mobility needs: it is now clear that an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) is not required for a pupil to be eligible for transport under the criteria.
 - Appropriate risk assessment for children with SEND and/or mobility/medical needs.
 - Requirement for mandatory training for all staff involved in the commissioning and provision of school transport – this is approximately 3900 drivers and passenger assistants.
 - The Council must publish a sustainable modes of travel plan for each academic year. This should be published annually by 19 September.
- 4.5 The new guidance is clarifying the latter two points that have been required since 2014, therefore the expectation is that these duties should be delivered as soon as possible and within one year. The guidance does not require consultation on these two elements, and they will be subject to separate Council internal processes and decision making.
- 4.6 The guidance also provided a check list to ensure that local authorities' home to school travel policies meet the required standards. A review of the existing policy identified that it complied with only six of the eleven points and concluded there would be a requirement for the Council to adopt a revised policy to achieve compliance. The work that has been undertaken in developing proposals for a revised policy has, therefore, considered those elements of the existing policy that are not consistent with the new guidance including with

respect to the criteria for eligibility for travel assistance. A copy of the proposed policy is attached to this report at Appendix C.

Financial background

- 4.7 In 22-23, data shows that compared to the previous year, national expenditure on transport for pupils with special educational needs (SEN) increased by 24.4% to £1.3 billion, whilst mainstream home to school transport expenditure increased by 14.3% to £460.2 million.

In North Yorkshire, the cost of providing home to school travel is the third largest item of revenue expenditure for the Council (behind Adult Social Care and Waste Management). The total expenditure is projected to stand at c.£51m for the current financial year and this has more than doubled since 2018-19. The Council is one of the highest spending local authorities in the country on home to school transport. The following table shows the total expenditure levels over time, together with a breakdown for each type of provision:

Financial Year	Total Expenditure £m	Mainstream School Expenditure £m	Out-of-school Expenditure £m	Specialist Provision Expenditure £m
15-16	20.5	13.6	0.6	6.2
16-17	21.0	13.1	0.6	7.3
17-18	22.5	13.3	0.7	8.5
18-19	24.2	13.2	0.7	10.3
19-20	26.1	14.1	0.6	11.5
20-21	24.8	13.2	0.4	11.2
21-22	29.0	14.6	0.3	14.1
22-23	35.5	17.0	0.3	18.2
23-24	42.7	20.6	0.5	21.6
24-25 (forecast)	50.8	23.4	0.5	26.8

- 4.8 The increase in expenditure levels for school transport is broadly driven by two elements. Firstly, an increase in the number of eligible children. This is particularly relevant for specialist provision expenditure as the number of children who have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) and are eligible for transport has increased by 47% from 1,203 pupils to 1,772 pupils in the period since 2018/19. The second is the operational cost of providing the services to maintain the required network of school transport for all school types. In that regard recent times have seen increases in contract prices due to rising costs in the transport industry. Whilst the situation is starting to slowly improve there are still significant challenges around driver and vehicle availability, increased costs for fuel, parts, insurance and vehicle maintenance which in turn increase contract charges.
- 4.9 The new policy requirements in the guidance are likely to increase the number of pupils with mobility or medical needs who meet eligibility criteria and potentially lead to increased expenditure.
- 4.10 In the context of the financial challenges faced by the Council, officers considered it appropriate, given the financial position for school transport and the foreseeable rise in expenditure due to the statutory requirements, for there to be an examination of what changes could possibly be implemented in a new policy that would have the potential to reduce expenditure.

Original Policy Proposals

4.11 At a meeting with the Corporate Director on 23 January 2024 the Executive Member for Education, Learning and Skills approved policy proposals for the basis of a consultation exercise and which are set out below.

4.12 Out-of-scope

There are two policy elements that are to be out-of-scope for this consultation:

- Transport provision at Post 16 – there is a separate NYC Post 16 Transport Policy Statement 2023-2024 that is supported by stand-alone DfE guidance. The Council will wait for the update to that DfE guidance, which is anticipated in 2024, before considering consultation on any Post 16 policy changes.
- Sale of spare seats via paid travel permits – this is closely linked to Post 16 arrangements as all Post 16 eligibility is on a paid basis. The Council will also wait for the update to the DfE Post 16 guidance before considering consultation on any policy changes regarding spare seats.
 - The exception to this will be the subsidised charging rate for Post 16 and spare seats which is set annually via a report to the Executive Member in the spring of each year.

4.13 Necessary elements

There is a requirement for any new policy to be compliant with the checklist set out in the guidance. A consultation stage draft policy was made available for the start of the consultation period for stakeholders to view. This draft contained a significant re-write of the current policy in order for it to more closely align with the language, style and content of the latest DfE guidance.

4.14 The guidance provides clarity regarding the eligibility of children with SEN, disability and mobility needs. It sets out that a child does not need to:

- have an Education Health and Care plan (EHC plan); or
- have travel to school specified in their EHC plan if they have one; or
- attend a special school; or
- live beyond the statutory walking distance.

The guidance goes on to describe that “*local authorities will need to assess eligibility on the grounds of special educational needs, disability or mobility problems on a case-by-case basis.*”

This has potentially significant implications for the numbers of children requesting and/or requiring an assessment of eligibility. This assessment is currently only undertaken following the issuing of an EHCP.

4.15 'Discretionary' elements

The current policy includes provisions for transport or eligibility criterion that are above and beyond the requirements of the statutory guidance. In that respect they are considered discretionary, and it is for the Council to decide whether and how they will form part of the new policy. There were six areas considered as part of the consultation:

- Extended eligibility in the Reception Year
- Extended eligibility in Year 3
- 50/50 second address
- Primary phase denominational transport
- Two days of transition, where possible, for pupils with SEND
- The main eligibility criteria – nearest school / catchment school

Each of these areas were considered separately during the consultation process and details of the policy provision and the responses are in Section 5.

5.0 CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN AND RESPONSES

5.1 The consultation exercise that was undertaken was designed to provide information about the policy proposals and to seek the views of a broad range of stakeholders, including via an online survey. The indicative timetable for the consultation was 5 February 2024 to 20 March 2024. However, the consultation took place from 12 February 2024 to 26 April 2024.

5.2 The consultation, including the survey, was undertaken via the Council's website but was promoted via a number of different mechanisms, including:

- Pre-consultation briefings with headteachers and school leaders
- Email distribution to schools, asking them to pass the link on to families via their own newsletters/ email services
- Email distribution to all registered early years providers in the county
- Email distribution to neighbouring local authorities
- Webinars with primary, secondary and special schools
- Group and individual meetings with schools and councillors when requested
- Links to the online consultation were sent to all parish councils in the county
- 16 public face to face events in venues across the county, and held during the day and in the evenings

The exercise was promoted via the local media and also via the Council's own social media channels.

Response to the Consultation

5.3 A total of 1,299 responses were received to the online survey, of these, 800 consultation responses included detailed written statements in a 'free text' question within the survey. Copies of all of the written statements are attached to this report in Appendix D1. Responses were received from a range of stakeholders, including:

- Over 900 from the parents or carers of pupils in North Yorkshire schools or early years settings
- Over 60 school based responses (approximately 62% from secondary schools and approximately 31% from primary schools)
- Over 20 pupils
- 18 transport providers
- Of the pupils, parents and carers attending or soon to be attending a NY school, approximately 45% of responses came from families with children attending primary schools and approximately 44% from families with children in secondary schools. 6% came from families with pre-school aged children and the remaining responses from children at special schools or post 16 settings
- Seven Parish Councils submitted online responses through the survey.

5.4 In addition to responses to the online survey:

- Representation via letter or email was received from MPs, councillors, parish councils, schools and individual residents throughout the county, copies of which are attached to this report at Appendices D2 to D5

- A petition 'Stop school bus cuts' was received on 26 April 2024 from the North Yorks Liberal Democrats containing 378 signatories. Although the petition did not meet the threshold to be considered at the Area Constituency Committee

General feedback about the policy documents

- 5.5 Views were sought in relation to the draft policy document. Feedback showed agreement that the document being clear and easier to understand than the current policy and for the usefulness of the examples in the draft policy appendix. The responses were generally positive with regard to the clarity of the descriptions of the approaches for children with Special Educational Needs or Disabilities, children with mobility needs and children with medical needs. The question with least support was the clarity of the 'nearest suitable school' definition in which approximately 22% of responses disagreed that the definition was clear.

Feedback in relation to the discretionary elements

- 5.6 Proposed to be retained - Extended eligibility in the Reception Year

Under the current policy, travel assistance is awarded from the start of reception year to the term following the 5th birthday (compulsory school age). This aids and simplifies the administration of transport services for the whole academic year. This also provides consistency for parents as there will not be two different systems they require during the reception year. The guidance specifically refers to this as an example of a discretionary decision when it says:

It is for each local authority to decide whether and how to exercise their discretionary power. Most use it to provide free travel to school for 4-year-olds attending reception classes if they will be eligible for free travel when they reach compulsory school age

Almost 90% of responses agreed or were neutral in relation to this proposal.

It is recommended that the Executive considers the report and recommends this proposal to Full Council to retain this extended eligibility in reception year as part of the future travel policy.

- 5.7 Proposed to be retained - Extended eligibility in Year 3

Under the current policy there is continuation of the 2 miles statutory walking distance criterion until the end of the academic year (Year 3) instead of ceasing on the child's 8th birthday. This aids and simplifies the administration of transport arrangements for the whole academic year and also provides consistency for parents as there will not be two different systems they require during the academic year.

Almost 90% of responses agreed or were neutral in relation to this proposal.

It is recommended that the Executive considers the report and recommends this proposal to Full Council to retain this extended eligibility in Year 3 as part of the future travel policy.

- 5.8 Proposed to be removed - 50/50 second address

This current policy provision allows for transport to be provided at full cost recovery to a second address where a child lives with each parent or guardian for 50% of the school term time. Experience has shown this to be an administrative burden without any financial benefit to the Council. This is because officers undertake the initial process, but parents do not then take up the option once they are made aware of the cost. This is unnecessary given DfE guidance states that 'there is no expectation that local authorities should provide travel to and from two separate addresses.'

Almost 70% of responses agreed or were neutral in relation to this proposal. However, there is currently no take up of this policy provision. There was some confusion in the consultation responses whereby a small number of responses stated they were accessing this provision, however this is incorrect, instead all recent enquiries have resulted in parents choosing a paid travel permit or accessing travel via the existing pass and pick up point

despite having a second address. A very small number of responses felt that families where children live at two addresses were being penalised.

It is recommended that the Executive considers the report and recommends this proposal to Full Council to remove transport assistance to second address as part of the future travel policy.

5.9 Proposed to be removed - Primary phase transport assistance to children attending designated religious character schools

This is another area of the Council currently applying its discretionary power to provide travel assistance. This element of the current policy to allow provision to those children at primary phase on low-income grounds was introduced in 2015 when the Council removed the previous discretionary transport assistance to all children attending designated religious character schools. Travel assistance is currently provided to the nearest suitable primary school parents prefer because of their religion or belief, where the distance from home to school is more than two miles but not more than five miles. There is a statutory requirement for eligibility at secondary phase, but not primary.

Over 65% of responses agreed or were neutral in relation to this proposal.

For clarity, the guidance does however make provision for 'extended rights' for low-income families at primary phase to 'exercise choice'. This provision does not solely relate to designated religious character schools it applies to all school and states:

A child is eligible for free travel to school if they are eligible for free school meals, or a parent with whom they live receives maximum Working Tax Credit, and they are aged 8 or over but under 11, attend their nearest suitable school and it is more than 2 miles from their home.

This statutory low-income provision is part of the current policy and will exist in the new policy. The Council would have to consider any request for transport assistance if it were made by a parent/carer for travel to such a school, and the Council should consider whether it would be appropriate to exercise the discretionary power.

It is recommended that the Executive considers the report and recommends this proposal to Full Council to remove travel assistance to children attending designated religious character primary schools as part of the future travel policy.

5.10 Proposed to be removed - Two days of transition, where possible, for pupils with SEND

This current policy provision is a general approach to travel as part of transition which in practice has been found unfit for purpose and has not been reviewed since 2008.

Over 60% of responses agreed or were neutral in relation to this proposal.

It is recommended that the Executive considers and recommends that this proposal to Full Council include a proposal that travel on transition is assessed on a case-by-case basis in accordance with the EHCP.

5.11 Proposed to be amended - The main eligibility criterion – nearest school / catchment school

The county is covered by a system of catchment areas that are currently used to define both priority for school admissions and eligibility for travel assistance. A catchment area is an area around a single school. The 'catchment school' for admissions purposes is allocated by the local authority from the geographical area linked to home addresses. A catchment school is determined by a home address, and not the primary school that a child attends. It is to be noted that the Council's catchment area map, shows that some home addresses are in two or more catchment areas.

5.12 The current home to school transport policy states that:

Free transport is provided to pupils from the start of reception year to the catchment school or the nearest school to their home address where the walking distance is:

- over 2 miles (until the end of the school year in which a pupil turns 8)
- over 3 miles (if aged 8 and over)

5.13 The statutory requirement confirmed by the DFE guidance 2024 is for transport to be provided to the nearest suitable school. The guidance is as follows:

A suitable school for school travel purposes is a qualifying school that is suitable for the child's age, ability, aptitude and any special educational needs they may have. It should also be suitable for the child's sex, for example a girls' school could not be considered the nearest suitable school for a boy.

'Suitable school' does not mean the most suitable school for a child. Schools are able to meet a wide range of needs. The nearest secondary school to the home of a child of secondary school age, for example, will almost always be their nearest suitable school (provided it would be able to admit them).

Qualifying schools are:

- *community schools, foundation schools, voluntary aided and voluntary controlled schools;*
- *academies (including those which are free schools, university technical colleges, studio schools and special schools);*
- *alternative provision academies;*
- *community or foundation special schools;*
- *non-maintained special schools;*
- *pupil referral units;*
- *maintained nursery schools (where attended by a child of compulsory school age); and*
- *city technology colleges and city colleges for the technology of the arts*

5.14 The main eligibility criterion within the current home to school transport policy is therefore above and beyond the requirements of the Education Act 1996 and statutory guidance, which only requires that transport be provided to the nearest suitable school (with places available).

It is recommended that the Executive considers and recommends to Full Council for a proposal to amend this criterion to match the statutory requirement, meaning that in future eligibility on catchment grounds would no longer apply.

5.15 The application of the current home to school transport policy means that some children can have eligibility for transport to more than one school where their catchment school is not the nearest to their home address and in some places where an address is located in the catchment area for more than one school. However, the proposed policy change would mean that all children would only have eligibility to one school, that being the nearest suitable school to the home address (with places available). The proposal therefore addresses an existing anomaly and creates greater equity of access to travel eligibility across the council area.

5.16 For some addresses in North Yorkshire an out-of-county school can be the nearest so the Council is now, and will continue to be, statutorily obliged to provide transport assistance to schools outside of North Yorkshire. This applies to children living in other council areas who may also have an address closer to a school in North Yorkshire. The council where the pupil is resident is responsible for the travel eligibility and arrangements.

The proposal to match the eligibility criterion to the statutory requirement would bring the Council in line with several comparator and neighbouring local authorities such as

Buckinghamshire, Cheshire and Chester West, Durham, West Berkshire, Lancashire, Leeds, Redcar and Cleveland, Darlington, Wakefield and Bradford.

Whilst other local authorities may also consult on potential changes to their Home to School Travel Policies, the Council has not made any adjustments to the anticipated maximum saving from the proposed change to the North Yorkshire policy. Changes to a neighbouring council's Home to School Travel policy will not directly make changes to admissions – nor to the level of potential saving that North Yorkshire may achieve by the proposed changes to our policy. Paragraph 5.27 provides further information about school funding and how this is calculated.

- 5.17 The Council would expect to realise a financial benefit over time through this change to the main criterion: transport costs in the future would be less on a like for like basis than if the policy continued as it is. Updated analysis undertaken on a large sample of currently eligible pupils suggests that the annual saving at the end of the seven-year transition period (when the new policy applies to all) on a like for like basis could be approximately £4million. This figure is based on a number of assumptions, and much will depend on the extent to which the proposed change in the travel eligibility influences future parental preference for school admissions, and that is difficult to predict with any certainty.

Estimated daily saving (max)	£22,440
Estimated annual saving (max)	£4,263,445
Estimated pupil numbers (over 7 years)	2,382

The model is an estimate of future pupil eligibility, using recent pupil census information but with the proposed policy being applied. The model has many variables including: parental preference for admissions, school popularity/place availability, decisions made by families with siblings under two policies, Free School Meals eligibility over time, family life eg parent job location/other childcare arrangements. This is why an estimate savings range has been created from 20% to 100%

Implementation Based on academic year	Estimated 20% of potential savings (Cumulative)	Estimated 40% of potential savings (Cumulative)	Estimated 60% of potential savings (Cumulative)	Estimated 80% of potential savings (Cumulative)	Estimated 100% of potential savings (Cumulative)
25-26	£168,160	£336,320	£504,480	£672,640	£840,800
26-27	£318,838	£637,676	£956,515	£1,275,353	£1,594,191
27-28	£478,010	£956,020	£1,434,030	£1,912,040	£2,390,050
28-29	£629,207	£1,258,415	£1,887,622	£2,516,829	£3,146,036
30-31	£805,273	£1,610,545	£2,415,818	£3,221,090	£4,026,363
31-32	£826,796	£1,653,591	£2,480,387	£3,307,182	£4,133,978
32-33	£852,689	£1,705,378	£2,558,067	£3,410,756	£4,263,445

100% savings

This is a modelled estimate showing the value of what could be achieved if all future families follow the same admissions preferences as they do under the current policies; therefore, the policy change means that some parents who choose schools that are not their nearest suitable school take responsibility for their own travel arrangements.

20% savings

This is a modelled estimate showing the value of what could be achieved if all future families switch their admissions preferences and secure a place at their nearest suitable school – even if this is not catchment; therefore, the policy change means that the council will provide travel assistance to a maximum number of eligible pupils.

- 5.18 It is of note that savings can only be realised if the expected reduction in the number of eligible pupils translates to a reduction in the sizes or number of vehicles required and therefore the costs associated with any given route.

General issues raised in the survey responses and correspondence

5.19 Safety issues – routes, roads, vehicle size and weather conditions

Many respondents, for example from the Upper Swaledale area, objected to the proposed change to the eligibility criterion to being to the nearest school only. They identified that, for example, although Richmond School is the catchment school for the Upper Swaledale area, for many children either the Wensleydale School, Teasdale School (County Durham) or Kirby Stephen Grammar School (Westmorland and Furness) would be their nearest school.

In most cases respondents expressed concern about the suitability of the relevant roads for use by home to school transport, particularly during periods of inclement weather and specifically during winter periods. Many respondents noted that the shortest routes are not suitable for large vehicles and that road conditions, including in relation to gritting are unsuitable.

Response

The number of children provided with home to school transport on any individual route is determined by a range of factors, including:

- Parental preference for schools as part of the admissions process
- Availability at preferred schools; and
- Eligibility under the council's Home to School Travel Policy

Following the allocation of school places and identification of the number of children who are eligible for assistance with transport the Council's Integrated Passenger Transport (IPT) team establish the most appropriate travel arrangements for individual pupils. Where relevant, in determining the most appropriate arrangements IPT, in consultation with transport providers when relevant, take account of a range of issues.

Whilst the Council does not specifically prescribe the exact travel routes that are to be used by a transport provider, the commissioning arrangements that are established take account of the numbers of children to be transported in an area, the means via which those pupils are able to access the transport (including whether additional 'feeder' transport is required), and the characteristics of the road(s) that are likely to be used.

Once a contract is in place with a provider, the terms and conditions of contract require that providers risk assess the routes that they are proposing to use, taking account of the contract's specified vehicle capacity and to ensure that contract providers only utilise vehicles that is suitable for the specific route (including the suitability of the size of vehicle). Further, providers are expected to risk assess prior to undertaking each journey and are clearly instructed not to undertake any journey that they do not consider can be completed safely.

The IPT team are advised by Highways colleagues about all road closures and roadworks. In turn, this information is passed on to all contract providers who are required to respond accordingly in consultation with IPT. Such a response may include:

- A temporary change in either the route or vehicle(s) utilised; or
- Negotiation with contractors to facilitate access for Home to School Transport vehicles through roadworks

Where circumstances, such as bad weather lead to non-operation of service, the IPT team record non-operation through their incident/complaints procedure. For the period 1 September 2023 and 1 June 2024 they have identified 29 occasions where they were informed that transport did not run due to weather related issues. Furthermore, 16 of these services didn't run at all and the other 13 either ran late, or only completed part of their route. Please note that this includes non-operation on days when schools are open. It may also be the case that transport arrangements are cancelled when there is also a school decision to close due to weather conditions or other unplanned circumstances.

The reasons for the 29 incidents include from snow/ice as well a fallen trees due to a storm and flooding. The 29 cases relate to 18 different operators. For context, there are almost 1300 home to school transport services operating for 190 days per academic year.

As Highway Authority under Highways Act 1980, the Council has a 'duty to maintain highways maintainable at public expense'. Additionally, under the same act 'a highway authority is under a duty to ensure so far as is reasonably practicable that safe passage along the highway is not endangered by snow or ice'. In order to fulfil this duty, the Council has a winter maintenance policy that is approved by Members and that sets out the Council's approach.

However, it should be noted that the current prioritisation of winter routes is not derived from service buses, school bus routes or any other *specific* type of road user. Instead, the current winter policy and treated routes (incl. their priority) has evolved around network hierarchy as per the extract from the Council's current policy immediately below.

- Priority 1 includes all principal roads and important B Class, C Class and unclassified routes as approved by Members
- Priority 2 includes the remainder of B Class and appropriate C class and unclassified roads as approved by Members (note: not all remaining C Class roads will be Priority 2)
- Priority 3 the remainder of the network including estate roads

The gritting routes and policy are on the Council's website and are used to help inform highway users so that all road users can make dynamic risk assessments based on prevailing weather conditions.

5.20 Safety issues – unsafe walking routes

Many respondents noted that their property was less than 2 or 3 miles from their nearest suitable school but that there was no safe walking route to that school, for example, because there is no footpath. Other respondents noted that pupils should not be required to walk to either their school or home, or to or from their home to school transport pick up point in the dark.

Response

The Council will continue to provide assistance with home to school transport for children who live less than the statutory walking distance away from their nearest suitable school if they would not be able to walk to that school in reasonable safety, even if they were

accompanied by their parent. This is in accordance with the statutory requirements and therefore provision exists in the current and proposed policy.

The assessment of unsafe walking routes is provided for within the guidance and it should be noted that in assessing the distance between a child's home and their nearest suitable school local authorities are required to consider the shortest route (including footpaths, bridleways, and other pathways) along which a child may walk in reasonable safety *accompanied as necessary*, and that they are required to consider the safety of the whole of the route.

Upon parental request, the Council assesses walking routes to schools to determine whether they are able to be walked in reasonable safety, accompanied as necessary. Assessments are undertaken in accordance with guidance that is provided by Road Safety GB, *Assessment of Walked Routes to School*. A copy of the guidance is attached to this report at Appendix E.

The Assessment of Walked Routes to School guidance identifies a number of principles that are to be used, including: -

- **Nearest Available Route**

The route considered should be the shortest available walking route that a child is available to utilise, accompanied as necessary, and that the assessment should look at the relationship between pedestrians and traffic only.

- **Accompaniment of Children**

For a route to be available it must be a route along which a child, accompanied as necessary, can walk with reasonable safety to school. A route would not fail to qualify as available because of dangers which would arise if the child was unaccompanied.

- **Street Lighting**

The presence or absence of street lighting on a route is not considered to be a factor.

The statutory guidance notes that there is no expectation that children will walk and that it is for the parent to decide what arrangements would be suitable for their child's journey to and from school.

5.21 Delivery of transport for eligible pupils – value for money including use of taxis

A number of responses suggested that improvements could be made in the commissioning of home to school transport arrangements through the provision of contracts to a greater number of local providers and through commissioning of more suitably sized vehicles. Some respondents cited, for example, concerns about taxi services being provided by out of county providers and other respondents gave examples where buses or taxis had been witnessed having surplus capacity within them.

Response

Specific transport arrangements referred to in the consultation had recently been re-tendered as part of contract review for services in the Harrogate, Ryedale, Craven and Richmondshire areas. The existing contracts were due to end in April 2024 and as such they were reviewed in accordance with Financial Regulations, the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 and the Council's procurement process. The Council operates an open procurement process which is available to all bus and coach companies, community transport organisations as well as registered Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Operators who have registered on the Council's procurement system.

This open procurement process does not exclude any operators from tendering on contracts based on their location. The Council will select the most economically advantageous tender where the potential contractor meets all the threshold requirements in the quality tender submission document and following an inspection (if they are a new provider). This does mean that some contractors will travel from out of the immediate area to undertake a contract. However, they may have staff and cars in the local area in addition to any at their registered business address.

In relation to drivers, all drivers and passenger assistants who work on North Yorkshire Council home to school or social care contracts must submit a DBS application through the Council before they are permitted to work on a contracted service. The drivers and passenger assistants are issued with a North Yorkshire Council badge to confirm that they have received the required clearance, and these are expected to be worn/be visible at all times when operating on our contracts.

Whilst the Council commissions transport for a prescribed number of pupils, the size of vehicle provided either permanently or in individual circumstances is determined by the provider of the transport service. There are instances, for example, when providers use vehicles that are larger than required for a temporary period if the vehicle that is normally utilised for an individual route is not available on a specific day. Where this is the case, then the provider is obliged to ensure that the vehicle that is utilised on a temporary basis remains suitable for the route.

Equally, following an assessment of the number and location of eligible pupils the Council may commission routes that have multiple pick-up points and, therefore, buses may appear not to be full at the early stages of a route.

With regard to environmental impacts of the procurement process, the following is an extract from the terms and conditions of contract that forms part of the tender documentation and which each provider signs up to at the point of contract exchange.

20. SUSTAINABILITY AND BUSINESS CONTINUITY

20.1 *Throughout the Term of this Agreement the Supplier shall make all reasonable endeavours to reduce any negative impact on the environment caused by the Service and to ensure that, wherever possible, the vehicles supplied for the Service are of a type, and used, so as to minimise environmental pollution.*

20.2 *The Supplier may be required to provide evidence of actions taken to mitigate climate change and reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and on request, information relating to driver training, fuel use and other relevant indicators.*

5.22 Delivery of transport for eligible pupils – sustainability / climate / emissions

Many respondents suggested that any reduction in the provision of home to school transport would be likely to result in an increase in road traffic in the event that an increased number of parents elect to transport their children to school themselves and that this would result in an increase in both emissions from transport, and in health and safety risks as cars seek to drop off near to school entrances.

Response

The council recognises its duty to promote the use of sustainable travel on journeys to and from all places of education in North Yorkshire, and the benefits that will arise from increasing the use of it. In addition to contributing to the reduction in emissions and congestion, the Council would wish to promote the health benefits that would also arise for

children and their families from active journeys. This plan will be aligned with the ambitions of the Local Transport Plan 5 (under development) and Local Plan, as well as key aspects of the Climate Change Strategy.

The Council will be publishing a sustainable modes of travel plan annually setting out its vision for sustainable travel to school and will be working with schools and other educational settings to identify how this can be promoted and facilitated. The draft plan for September 2024 will be appended to the Full Council report on 24th July.

5.23 Delivery of transport for eligible pupils – links to public transport requirements

Some respondents suggested that home to school transport could be delivered more efficiently if it were to be better integrated with public transport.

Response

A new way of procuring these services is due to be introduced and council officers are currently working on revised arrangements that should improve flexibility for operators to bid for linked services. In addition, proposals will be brought forward for a pilot scheme in the northern part of the county which could deliver both home to school transport contracts, adult social care transport and passenger transport utilising the same vehicles.

5.24 North Yorkshire schools – admissions, term dates and siblings

Many respondents expressed concern about issues associated with admissions arrangements and / or practical issues arising from attending a school in another local authority area. Some respondents were concerned that they would not be able to apply for a school place at their catchment school if their catchment school was not their nearest suitable school. Respondents were also concerned about day to day issues associated with a child attending a school in a different administrative area, including, for example, schools having different term dates and noted that this would be exacerbated if children in the same household were attending two different schools during the period of the policy implementation.

Response

In terms of admissions to school, parents will continue to be able to preference any school of their choice and the admission arrangements for the school will continue to determine who has priority for a school place. This is not changing. Applications for a school place from families living in the admissions catchment area for a school will still have priority for a school place over those who live outside the admissions catchment area.

The local authority is responsible for setting term dates for its maintained community, voluntary controlled and community special schools and maintained nursery schools; The Education (School Day and School Year) (England) regulations 1991 require all maintained schools to educate their pupils for at least 380 sessions (190 days) in each school year. These regulations do not apply to academies and Free Schools; the academy trust is responsible for deciding the length of the school year. It is hoped that for consistency across North Yorkshire all schools adopt the same recommended term dates. Furthermore, the Council is part of the group of LA's across the area that have agreed a set of guiding principles the aim of which is to achieve more consistent holiday dates across local areas. A consultation on the draft calendar for future academic years is proposed annually with all schools, academies, professional associations and interested parties. After the consultation the calendar is presented to the CYPS Executive Member for Education, Learning and Skills for consideration and approval.

5.25 North Yorkshire schools – selective schools

Some respondents, specifically from the Ripon and Skipton areas, expressed concern that pupils would not be entitled to assistance with home to school transport to selective schools, even in the event that pupils had been successful in entrance requirements.

Response

This is correct if the proposed policy is adopted, then children would not be eligible for assistance to selective schools unless they are their nearest suitable school. This would be equitable with all children attending non-selective schools as it is under the existing policy. The selective school would only be a suitable school for transport assistance where a child had achieved the entry requirements.

5.26 North Yorkshire schools – ‘nearest school in North Yorkshire’

Many respondents objected to the proposed change to the eligibility criterion to being to the nearest school only because of the potential impact to individual schools, particularly secondary schools.

Many respondents objected to the proposed change to the eligibility criterion to being to the nearest school only because they do not want their child to be only provided with transport to an out of county school (if it is the nearest). There was a view amongst some respondents that children who live in the county should be able to access travel assistance to schools in the county, even if other out of county schools are nearer.

Response

The Education Act Schedule 35B para 6 sets out that a child is eligible if they attend a qualifying school, do not live within walking distance, and no suitable arrangements are made for either attending boarding accommodation nearer the school or enrolling at a nearer qualifying school.

Part 1 of the guidance defines eligibility for home to school transport assistance, noting:

‘A child is eligible if they are of compulsory school age, attend their nearest suitable school and....’.

The guidance does not reference either administrative boundaries or catchment areas for schools and, therefore, in defining ‘nearest’ the council is only able to consider distance, irrespective of whether the distance is to an out of county school or a catchment school.

As noted, because the guidance is statutory there would be a continued requirement to continue to provide transport to the nearest school (out of county) even if the Council were to elect to retain the catchment, or define a new eligibility in relation to the nearest North Yorkshire school as part of the policy entitlement. The ‘nearest’ requirement exists within the current legislation and policy and is the basis upon which the Council currently provides transport for many children to schools outside of the county. An amended proposal, in light of the consultation responses, to add a new discretionary element that would provide eligibility to a nearest North Yorkshire school would create inequity of access to travel eligibility across the council area and therefore is not recommended by officers. This is because families that live in close to the border of another local authority would potentially have additional have additional eligibility compared to those that live elsewhere in the county.

From the sample data, there are approximately 2500 children who are currently eligible for travel assistance due to catchment, but who do not attend their nearest school.

Approximately 1000 of these children would have an out-of-county school as their nearest and approximately 250 of these would be in the statutory walking distance to that school.

Each year, the October school census information is used for the determination of school budget in the following financial year, for example, the October 2024 census information will be used for the determination of school budgets in 2025/26. Schools are funded for the pupils on roll at the school on the census day – not the pupils that live in the county. Whilst some school rolls will only include pupils who are resident in North Yorkshire, a number of schools – typically located near the county border – will include pupils who are resident in North Yorkshire and some pupils who are resident in other local authority areas. To clarify further, this means that North Yorkshire Council does not fund schools or academies located outside of North Yorkshire to educate North Yorkshire pupils. Funding from DfE is allocated according to census day pupils on roll, not pupils who are resident in the county.

The following tables show the number of children on roll at state funded schools including those who move across an LA boundary in order to attend school.

Total NY resident children attending NY state schools – as at Jan 2023	Primary Schools	Secondary Schools	Special Schools	Total
Total	40,704	28,602	953	70,259

NY resident children attending other local authorities state schools - as at January 2023	Primary Schools	Secondary Schools	Special Schools	Total
Neighbouring LAs	1,033	1,389	147	2,569
Other LAs	17	5	4	26
Total	1,051	1,396	151	2,598
NY children attending any state school Jan 2023	41,755	29,998	1,104	72,857

Children attending North Yorkshire state schools from other local authorities - as at January 2023	Primary Schools	Secondary Schools	Special Schools	Total
Neighbouring LAs	1,227	3,593	93	4,913
Other LAs	96	35	10	141
Total	1,323	3,628	103	5,054
All children on roll in NY schools Jan 2023	42,027	32,230	1,056	75,313

5.27 North Yorkshire schools – paid for permits

A number of respondents expressed concern that a paid for permit could not be guaranteed from one year to another. This was cited as an issue by parents who stated they would be willing to pay for transport provision arranged by the Council to a school of their choice - specifically a school other than the nearest school.

Response

The Council's current policy is to provide transport for pupils to either their catchment school or their nearest suitable school if they meet the eligibility criteria. The proposed policy would be to provide transport for pupils to their nearest suitable school if they meet the eligibility criteria. The same issue applies within the current and proposed policies - if

parents choose to send their child to another school where the eligibility criteria is not met.

Where a child attends a school that is not the nearest or the catchment school for the home address or the school is outside the qualifying distance, parents are responsible for the travel arrangements and costs. In some instances, parents are able to purchase a paid permit for a spare seat on a home to school transport service which is arranged for eligible pupils. The terms and conditions of the permit are that it is not for a guaranteed seat and that it can be withdrawn if the seat is then required for eligible children.

Furthermore, as the arrangements for eligible children can change from year to year, paid for permits are not made available until later in the year once all home to school transport arrangements for eligible pupils are established. Availability of spare seats cannot be confirmed until shortly before the beginning of the academic year when all necessary provision for the new cohorts have been confirmed. Put simply, if an eligible child requires the seat, it is no longer spare and would no longer be available as paid for permit and this may be at short notice for families.

The Public Service Vehicles Accessibility Regulations 2000 (PSVAR) require buses and coaches designed to carry over twenty-two passengers on local and scheduled routes to incorporate features to enable disabled people to travel on them comfortably and safely, including a wheelchair space and a ramp or lift. The Regulations have applied to vehicles progressively over the past nineteen years, including coaches manufactured from 2005 onwards. From 1st January 2020, the Regulations will apply to any remaining coaches subject to them, which were manufactured before 2005. This means that if transport is not PSVAR compliant the Council cannot sell spare seats. The Department for Transport has allowed Operators exemptions for home to school transport to continue to operate subject to the conditions set out in their guidance in relation to the upgrade of their vehicle fleet by 2026.

It must be noted that the consultation did not consider the paid for seats element as this is closely related to Post 16 travel and the Council is awaiting updated guidance from DfE.

5.28 Compulsory school age and Post 16 travel

Similarly, a number of respondents felt that travel to school sixth forms should be included in the eligibility for travel assistance due to the increased participation age.

Response

Although the participation age for pupils has increased to include 16 and 17 year olds, the compulsory school leaving age has remained the same and there is no legal obligation on a local authority to provide transport for pupils above statutory school age.

The Council does however have a duty to ensure that Post 16 students are not denied access to education because of a lack of transport provision. To facilitate this, the Council offers assistance with transport to the nearest school or college where it is necessary and offers this consistently across the county. The current guidance relating to this matter is clear that if a local authority does offer transport to post 16 students, they can charge.

The charge for Post 16 transport has been in place for many years and is the same for all students who live over three miles from their nearest school or college regardless of the distance. So, a young person who lives 5 miles from the school or college would be charged the same as one who lives 12 miles for example. The average cost (of a place on transport) to the Council are currently much greater than the charge. For 2024/25 this is £792 which is reduced to £396 if the family is eligible for the low-income reduction. With the Post 16 assistance, in the event that there was no seat on a service or other form of transport available that could be used, a mileage allowance would be offered.

It must be noted that the consultation did not consider post 16 travel arrangements as the Council is awaiting updated guidance from DfE before considering whether further consultation is required.

5.29 Concerns over the accuracy of the data set

A model was created in order to allow officers to consider the possible impacts of the proposed policy revisions on small and rural schools as it was important to avoid any unintended consequences including risk to small school viability, where a small reduction in pupil numbers can be a significant factor. The initial data set which contained indicative school level analysis was presented to the Executive Member for Education, Learning and Skills so she could consider the indicative school level data confidentiality prior to agreeing the consultation. This was the purpose for creating a school level data set. Since the model had been developed, indicative school level information was offered to school leaders and governors so they could consider the potential impacts of the proposed policy changes on their school setting to support them in fulfilling their management responsibilities.

During the consultation, a small number of schools approached the Council asking officers to check the data modelling as the schools estimates of how many children in their catchment may live closer to another school and therefore may not be eligible to travel in the same way as the current cohort were different to those initially provided by Council officers.

The Council checked and revised the modelling tool. This led to revised indicative school data being provided to individual schools, and the consultation being extended by two weeks, to allow further dialogue with interested schools.

The indicative school level data is not essential for the consultation but was added in order to provide a management indicator for schools in relation to any planning they may wish to do should the policy be implemented from September 2024 (with early impacts expected from Sept 2025).

The model is an estimate of future pupil eligibility, using recent pupil census information but with the proposed policy being applied. The model has many variables including: parental preference for admissions, school popularity/place availability, decisions made by families with siblings under two policies, Free School Meals eligibility over time, family life eg parent job location/other childcare arrangements. This is why an estimate savings range has been created from 20% to 100%.

The estimate shows the possible impacts over a seven-year implementation period (eg possible reduction and possible increase in eligibility over time). Some schools may experience both reductions and increases of pupils with eligibility with an unknown net effect. Any changes to admission numbers in one school has a direct effect on the neighbouring schools and the Council has statutory responsibility to ensure sufficient school places across the whole county. The Council must also ensure efficient use of resources fulfilling its responsibilities.

The Council does not consider this indicative school level data set essential to the consultation process, this information has been treated confidentially as we believe sharing it would prejudice the effective conduct of public affairs in the Council's discussions with schools.

5.30 Support for low income families

In response to the consultation, it is proposed that an additional discretionary element should be provided to mitigate the impacts on those with protected characteristics.

Officers are recommending the provision of an additional discretionary element aimed at secondary age pupils that would enable low income families to exercise meaningful preferences for school admissions with the provision of travel assistance for up to three schools across a greater distance, given the rural context of the county. In effect this places the statutory guidance within the North Yorkshire context. This will address an adverse impact highlighted by the paying due regard process and the Equalities Impact Assessment.

It is recommended that the Executive considers and recommends to Full Council for a proposal to use its discretionary powers to extend the eligibility for travel assistance for secondary age pupils from low income families to attend one of their three nearest suitable schools provided it is more than **2 miles but not more than 12 miles** (an increase from 6 miles) from their home as part of the future travel policy.

6.0 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 6.1 A number of other actions are being taken to ensure the home to school travel provision is efficient, providing a good service and achieving value for money. In parallel to the policy review, working groups have been established to fully review and improve the data and systems relating to unsafe walking routes, solo transport and the application and re-assessment of eligibility for mainstream and SEND transport.
- 6.2 Two strands of work have also been established to focus on transport operators, ensuring that key training requirements outlined by DfE are in place, as well as exploring potential opportunities for more efficient procurement processes and market engagement.
- 6.3 Prior to seeking approval for consultation – and when calculating the potential savings – officers considered a fixed date for immediate and full implementation. However, it was considered more appropriate to avoid the disruption that could be caused to families if there was implementation of all measures with effect from September 2024 and so a phased roll out is being proposed. As a result of the phased implementation, existing eligible children would retain eligibility unless there was a material change in circumstances. This means that the cash saving is reduced by £9million - £10million over same implementation period. The expected savings from the proposal will only be visible from 25-26 (part year) and then for the following five financial years from 26-27 onwards.

7.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 The draft policy change consulted upon is expected to contribute to almost £1.5million savings identified within the Council's current Medium Term Financial Strategy ('MTFS') and has potential to offer up to £2.5million further in the next cycle of savings.
- 7.2 Paragraphs 4.7 – 4.10 and 5.16 – 5.18 above contain more detailed information about the financial information.
- 7.2 Officers are recommending the provision of an additional discretionary element for secondary age that enables low income families to exercise preferencing to school admissions to up to three schools across a wider area. The cost if approved of this further discretionary provision is approximately £170k per year based on current contract costs. This could allow greater school choice for 96.5% of children, within the sample cohort, receiving Free School Meals who could, had this amendment not been proposed, be affected by the removal of catchment.

8.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 The Council has a statutory duty under Section 508A of Education Act 1996 (the 1996 Act) to promote the use of sustainable travel and transport.

- 8.2 The Council has a statutory duty under Section 508B of the 1996 Act to provide, free of charge, suitable home to school travel arrangements to secure the attendance at school or other relevant educational establishment of eligible children.
- 8.3 The Council has a statutory duty under Section 509AD to have regard to amongst other things when exercising any of their travel functions to any wish for the child to be educated in a school designated religious character.
- 8.4 The Council has a discretionary power under Section 509A to provide assistance to a child receiving education at an Early Years setting, where without the assistance their attendance would be prevented.
- 8.5 Schedule 35B of the 1996 Act defines 'eligible children'. This includes a definition of compulsory school aged pupils (term after 5th birthday to end of June in year 11) and qualifying school which states categories of school and of those schools it is the nearer or nearest to the child's home. The proposed policy does not alter the statutory duties and the policy remains compliant with this legislation.
- 8.6 Whilst the Education & Skills Act 2008 raised the age of participation in education or training, the duties under the 1996 Act were not amended to include 16 and 17 year olds.
- 8.7 The Council has a discretionary power to make travel arrangements for non-eligible children where they consider it necessary under the 1996 Act. Even if the Council determines it is not necessary to provide travel assistance to non-eligible children, it may have further discretionary powers under Chronically Sick & Disabled Persons Act 1970.
- 8.8 The Council accepts that the 1996 Act has not been amended in recent years, and the legislation therefore remains the same. The Council has been providing transport arrangements for significant period of time above and beyond the statutory duties. The Department for Education has updated the statutory guidance and as a result that the Council must have regard to the Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities 'Travel to school for children of compulsory school age', published by the Department for Education, January 2024, the Council has to consult upon amendments to its policy in light of this updated guidance.
- 8.9 The Council carried out a consultation in accordance with the statutory duties, and guidance. This consultation was carried out at a time when the proposals were in development stage, the consultation was due to commence on 5 February to 20 March, however this was delayed, and the consultation was due to run from 19 February until 12 April, taking into account the Easter holidays. The consultation period was extended for a further period of two weeks to 26 April to allow for revised data to be provided to schools who had requested school level data, and further consultation on an individual school or Multi-Academy Trust basis. The Council is of the view that the consultation has complied with the statutory and common law requirements for consultation.
- 8.10 The Council must comply with the Equalities Act 2010 public sector equality duty whereby the Council and Councillors must have due regard in the exercise of its functions to the need to:
- eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited
 - advance equality of opportunity between persons who share relevant protected characteristics and persons who do not share it
 - foster good relations between parents who share relevant protected characteristics and persons who do not share it
- 8.11 The Chair of the Council has pursuant to Overview and Scrutiny Procedure 16 (quote below) agreed that the decision taken being recommended by the Executive will be exempt from

call-in. This decision was due to be heard on 11 June 2024, however, was delayed as a result of the General Election and purdah period. As the Council must publish the Home to School transport policy by 31 July 2024, (to ensure that it is in place before the admission round opens on 12 September) this matter must be put to Full Council on 24 July 2024.

“The call-in procedure set out above shall not apply where the decision being taken by the Executive is urgent. A decision will be urgent if any delay likely to be caused by the call in process would seriously prejudice the Council’s or the public interest.”

9.0 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 The Council has in the development of this policy paid due regard to those with protected characteristics. An Equality Impact Assessment is attached at Appendix F and has been reviewed and updated following the consultation responses.
- 9.2 The paying due regard prior to the consultation highlighted that there may be some adverse impacts to those with protected characteristics of age. However, the consultation showed that there are multiple impacts for more pupils as a result of wider range of protected characteristics such as low income, and rurality especially those with combined protected characteristics.
- 9.3 Officers are recommending the provision of an additional discretionary element for secondary age that enables low income families living in rural areas to exercise preferencing to school admissions to up to three schools across a wider area.
- 9.4 This is an additional extension to the extended rights currently within the policy and would mean that: A child is eligible for free travel to school if they are eligible for free school meals or a parent with whom they live receives maximum Working Tax Credit and they are aged 11 to 16 years, and attend one of their three nearest suitable schools provided it is more than 2 miles but not more than 12 miles from their home, rather than the 6 miles within the legislation and Statutory Guidance.
- 9.5 From the sample cohort officers are of the view that this amendment to the proposed policy would mitigate some of the potential adverse impacts to those pupils whose family are low income.

10.0 CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 The Council has in the development of this policy development has paid consideration to climate change implications where known. A Climate Change Impact Assessment is attached at Appendix G and has been reviewed and updated following the consultation responses.
- 10.2 Current annual expenditure on home to school transport amounts to £51 million annually arising from the provision of transport to eligible pupils. The requirements for home to school transport vary according to the needs of pupil cohorts but involve the use of a broad range of vehicles by size and type. As a consequence, there is some impact upon climate change arising from vehicle emissions and other impacts.
- 10.3 The implementation of revised proposals, aligned with statutory guidance issued by the DfE would have the effect of limiting some criteria for eligibility, and thus reducing the total amount of transport provided and, as a consequence, have a positive impact upon climate change.
- 10.4 In addition to the proposed implementation of policy proposals it is also proposed that the Council will develop and implement a Sustainable Travel Plan for all home to school travel (i.e. including that undertaken by pupils not eligible for assistance) and thus have a greater impact upon climate change.

11.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS - ADMISSIONS

- 11.1 As stated earlier, the county is covered by a system of catchment areas that are currently used to define both priority for school admissions and eligibility for travel assistance. Virtually all the catchment areas have remained the same for many years, and in most cases since 1974 or much earlier.
- 11.2 Adopting the proposed home to school travel policy to exclude catchment eligibility as part of the main criterion would essentially mean that in future a child may have admissions priority for a school on catchment grounds but not be eligible for transport to that school unless it were also the nearest school to the home address (with places available).
- 11.3 The Council is the admissions authority for all community and voluntary controlled schools. There is no proposal to vary the catchment area criterion within the North Yorkshire admissions policy that applies to those schools.
- 11.4 All of the existing 141 mainstream academies that had a North Yorkshire catchment area (as a former LA maintained school) have kept it unchanged within their admissions arrangements since academy conversion. These academies are their own admission authority responsible for determining their own arrangements.
- 11.5 There are some risks attached to the potential change of eligibility criterion. Amongst them is recognition that when a longstanding policy is changed it can subsequently take time to be widely understood.
- The phased implementation proposed for the policy change means that the full financial impact of the change won't be seen until seven years from the date of implementation.
 - The phased implementation proposed for the policy change also means that within families with more than one child could have different eligibility.
 - There could be a disproportionate impact on rural communities as the prevalence of school transport services to rural schools is higher given that home to school travel distances are inherently longer.
 - There is a risk around a potential lack of understanding of the revised eligibility criterion and what it means for parents and children.
 - The proposed policy change has the potential to change the pattern of admissions at any schools where transport provision is a factor for parent preferencing of school admission application. However, it is widely understood that other factors also affect admissions patterns, for example popularity and Ofsted outcomes of neighbouring schools.
- 11.6 The Council will need to have effective systems and processes in place to communicate the revised policy position very clearly to future parents to minimise any uncertainty around eligibility under the travel policy. Importantly this must include very clear communication that the North Yorkshire Admissions Policy for Community and Voluntary Controlled schools is *not* affected by this transport policy change.

12.0 ICT IMPLICATIONS

- 12.1 To support the adoption and implementation of the new Home to School Travel Policy a distance calculator tool is being built to ensure those who apply for school places can do so fully aware of the implication of their admissions preferences on eligibility for home to school travel assistance. In addition, a new home to school travel assistance application process and annual re-assessment tool are being created to ensure that parents/carers are

required to make a conscious decision to access transport and are required to confirm their continuing requirement and eligibility on an annual basis.

13.0 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 13.1 The Council has reviewed its existing Home to School transport policy within the context of the revised Statutory Guidance issued in June 2023 and amended in January 2024 and has identified that amendments are required in order to make it compliant with the Statutory Guidance.
- 13.2 The Council is under statutory duty to adopt and publish the Home to School travel policy by 31 July 2024.
- 13.2 The Council has statutory duties to balance its budget, and deliver statutory services within the resources it has available. The Council has a duty to fully consider how it can continue to deliver statutory services and ensure that the services are sustainable into the future.

14.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Executive considers the report and proposes to adopt a new home to school travel policy including consideration of each of the following recommendations to Full Council:

- i) to retain this extended eligibility in reception year as part of the future travel policy.
- ii) to retain this extended eligibility in Year 3 as part of the future travel policy.
- iii) to remove transport assistance to second address as part of the future travel policy.
- iv) to remove travel assistance to children attending designated religious character primary schools as part of the future travel policy.
- v) a proposal that travel on transition is assessed on a case-by-case basis in accordance with the EHCP as part of the future policy.
- vi) amend the criterion to match the statutory requirement, meaning that in future eligibility on catchment grounds would no longer apply as part of the future travel policy.
- vii) use its discretionary powers to extend the eligibility for travel assistance for secondary age pupils from low income families to attend one of their three nearest suitable schools provided it is more than **2 miles but not more than 12 miles** (an increase from 6 miles) from their home as part of the future travel policy.

APPENDICES:

Appendix A	Existing Home to School Transport Policy
Appendix B	Travel to school for children of compulsory school age - statutory guidance for local authorities (January 2024)
Appendix C	Draft Proposed Home to School Travel policy (revised post consultation)
Appendix D1	Copies of all free text responses received via the online consultation
Appendix D2	MP Enquiries
Appendix D3	Parish Council Enquiries
Appendix D4	Councillor Enquiries
Appendix D5	Other enquiries
Appendix E	Assessment of Walked Routes to Schools Road Safety GB. April 2011

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS:

Report to the CYPS Executive members and Corporate Director Meeting
23 January 2024 [HTS Transport report.pdf \(northyorks.gov.uk\)](#)

Consultation - [Previous consultations | North Yorkshire Council](#)

DfE Travel to school for children of compulsory school age - Statutory guidance for local authorities
January 2024 [Travel to school for children of compulsory school age \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#)

DfE Post-16 transport and travel support to education and training - Statutory guidance for local
authorities January 2019 [Post-16 transport and travel support to education and training
\(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#)

Current Home to School Travel information [School transport for reception to year 11 children | North
Yorkshire Council](#)

North Yorkshire Council's gritting routes [Road gritting | North Yorkshire Council](#) and policy [Winter
maintenance policy | North Yorkshire Council](#)

Stuart Carlton
Corporate Director – Children and Young People's Service
County Hall
Northallerton
8 July 2024

Report Author – Amanda Newbold, AD Education and Skills
Presenter of Report – Amanda Newbold, AD Education and Skills

Note: Members are invited to contact the author in advance of the meeting with any detailed queries
or questions.

NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SERVICE

HOME TO SCHOOL AND COLLEGE TRANSPORT POLICY

JULY 2019

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 North Yorkshire is England's largest County, stretching from the North Sea Coast to within 12 miles of Morecambe Bay and from the South of the M62 to the edge of Teesside. It is sparsely populated with some 600,000 people across 3,300 square miles; with 40 per cent of the area being within either the North Yorkshire Moors or the Yorkshire Dales National Parks and over half the population living in areas classed as "sparse" or "super sparse". Around 20% of the population live in the two major urban centres – Harrogate and Scarborough.
- 1.2 There are approximately 129,000 children and young people aged 0-19 in the county, of those 80,000 are of school age, including 5,300 in post-16 education. There are 43 Secondary Schools, 304 Primary Schools and 10 Special Schools, North Yorkshire County Council transports approximately 20,000 pupils per day to school or college.
- 1.3 The Local Authority (LA) has a responsibility to make suitable travel arrangements where necessary to allow children access to schools. This includes meeting the following objectives of ensuring that children can:
- Succeed in good schools and other settings
 - Lead Healthy lifestyles and have good health care
 - Be Kept safe and protected from harm
 - Positive choices for personal growth
 - Be economically secure
- 1.4 North Yorkshire County Council spends in excess of £24 million per year, on home to school transport. The aim is to provide a good quality, safe service, whilst balancing costs to ensure that the service provided is best value for money.
- 1.5 This policy is a general policy, which supports the Council's responsibility to provide access to education for all pupils, and covers eligibility for home to school transport for all children. Each request for transport is considered on an individual basis and individual circumstances will be taken into account when deciding if children are entitled to free home to school transport.

2.0 RESPONSIBILITIES

2.1 Local Authority

The Local Authority is responsible for making suitable arrangements for all eligible children to travel to school in reasonable safety and comfort so that they arrive there without stress or difficulty, and can benefit from their education. This is done by making sure that pupils do not have unnecessarily long journey times (taking into account the size of the county), and that they are not expected to walk an unreasonably long distance to catch the bus. Drivers and passenger assistants are properly trained and have an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service check. The vehicles used meet the necessary safety standards and seatbelts are provided wherever possible.

2.2 Parent/Guardian

It is a parent or guardian's responsibility to make sure that their child attends school. It is important that parents provide the LA with information that is requested about their children to help decide whether they are eligible for free home to school transport or whether assistance can be given in any other way.

Following the consultation (spring 2019), it has been agreed that parents will be required to request travel assistance through an application process, details of this process is available at www.northyorks.gov.uk

Parents should also encourage their children to wear a seatbelt (where they are fitted) and behave well on any the home to school transport provided.

If a child is sent home from school due to illness or because of behaviour problems it will be the parent's responsibility to ensure that they are collected from school.

Where parents live within the minimum qualifying distance, it is normally their responsibility to decide how their child will travel to school and for making the necessary arrangements and associated costs. This may be in any way that they feel is appropriate for their child for example: walking, cycling or using a local bus service. Transport may be provided for pupils living under the qualifying distance in some circumstances. This will include:

- where the LA considers that the walked route is not safe for children to walk, accompanied as necessary. ¹
- where the LA agrees that it is not possible* for children to be accompanied and circumstances (of children's age and the route) mean that transport should be provided.

*"Not possible" does not mean not convenient to parents (i.e. due to work commitments, or arrangements to take children to different schools)

3.0 DEFINITION OF HOME TO SCHOOL

The term 'normal school' in this policy means the school designated by the local authority covering the geographical area within which the 'home' address falls. This may also be referred to as 'appropriate' or 'catchment' school.

¹ Decisions about the safety of walked routes follow the guidelines on the Assessment of Walked Routes to School, published by Road Safety GB in June 2011. These Guidelines assume that the child is accompanied as necessary by a parent, career or other responsible person.

The policy applies to “home to school” travel arrangements at the start of the day, and “school to home” travel arrangements at the end of the school day and does not include nursery, pre-school or after-school clubs.

Where children are attending school part time as part of an agreed package of education, transport will be provided at the start and end of the time attended, this may be a morning journey and return home at lunchtime or a lunchtime journey and return home at the end of the school day.

Travel between educational institutions during the school day is not covered by this policy.

The term ‘Home’ in this policy means the permanent address where the child lives for most of the time, and is the address used on the school admissions application.

Where children have more than one ‘home’ (i.e. parents or guardians who live separately) consideration will only be given to a child who lives with each parent or guardian for fifty percent of the school term time, this does not include weekends or school holidays and qualifies for home to school transport from the address used to obtain a school place. From September 2019 a full cost recovery will be required for any travel assistance to the second address.

Transport to alternative addresses, for instance to take into account child care arrangements for parents will not be provided.

Transport will normally be provided from a suitable pick-up point near to home.

4.0 PUPILS ATTENDING SCHOOL UP TO AGE 16

Local authorities in accordance with DfE statutory guidance 2014, have a duty to provide transport and support to help children and young people travel to and from schools or colleges.

The following paragraphs outline these duties in more detail and outlines further discretionary elements of the policy.

4.1 PUPILS AGED BETWEEN 5 AND 11 WHO ATTEND PRIMARY SCHOOL

Children are of compulsory school age when they reach the age of five and must start school in the term following their fifth birthday. In practice, many children start before this age.

From September 2019, free transport will be provided to pupils from the start of reception year to the catchment school or the nearest school to their home address where the walking distance is

- over 2 miles (until the end of the school year in which a pupil turns 8)
- over 3 miles (if aged 8 and over)

This will also apply to pupils starting school and to pupils whose circumstances change e.g. move address or change schools during the school year.

If children receive free school meals or parents receive the maximum level of Working Tax Credit, transport will be provided (subject to an annual assessment), for primary aged pupils in Reception to Year 6 who go to:

- the nearest school or the school the LA has said is the catchment school for their home address that is over 2 miles or
- to the nearest suitable school parents prefer because of their religion or belief, where the distance from home to school is more than two miles but not more than 5 miles.

4.2 PUPILS AGED BETWEEN AGED 11 AND 16 WHO ATTEND SECONDARY SCHOOL

Free transport will be provided for secondary school pupils in years 7 to 11 who go to:

- the nearest school or the school the LA has said is the catchment school for their home address that is over 3 miles

If children receive free school meals or parents receive the maximum level of Working Tax Credit, transport will be provided for Secondary school pupils in years 7 to 11 who go to:

- one of their three nearest qualifying² schools, if that school is more than two but less than six miles from the home address; or
- the nearest suitable school preferred because of parents' religion or belief, where that school is more than two but less than 15 miles from home.

If children go to a school that is on split sites, the measurement of the walking distance will be taken from home to the site the children normally attend.

4.3 TRANSPORT TO A SCHOOL ON THE GROUNDS OF RELIGION OR BELIEF

Since September 2012 pupils starting a 'denominational' school, either secondary or primary, have not been entitled to assistance with home to school transport.

Parents are responsible for ensuring that their child attends school. Where possible paid permits will be available to purchase for surplus seats on services that are under contract to the County Council.

This means that parents will be responsible for transport arrangements and costs to denominational schools.

It is important that you do not rely on existing travel arrangements when deciding which school you wish your child to attend.

Exceptions

The exceptions are:

² Qualifying schools are: Community; foundation; voluntary aided or controlled schools, community or foundation special schools; non-maintained special schools; pupil referral units; city technology colleges(CTC); city colleges for the technology of the arts (CCTA) or Academies (source *Home to school travel and transport guidance para 104* published by DCFS 2007)

- If the denominational school is nearer to the home address than the catchment school (s) and the distance from home to school is over the walking distance of 3 miles

Also where children receive free school meals, or whose parents receive the maximum level of working tax credit we will provide assistance with transport to the nearest suitable school parents' preference because of their religion or belief:

- For secondary aged pupils where the distance from home to school is more than two miles but not more than 15 miles,
- For primary aged pupils where the distance from home to school is more than two miles but not more than 5 miles.

This will be assessed on an annual basis and may be withdrawn if parents' benefits change.

Denominational school refers to schools where pupils are admitted on the grounds of their parents' faith as part of the published admissions criteria. This will not normally apply to a Voluntary Controlled School as pupils are not admitted to schools on these grounds.

Some 'denominational' primary schools are also the 'normal' school for the home address. In cases where pupils are attending the school as it is their normal or community school they will remain entitled to free transport if they live more than two miles from the school .

We check with the school to see if a child has been admitted on denominational grounds.

4.4 TRANSPORT ASSISTANCE IF THE LOCAL SCHOOL IS FULL.

If the catchment or nearest school is full, transport will be provided to the nearest alternative school, if it is more than the statutory walking distance from the child's home.

4.5 TRAVEL ASSISTANCE FOR PUPILS WHO DO NOT QUALIFY FOR FREE TRANSPORT

Children attending Schools on Parental Preference

If children attend a school that is not the nearest or normal school parents are responsible for the travel arrangements and costs.

If children are not entitled to free transport parents may be able to purchase a permit which entitles their children to occupy spare places on 'education transport service' vehicles at a fixed charge. It may be necessary to end the arrangement at short notice, if there is an increase in the number of entitled pupils using these vehicles and as a result of this spare places are no longer available. Details regarding paid permits are highlighted in 4.7

4.6 EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES

The home to school transport policy will normally apply as outlined above, however, following a parental request for consideration of exceptional circumstances, each case is considered on its own merits. Some examples of exceptional circumstances are given below:

Change of Home

In circumstances where children or young people face disruption because of their need to be accommodated by the local authority away from the family home.

Looked After Children

Children placed in the care of North Yorkshire will be considered for assistance with transport to avoid disruption to their education or home life. This will normally be for a fixed period and for travel involving a reasonable distance.

Fair Access

There may be times when children will need to be educated out of school, or may need to move to an alternative school because of exceptional circumstances, due to attendance and behaviour issues or because of medical needs.

In most cases the admissions and transport needs of these pupils will be considered through the usual procedures but in some cases appropriate education and transport provision will be determined through the In-year fair access process.

Free transport may be provided, in exceptional circumstances, where children live under the statutory walking distances from school, Pupil Referral Service or out of school provision to ensure attendance.

Work experience placements

Transport to and from work experience placements is the responsibility of parents or the school. In the case of post 16 pupils this may be organised by the school or college. There may be some exceptions for pupils with an Education Health and Care Plan who attend a residential school who need to attend work experience placements nearer to home.

Transport to an alternative school due to social or domestic circumstances

If there are exceptional social or domestic reasons why children cannot attend their appropriate school then assistance with transport may be given. Written evidence from an appropriate professional or agency will be required to assist with decision making.

Transport assistance following a school closure or reorganisation

This will be determined by the Council, following consultation, at the time that closure notices are determined and may vary depending upon circumstances.

4.7 PAID TRAVEL PERMITS FOR DISCRETIONARY TRAVEL ASSISTANCE

If children are not entitled to free transport parents can purchase a permit which entitles their children to occupy spare places on 'education transport service' vehicles at a fixed charge. It may be necessary to end the arrangement with 7 days' notice, if there is an increase in the number of entitled pupils using these vehicles or if there are no longer any entitled pupils travelling on the transport and it is solely used by paid travel permits holders.

Allocation of spare places

In cases where the LA is unable to meet the demand for purchased travel permits (PTP) on a particular service then the following criteria will be applied:

- Pupils who have SEN
- Pupils who are at a critical stage of their education, with priority to pupils who are in their GCSE years
- Pupils who have siblings currently travelling on the service
- Pupils who are renewing, like for like, eg. a PTP was purchased during the previous academic year on the same service
- Any exceptional circumstances, which may be identified through discussions with the pupils school
- Pupils who are attending their catchment school and who live the furthest from that school (under the statutory walking distance)

Where none of the above can be used to prioritise applications the date that the application was received will be taken into consideration

5.0 DISTANCE MEASUREMENTS

5.1 MINIMUM QUALIFYING DISTANCE

When deciding on eligibility for assistance with transport, the measurement from home to school will be taken from the boundary of the home to the nearest entrance gate (not always the main entrance) to the school following the nearest available walked route, as defined by NYCC GIS system, which can mean a suitable footpaths and or bridleways. Where a private road or farm track exists this is included in the measurement.

This means that in some cases pupils living in the same street or even in adjoining properties may not all be eligible for free home to school transport.

5.2 MEASUREMENT OF DISTANCE FOR SECONDARY AGED PUPILS IN RECEIPT OF FREE SCHOOL MEALS

When deciding on eligibility for transport for children in receipt of free school meals or if their parents receive their maximum level of working tax credit, routes of two miles or less will be measured as a walked route, using footpaths and or bridleways. Routes over two miles will be measured along road routes.

6.0 ADDITIONAL PROVISION FOR PUPILS UP TO AGE 16 WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS OR WHO NEED SPECIAL TRANSPORT ARRANGEMENTS

6.1 Transport may be provided for children who are unable to walk to school because of a disability or mobility problem, including temporary medical conditions. This will normally be agreed following the issue of an Education, Health Care Plan (EHCP) or on production of relevant medical evidence.

6.2 Pupil attending residential special schools

Where children attend a residential special school, free transport, or a transport allowance, will be provided at mid and full term holidays or as determined by the child's EHCP.

6.3 Pupils on 52 week residential placements

Where children attend a residential special school on a 52 week placement free home to school transport is not given. If assistance with transport is required the social care worker allocated to the family should be contacted.

6.4 Hospital visits from residential schools

Where children attend a special residential school free transport from school to home will be provided to allow them to keep necessary hospital appointments, where a supporting appointment card is provided. Parents are encouraged, wherever possible, to make such arrangements outside of term time.

6.5 Induction visits to schools/colleges (for pupils attending special schools)

Transport will be provided for children for 2 induction visits where they have been allocated a place at that school or college, where possible.

Parents are responsible for arranging and paying for visits to schools or colleges to see whether they would like children to go to that particular school.

6.6 Dual placements (for pupils attending special schools)

If children are attending a special school they may also attend a mainstream school for part of their school week. Transport will be provided if they live more than 2 miles for primary pupils and 3 miles for secondary pupils from that school. Shorter distances may be considered in exceptional circumstances.

6.7 Annual Reviews (for children attending special schools)

It will normally be a parent's responsibility to arrange transport so that they can attend.

6.8 Parents/guardian with a disability

If a parent is unable to accompany their child, as necessary, along a walked route due to their own disability free transport may be provided. Supporting medical evidence will be required.

6.9 Transport to and from respite care or after school clubs

This is not covered by the home to school transport policy. If a parent requests transport assistance to or from respite care or after school clubs it may possible to make arrangements. Children's Social Care should be contacted for assistance.

7.0 PUPILS AND STUDENTS AGED 16-19 AND POST 19 EHCP STUDENTS - POLICY

The Authority has a duty to prepare and publish an annual transport policy for Post 16 students on its website, and upload the link to GOV.UK by 31st May. The will include arrangements and provision of transport for pupils aged 16 – 19 and for Post 19 students with an Education, Health Care Plan (EHCP.)

Please refer to the policy statement that can be found here:
<https://www.northyorks.gov.uk/transport-sixth-form-or-college>

8.0 TRANSPORT ARRANGEMENTS

8.1 TYPE OF TRANSPORT/PAYMENT OF PARENTAL TRANSPORT ALLOWANCES

Integrated Passenger Transport will take into account any special requirements and will provide the most appropriate and cost effective means of transport.

Where possible a pass will be issued for an existing service. From September 2019 the authority will issue the first pass free of charge, all replacement passes, will be subject to a fixed replacement fee.

A voluntary parental transport allowance may be offered to parents where this is the most cost effective option and is usually offered where there is no other contracted transport running.

The Authority will promote a parental transport allowance (PTA) for SEND pupils in sole occupancy provision with a realistic enhancement to meet the young person(s) transport needs.

8.2 JOURNEY TO WAITING POINT

Children will be expected to make their own way to a pick-up point. This should normally involve a walk of no more than a mile. Free transport from home to the pick-up point will only be given where the route is unsafe for children to walk, accompanied as necessary.³

8.3 WAITING POINTS

The waiting point for transport to school or college will generally be a public stop or station or, in the case of hired transport, a named point which is suitably safe, both for children to wait and vehicles to stop. Integrated Passenger Transport will carry out risk assessments on pick up and set down points, where there are any concerns.

8.4 CONNECTING SERVICES

If children attend primary school and the transport provided needs to meet a connecting service, the driver of the first vehicle will wait with children until the connecting vehicle arrives. If children attend a secondary school this will not normally be necessary. The waiting time between connections will normally be no longer than 10 minutes. The meeting point will,

³ Decisions about the safety of walked routes follow the guidelines on the Assessment of Walked Routes to School, published by Road Safety GB in June 2011. These Guidelines assume that the child is accompanied as necessary by a normal caring parent or other responsible person..

where possible, be near a public telephone or building which should have a telephone (e.g. garage, Post Office).

8.5 MAXIMUM JOURNEY TIMES

Transport will be arranged so that children will not normally spend more than 1 hour 15 minutes travelling to a secondary school or 45 minutes to a primary school. Journey times might need to be longer than this in some more rural areas and where road or weather conditions mean that these times are not practical.

Journeys will, wherever possible, be by the most direct route but sometimes journey times will need to be increased to collect other children. If children's journeys are 20 minutes or less the journey time may be increased by up to 75% or a maximum of 15 minutes to collect more pupils. If it is 20 minutes or more children's journeys will not normally be increased by more than 20 minutes.

The exception to this will be during local area reviews or special school reviews, in which all transport arrangements are subject to change. This may result in an increase or decrease of journey times beyond that described above.

8.6 ARRIVAL AT AND DEPARTURE FROM SCHOOL

School transport should arrive at school between 5 and 15 minutes before the official opening time. The picking up/setting down point for children will usually be at the school, especially for primary age pupils. Secondary school pupils and college students using commercial bus or rail services may need to walk for no more than 10 minutes from the bus stop or rail station to the school or college.

Where possible, vehicles should arrive at school no more than 10 minutes before the end of the school day and leave school between 10 and 15 minutes after the official closing time.

8.7 BEHAVIOUR ON HOME TO SCHOOL TRANSPORT

The main responsibility for ensuring good behaviour on home to school transport lies with children themselves. It also lies with parents or guardians, schools, bus contractors/operators and the Local Authority jointly. Integrated Passenger Transport will work closely with schools and contractors to ensure that poor behaviour on transport is dealt with quickly.

If there are complaints that involve pupils, these will normally be investigated through the school. If pupils are found to have behaved in an unacceptable way, then any of the normal range of sanctions used by the school may be applied. This could include exclusion from school. In addition, the following may also be applied:

- Children may be asked to sit at the front of the vehicle for a set period of time.
- Children may be suspended from all school transport services for a period of time. In the case of extreme and persistent behaviour they may be banned permanently from the transport and parents will be expected to ensure that their child attends school.
- The Prevention Service may be asked to visit parents to discuss the problem.
- The police may be asked to investigate and take action as appropriate.

- Parents are expected to meet the cost of repairing any damage caused by their children.

8.8 EARLY DEPARTURES/LATE ARRIVALS FROM SCHOOL

Bad weather - Integrated Passenger Transport will make suitable arrangements to provide transport home from school, if necessary outside of the terms of the existing contract. Contractors will work with the schools in the local area to ensure that severe weather conditions are taken into account when transporting pupils to and from school.

First/last day of term or otherwise - Any additional cost of transport owing to a temporary change in school hours set up by the school is the responsibility of the school though it is expected Integrated Passenger Transport will, where possible, co-operate in making transport arrangements.

8.9 CHANGE OF SCHOOL HOURS

If a school or academy wants to change its school hours it should follow best practice and carry out a consultation at least three months before the planned change, including the Local Authority in the consultation. Good practice suggests that schools can only change the times of the school day at the start of the academic year, i.e. in September.

Where a school or academy alters its hours, unless agreed otherwise by the Local Authority during the required consultation, the school will be expected to meet any additional transport costs.

8.10 CO-ORDINATION OF SCHOOL TRAINING DAYS

There are three common training days agreed across the Authority, which can be found on the NYCC website with the agreed school term and holiday dates for each academic year. Schools with shared transport are encouraged to co-ordinate their remaining two training days to ensure the most efficient use of the transport network and to minimise costs.

8.11 VEHICLE CAPACITY

The LA will make sure that children have their own seat (i.e. that there is one seat per child on each vehicle used).

8.12 TAXIS AND PRIVATE CARS (Non-Public Service Vehicles)

When children are transported using a taxi or private-hire vehicle, that is not a public service vehicle, it must have one seat belt, and where appropriate child car seat or booster seat, for each person carried and be licensed by the relevant District Council.

8.13 VETTING

All drivers and passenger assistants will be 'vetted' which means that they have undergone an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check and must wear their County Council identification pass.

8.14 PASSENGER ASSISTANTS

Passenger assistants will be provided in accordance with assessed needs. This will usually only be where children have special transport requirements and need assistance to access the vehicle, or require medical intervention or, in the case of severe behavioural issues, need close supervision.

8.15 INFORMATION AND TRAINING FOR PASSENGER ASSISTANTS AND DRIVERS

Integrated Passenger Transport will provide contractors with general information and advice to make sure that children's journey are comfortable and safe.

The driver or passenger assistant will need to be provided with information about children if they have exceptional medical or behavioural problems so they can appropriately respond to situations that may arise.

When a contract is awarded to provide home to school transport it is made clear that passenger assistants and drivers may need to attend up to two information and training sessions per year. This will normally be general training but can be specifically related to the special needs of children.

When a passenger assistant is required to provide specialist support or medical intervention they will normally be employed by the authority and will be given specific training relevant to the needs of the child.

8.16 COVER FOR PASSENGER ASSISTANTS AND DRIVERS

Contractors are asked to try and provide the same driver or group of drivers on contracts, where possible. In some cases the contract may state that the same driver should always be used. Wherever possible the same passenger assistant is also available for the duration of that contract. The passenger assistant should be changed only in exceptional circumstances, for example illness.

8.17 WHEELCHAIR FIXING

If children travel in a wheelchair this must be to ISO 7176-19;2008 standards and properly fixed in the vehicle in accordance with current Department of Transport guidelines. Integrated Passenger Transport will carry out a risk assessment before setting up transport to make sure that this is done properly and that children are transported safely. For details regarding wheelchair suitability please contact your Occupational Therapist.

8.18 COMPLAINTS

The Local Authority wants to maintain high standards of reliability in transport it provides for pupils. Integrated Passenger Transport makes sure that complaints by parents and schools are investigated and satisfactorily resolved. Account may be taken of any previous unsatisfactory operation in awarding contracts. A contract will not usually be made with a contractor who has had any other contract terminated for unsatisfactory operation in the 6 months prior to the closing date for tenders or prior to a contract being awarded.

8.19 LOCAL AREA REVIEWS/SPECIAL SCHOOL REVIEWS

Integrated Passenger Transport will:

- advise the Director of Children and Young People's Service, the schools and parents, at the earliest opportunity that there will be a review of transport provision in the area.
- at an early stage in the process, circulate to schools and parents information about the review with an invitation to Governing Bodies and parents to submit (written) observations on the review proposals;
- in the event of unresolved objections to the proposals from schools or parents, call a public meeting to air the issues involved to which Headteachers, Governors, Local Members and parents should be invited;
- report to the Executive Members jointly with the Director of Children and Young People's Service, making Members aware of any remaining objections and of any additional costs, policy and wider budgetary implications there would be in meeting them.

9.0 CONSULTATION WITH MEMBERS

In addition to joint reports to the Executive Members for Children and Young People's Service relating to area reviews, joint annual monitoring reports will be submitted.

These will include:

- policy issues arising out of legislation or operational/case law or budgetary considerations;
- the current costs of the service and target savings where appropriate;
- policy development proposals where appropriate and related budgetary arrangements;
- the timetable for any reviews to be undertaken in the forthcoming year and appropriate detail about their scope.

10.0 APPEALS PROCEDURES

A transport appeal can only be made on the following grounds;

- Eligibility
- Transport arrangements made
- Distance measurement of the walked route
- Safety of the walked route

There is a two stage appeal process when a parent/carer wishes to challenge a decision in relation to statutory transport:

Stage 1:

A request for a stage 1 review must be made in writing within 20 working days of the initial decision letter. The request:

- Should clearly state the reasons for the challenge and include any new documentary evidence.
- Will be reviewed by two senior officers, the original decision may be upheld, overturned or alternative solutions suggested.
- Where transport assistance is agreed the Authority will make the necessary transport arrangements.
- Where transport is not agreed, parent/carer will be told in writing and parents who are not satisfied with that decision will be informed of the next and final stage of the appeal process.

Stage 2

A stage 2 appeal must be made in writing by completion of an appeal form within 20 working days of receipt of the stage 1 response:

- The appeals form must clearly state the reasons why parent/carers challenge the stage 1 response and provide any new documentary evidence.
- Stage 2 appeals are heard within 40 days of receipt of the appeal by the Appeals Committee which consists of a small group of elected members of the county council.
- Parent/carers are able to attend the appeal hearing
- Each case is considered on its merits
- The Committee takes into account the policy guidelines but may recommend departure from those guidelines in exceptional cases
- When a decision is made a response will be sent in writing of the decision and the reasoning behind the decision. This decision is final.
- Where the person is unhappy with the outcome they will be advised how escalate it to the Local Government Ombudsman at, www.lgo.org.uk, who may investigate to decide whether there has been any maladministration.

Details of the Post-16 appeals process are provided in the Post-16 Transport Policy Statement. Please see link above in Section 7.0

11.0 LEGISLATION AND GUIDANCE

Education Act 1996 and Education and Inspections Act 2006, sections 508A to 509A^E and schedule 35B

Equality Act 2010

Home to school travel and transport guidance - published by DfE July 2014

Post 16 Transport to Education and Training – DfE statutory guidance for local authorities published October 2017

Children and Families Act 2014

SEND Code of Practice 0-25 years January 2015 (updated May 2015)
Care Act 2014

24th July 2019



Department
for Education

Travel to school for children of compulsory school age

Statutory guidance for local authorities

January 2024

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Summary

About this guidance

This is statutory guidance from the Department for Education. It is issued under the duties placed on the Secretary of State by sections 508A (7) and 508D (1) of the Education Act 1996. It replaces the previous *Home to School Travel and Transport Guidance* from 2014.

Local authorities are under a duty to have regard to this guidance when:

- carrying out their duties in relation to arrangements for travel to school for eligible children of **compulsory school age**;
- exercising their discretionary power to arrange travel for other children;
- carrying out their duties in relation to the promotion of sustainable travel to school (this duty applies in relation to young people of sixth form age as well as children of **compulsory school age**).

There is [separate guidance on travel to post-16 education and training](#).

Review date

This guidance will be kept under review and updated when necessary.

What legislation does this guidance refer to?

This guidance refers to the legislation governing travel to school for children of **compulsory school age**, in particular:

- section 508A of the Education Act 1996: sustainable travel to school;
- section 508B of and Schedule 35B to the Education Act 1996: travel arrangements for eligible children;
- section 508C of the Education Act 1996: travel arrangements for other children;
- the School Information (England) Regulations 2008: publication of information about travel arrangements.

Links to some of the legislation that relates to travel to school can be found in annex 3: additional resources.

Who is this guidance for?

This guidance is for local authorities, in particular their school travel teams and **special educational needs** casework teams.

It may also be of interest to schools, academy trusts, **parents**, organisations that advise **parents** and travel operators. Parts of it are likely to be of particular relevance to schools that choose to arrange home-to-school travel for their pupils.

Main points

- **Parents** are responsible for ensuring their child attends school. This means they must take all the action necessary to enable their child to attend school.
- For most **parents**, this includes making arrangements for their child to travel to and from school. Local authorities must make arrangements, free-of-charge, for eligible children to travel to school (see part 1 of this guidance).
- Local authority school travel and **special educational needs** teams should work together to ensure travel arrangements are considered when deciding what school to name in a child's **Education, Health and Care plan** (part 1).
- Local authorities have a discretionary power to arrange travel to school for other children (part 2).
- Local authorities are responsible for deciding what travel arrangements to make, provided they are suitable for the needs of the children for which they are made (part 3).
- Schools should support local authorities to deliver their home-to-school travel functions, for example, by promoting good behaviour on transport, and sharing information to ensure children's needs are met, and taking travel arrangements into account when making changes to their **school day**.
- Local authorities' school travel policies should be easy for **parents** to find and understand (part 4).
- Local authorities should have a fair and transparent process so that **parents** can appeal a decision about travel to school for their child (part 5).
- Local authorities have a duty to promote sustainable and active travel to school (part 6).

In updating this guidance, we have had regard to:

- a [School Transport Inquiry](#) conducted by the charity [Contact](#);
- a [School Transport Report](#) by the charity [Cerebra](#);
- the [coroner's regulation 28 report to prevent further deaths](#) issued in 2016, following the death of a child on a **dedicated** school bus;
- responses to our [2019 public consultation](#);
- stakeholder comments provided in late 2022 and early 2023.

Words used in this guidance

Where the words ‘**must**’ and ‘**must not**’ are used, they represent a statutory requirement. Where the word ‘should’ is used, it represents something authorities ought to do or something that is considered good practice but is not a mandatory requirement.

The word ‘**reasonable**’ is used throughout this guidance. Local authorities are expected to act reasonably in the performance of their functions. Whether an action is reasonable may vary according to the circumstances in which it is being considered and local authorities will need to use their judgement. In general, they should seek to act in a way that is fair and rational and takes into account relevant factors.

An explanation of words in ***bold italics*** can be found in annex 1: explanation of terms used in this guidance.

Context

Home-to-school travel is an integral part of the school system. It ensures no child of ***compulsory school age*** is prevented from accessing education by a lack of transport or the cost of transport.

The cost of delivering free home-to-school travel has increased significantly in recent years. It is important that local authorities take travel costs into account when planning the supply of school places. Capital expenditure, revenue costs and travel costs need to be considered together to ensure financial sustainability.

The [SEND and Alternative Provision Improvement Plan: Right Support, Right Place, Right Time](#) sets out the Government’s plans for a national ***special educational needs, disability*** and alternative provision system that fulfils children’s potential, builds ***parents’*** trust and provides financial sustainability. The new system will improve early identification of needs and set clear expectations for the types of support that should be ordinarily available in mainstream settings, meaning fewer children will need to access support through an ***EHC plan***. Taken together with [£2.6 billion of Government investment](#) in new places and improvements to existing provision for children with ***special educational needs*** and ***disabilities*** or who require alternative provision, this will mean fewer children will need to travel long distances to a school that is able to meet their needs.

The Improvement Plan also sets out plans for local SEND and alternative provision partnerships which will bring together partners in education, health and care to plan and commission support for children and young people with ***special educational needs*** and ***disabilities*** and in alternative provision. The partnerships will create local inclusion plans that will set out how the needs of children and young people in the local area will be met. Home-to-school travel is important in enabling children to access the support available to them and partnerships will factor it into their plans.

We know that local authorities need schools to support them to deliver their home-to-school travel functions by:

- promoting good behaviour on transport;
- sharing information to ensure the needs of children with **special educational needs, disabilities** or **medical needs** are met;
- considering any implications for travel arranged by the local authority when arranging for children to be educated off-site or proposing changes to their **school day** or week; and
- promoting sustainable travel to school.

The Department has published trust quality descriptions which define what we want academy trusts to deliver. These include an expectation that trusts work collaboratively with schools, trusts, local authorities, dioceses, parents and other civic partners to ensure the delivery of statutory functions¹. This includes working collaboratively with local authorities to support them in the delivery of their home-to-school travel functions.

Fairness and getting things right

Free travel to school is a valuable service for many families, but budget pressures mean local authorities often have to make difficult decisions about how to make best use of the limited resources available to them. They must comply with their duty to arrange free travel for eligible children but have some discretion in how they do this. This means they need to make a range of decisions, many of which can be challenging. For example, they need to decide what travel arrangements to make for eligible children, whether a child with **special educational needs** can reasonably be expected to **walk** to school, and whether to exercise their discretion to provide travel for children that are not eligible.

School travel can sometimes become the subject of disputes between **parents** and their local authority and of complaints to the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO). It is not always possible to make a decision that **parents** are happy with, but it is important they are treated fairly and understand how the decision has been reached.

It is important to have policies to guide decision making but genuine consideration should be given to each case, rather than rigidly adhering to a policy, particularly when considering whether to exercise discretion.

¹ See page 3 of the trust quality descriptions available here: [Commissioning high-quality trusts - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/commissioning-high-quality-trusts).

Annex 4 sets out some questions that local authorities may find helpful when reviewing their policies and procedures. LGSCO has published [guidance on good administrative practice and the effective handling of complaints](#).

The public sector equality duty

The Equality Act 2010 requires local authorities to comply with the public sector equality duty. This means they must consider how their school travel decisions and policies affect people with protected characteristics, and must have due regard to the need to:

- eliminate discrimination against people with protected characteristics;
- promote equality of opportunity between people who have a protected characteristic and those who do not; and
- foster good relations between people who have a protected characteristic and those who do not.

The public sector equality duty is likely to be particularly relevant when local authorities are revising their school travel policies (see part 4), deciding whether to exercise their discretionary power (see part 2) and deciding whether it would be reasonable to expect a **parent** to accompany their child on their journey to and from school (see paragraphs 49 to 54).

Duty to have regard to religion or belief

Section 509AD of the Education Act 1996 requires local authorities to have regard to any wish of a **parent** to have their child educated at a school based on their **religion** or **belief** when exercising their school travel duties. This does not mean local authorities must arrange travel to a school with a **designated religious character** for a child whose **parents** have chosen it on the grounds of their **religion** or **belief** (unless the child would be eligible for free travel to that school), but they should not have a blanket policy that they never provide travel assistance to schools with a **designated religious character** and may need to make decisions on a case-by-case basis if asked to exercise their discretionary power in relation to such a school.

Part 1: local authorities' statutory duty in relation to eligible children

1. Subject to paragraph 66 below, local authorities must make free-of-charge travel arrangements to facilitate the attendance at school of eligible children resident in their area².

2. A child is eligible³ if they are of **compulsory school age**, attend their nearest suitable school and:

- live more than the statutory **walking** distance from that school (see paragraphs 9 to 12), or
- could not reasonably be expected to **walk** to that school because of their **special educational needs, disability or mobility problem**, even if they were accompanied by their **parent** (see paragraphs 13 to 28), or
- would not be able to **walk** to that school in reasonable safety, even if they were accompanied by their **parent** (see paragraphs 29 to 32).

3. There are 'extended rights' to free travel to school for children from low-income households (see paragraphs 33 to 37).

Suitable school

4. A suitable school for school travel purposes is a qualifying school (see paragraphs 7 to 8 for the definition of a qualifying school) that is suitable for the child's age, ability, aptitude and any **special educational needs** they may have⁴. It should also be suitable for the child's sex, for example a girls' school could not be considered the nearest suitable school for a boy.

5. 'Suitable school' does not mean the most suitable school for a child. Schools are able to meet a wide range of needs. The nearest secondary school to the **home** of a child of secondary school age, for example, will almost always be their nearest suitable school (provided it would be able to admit them).

6. Where a child has an **EHC plan**, the school named in the plan will normally be considered to be their nearest suitable school. (See paragraphs 20 to 28 for more

² [Section 508B of the Education Act 1996](#)

³ The categories of eligible children are set out in [schedule 35B of the Education Act 1996](#)

⁴ [Section 7 of the Education Act 1996](#) (Duty of parents to secure education of children of compulsory school age) defines suitable education.

information about children with **EHC plans** and paragraphs 38 to 48 for more information about suitable schools and qualifying schools.)

Child J is thirteen years old. Their nearest school is a co-educational secondary school that is 3.4 miles from their **home**. Their **parents** choose to send them to a single sex secondary school that is 5.3 miles from their **home**. Child J is not eligible for free travel to the single sex school because the co-educational secondary school is their nearest suitable school.

Child K is twelve years old. They attend School 1, a secondary school 3 miles from their **home**. Their **parents** chose this school because it offers a choice of several modern foreign languages at GSCE. School 2 is 1 mile from Child K's **home** and would have been able to admit them, but it only offers one modern foreign language. Child K is not attending their nearest suitable school because School 2 would have been able to provide them with an education that was suitable for their age, ability and aptitude.

Qualifying schools

7. Qualifying schools⁵ are:

- community schools, foundation schools, voluntary aided and voluntary controlled schools;
- academies (including those which are free schools, university technical colleges, studio schools and special schools);
- alternative provision academies;
- community or foundation special schools;
- non-maintained special schools;
- pupil referral units;
- maintained nursery schools (where attended by a child of **compulsory school age**); and
- city technology colleges and city colleges for the technology of the arts.

8. For children with **special educational needs**, an independent school is a qualifying school if it is the only school named in their **EHC plan**, or the nearest of two or more schools named in the **EHC plan**. (See paragraph 20 to 28 for more information about children with **EHC plans** and paragraphs 38 to 48 for more information about suitable schools and qualifying schools.)

⁵ Qualifying schools are defined by paragraph 15 of [schedule 35B to the Education Act 1996](#).

Statutory walking distances⁶

9. The statutory **walking** distances are used to determine whether a child is eligible for free travel to school. They are the distance beyond which a child who is attending their nearest suitable school is eligible for free travel arranged by their local authority. Where a child lives within the statutory **walking** distance (and is not eligible for free travel on any of the other grounds set out in this guidance) the **parent** is responsible for arranging their child's travel to school. There is no expectation that the child will **walk**. It is for the **parent** to determine what arrangements would be suitable for their child.

10. A child under the age of 8 is eligible for free travel to their nearest suitable school if it is more than 2 miles from their **home**.

11. A child aged 8 years or over is eligible for free travel to their nearest suitable school if it is more than 3 miles from their **home**.

12. When a local authority assesses whether the distance between a child's **home** and their school is further than the statutory **walking** distance, the route they measure must be the shortest route along which a child, accompanied as necessary, may **walk** in reasonable safety. This is not necessarily the shortest distance by road. The route may also include footpaths, bridleways, other pathways and alternative entrances to the school (see paragraph 49 to 54 for guidance about accompaniment).

Child A is six years old and attends their nearest suitable school. It is 2.3 miles from their **home**. Child A is eligible for free travel to school.

Child B is seven years old and attends a primary school that is 2.6 miles from their **home**. There is another suitable primary school 1.2 miles from their **home** which has places available. Child B is not eligible for free travel to school, as they are not attending their nearest suitable school.

Child C is eleven years old and attends their nearest suitable school. It is 2.6 miles from their **home**. Child C is not eligible for free travel to school.

Special educational needs, disability or mobility problems

13. A child is eligible for free travel to school if:

- they attend their nearest suitable school, and
- it is within the statutory **walking** distance of their **home**, and

⁶ The statutory walking distances are prescribed by [section 444\(5\) of the Education Act 1996](#).

- they could not reasonably be expected to **walk** there because of their **special educational needs, disability or mobility problem**, even if they were accompanied by their **parent** (see paragraph 49 to 54 for guidance about accompaniment).

14. To be eligible on these grounds, a child does not need to:

- have an **Education Health and Care plan (EHC plan)**; or
- have travel to school specified in their **EHC plan** if they have one; or
- attend a special school; or
- live beyond the statutory **walking** distance.

15. Not every child with an **EHC plan** or who attends a special school will be eligible for free travel to school.

16. Local authorities will need to assess eligibility on the grounds of **special educational needs, disability or mobility problems** on a case-by-case basis. The assessment should take account of the child's physical ability to **walk** to school and any health and safety issues related to their **special educational needs, disability or mobility problems**. It may take account of whether they would be able to **walk** to school if they were accompanied (see paragraphs 49 to 54 for guidance about accompaniment).

17. Information that local authorities may take into account when assessing a child's eligibility may include (but need not be restricted to) the following, where it illustrates why the child may not be able to **walk** to school:

- information provided by the **parent**;
- information provided by any professionals involved in the child's care, for example, an educational psychologist or hospital consultant;
- information provided by the child's school;
- any relevant information in the child's **EHC plan** if they have one;
- any relevant information in their **individual healthcare plan** if they have one.

18. It is likely local authorities will need to ask **parents** to provide some or all the information they will need to make their decision. Wherever possible, they should avoid asking **parents** for any information which is not already in their (the **parent's**) possession or is not easy for them to obtain.

Child D is fourteen years old and has a **disability** that requires them to use crutches to walk. They need to take their time to ensure they are balanced. They attend their nearest suitable school. It is 1 mile from their **home**. The local authority decides that they could not reasonably be expected to **walk** to school. Child D is eligible for free travel to school.

Child E is eleven years old and has been diagnosed with a long-term medical condition which causes them to take a long time to recover after strenuous physical activity. They attend their nearest suitable school which is a short **walk** from their **home**. The **parent** applies for free travel to school on the basis that the child needs to recover for a long time after any strenuous activity. Based on the information available to them, the local authority decides that Child E would not need to recover for a long time after the short **walk** to their school. Child E is not eligible for free travel to school.

19. A child may be eligible because of temporary **mobility problems** but, due to the short-term nature of some **mobility problems**, it may not always be practicable for the local authority to make travel arrangements before the child has recovered.

Children with EHC plans

Key points

- Subject to the exception set out in paragraphs 23 to 28 below, the school named in a child's **EHC plan** will be their nearest suitable school for school travel purposes.
- Local authorities should take the cost of travel into account when deciding whether it would be incompatible with the efficient use of resources to name the **parent's** preferred school in the **EHC plan**.
- It is important for local authority school travel and **special educational needs** teams to work closely together and to engage with one another early in the process for drawing up an initial **EHC plan** and when changing the school named in an existing plan following review.

20. The naming of a school in a child's **EHC plan** is governed by section 39 of the Children and Families Act 2014. **Parents** have the right to ask for a particular school to be named in their child's **EHC plan** (when the plan is first drawn up and when the local authority amends the existing plan). The local authority must name that school in the plan unless it would be unsuitable for the child's age, ability, aptitude or **special educational needs**, or incompatible with the efficient education of others or the efficient use of

resources⁷. Where the child will be eligible for free travel, they should take the cost of travel into account as part of this decision. Travel arrangements may also be relevant to the decision about the school that should be named in the plan in other ways, for example, the effect the journey may have on the child and their ability to learn when they arrive at school.

21. Where naming the **parent's** preferred school would be unsuitable for the child's age, ability, aptitude or **special educational needs**, or incompatible with the efficient education of others or the efficient use of resources, the local authority must name a different school that they think would be appropriate for the child.

22. This means that, where a **parent** would prefer their child to attend a school that is further away from their **home** than the nearest school that would be able to meet their needs, the local authority should consider whether arranging travel to the preferred school would be incompatible with the efficient use of resources.

23. The local authority should determine the cost of providing the child with free travel to each of the two schools. If travel to the preferred school would cost more than travel to the nearer school, they should decide whether the additional cost of providing travel to the **parent's** preferred school is incompatible with the efficient use of resources. This will include deciding whether the educational benefits and other advantages the school will provide for the child outweigh the additional cost.

24. If the local authority determines that providing travel to the **parent's** preferred school would be incompatible with the efficient use of resources, the local authority may:

- name a different school that would be appropriate for the child's needs (this may be the nearer school), or
- name the **parent's** preferred school on the condition that the **parent** arranges the travel or provides some or all of the cost of the travel, or
- name the **parent's** preferred school on the condition that they arrange the travel (or provide some or all of the cost) and name a different school that would be appropriate for the child's needs and to which the authority would provide transport.

25. When deciding whether to name the **parent's** preferred school conditionally (alone or in addition to another school), the local authority may take account of the risk of the **parent** later becoming unable to arrange or pay for the travel and the local authority then becoming responsible for transport costs. The level of risk will vary depending on the circumstances of each case.

⁷ See paragraphs 9.78 and 9.79 of the [Special educational needs and disability code of practice: 0 to 25 Years](#)

26. Although transport should not normally be recorded in a child's EHC plan⁸, when the local authority names the **parent's** preferred school on the condition that the **parent** arranges or pays for the travel, they may set out this condition in Section I of the plan.

27. Where in such circumstances the **parent's** circumstances subsequently change and they are no longer able to arrange or pay for the transport, the authority may conduct a review of the **EHC plan** to reconsider whether naming the parent's preferred school is incompatible with the efficient use of resources. If they determine that providing travel to the parent's preferred school would be incompatible with the efficient use of resources, they may amend the plan to name a different school that would be appropriate for the child's needs.

28. The local authority should make clear to the **parent** that they may review the school named in the **EHC plan** if the **parent** becomes unable or unwilling to arrange or pay for the travel. We recommend that the local authority records this information in a formal letter to the **parent**.

Unsafe walking route

29. A child is eligible for free travel to school if:

- They attend their nearest suitable school, and
- it is within the statutory **walking** distance of their **home**, and
- the nature of the route means they could not be expected to **walk** there in reasonable safety even if accompanied by their **parent**, and
- there is no alternative route within the statutory **walking** distance that they would be able to **walk** in reasonable safety, even if accompanied by their **parent**.

30. When assessing whether a route can be **walked** in reasonable safety, local authorities should consider the whole of the route. This will include, for example, any sections that use footpaths or bridleways, as well as sections that use roads. They should consider a range of risks such as canals, rivers, ditches, speed of traffic and fields of vision for the pedestrian and motorist.

31. Some local authorities use the '*Assessment of Walked Routes to Schools Guidelines*', published by Road Safety GB⁹, which provide advice to local authorities on assessing the risk posed to pedestrians by traffic. These guidelines can form the basis

⁸ The Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice: 0-25 Years says that transport should be recorded in the EHC plan only in exceptional cases where the child has particular transport needs.

⁹ [Road Safety GB](#) is a national road safety organisation made up of representatives from groups across the UK, including local authority road safety teams.

from which to develop a route safety assessment but are not a complete assessment and should be used in conjunction with local context and knowledge.

32. Modern technology is valuable in identifying, measuring and assessing routes but it may sometimes be appropriate for a route to be assessed by **walking** it at the times of day and on the days of the week that the child would travel, particularly if the safety of a route is challenged.

Child F is twelve years old. They attend their nearest suitable school. It is 2 miles from their **home**. The only **walking** route to this school is along a busy road with no footpaths or stepping off points. The local authority carries out an assessment of the route and decides it would not be possible for a child to **walk** it in reasonable safety, even if they were accompanied by their **parent**. Child F is eligible for free travel to school.

Extended rights

33. Extended rights are designed to support low-income families to exercise school choice. A child is eligible for free travel to school if they are eligible for free school meals or a **parent** with whom they live receives maximum Working Tax Credit and they are:

- aged 8 or over but under 11, attend their nearest suitable school and it is more than 2 miles from their **home**; or
- aged 11 to 16 years, and attend one of their three nearest suitable schools provided it is more than 2 miles but not more than 6 miles from their **home**; or
- aged 11 to 16 years, attend a school that is more than 2 but not more than 15 miles from their **home** that their **parents** have chosen on the grounds of their **religion** or **belief** if, having regard to that **religion** or **belief**, there is no suitable school nearer to their **home**.

Child G is eleven years old and eligible for free school meals. Their nearest suitable school is 2.5 miles from their **home**. Their second nearest suitable school is 3 miles away. Their third nearest is 5 miles away. Child G would be eligible for free travel to any of these schools.

Child H is eleven years old and eligible for free school meals. Their three nearest schools are School X, School Y and School Z. School X is 1.5 miles from their **home**, School Y is 2.2 miles from their home, and School Z is 5.5 miles from their **home**. Child H would be eligible for free travel to School Y or School Z, but not to School X.

Child I is thirteen years old and is eligible for free school meals. Their **parents** are Sikh and wish them to be educated in a school with a **religious character**. They attend a **designated** Sikh school that is 8 miles from their **home**. There are other schools which are nearer to their **home**, but none of these is a Sikh school. Child I is eligible for free travel to the Sikh school.

34. When a local authority assesses, for the purposes of extended rights, whether a child lives more than 2 miles from a school, the route should be measured in the way described in paragraph 12. When assessing whether a child lives within the 6- or 15-mile upper limits, the local authority should measure **road routes** only. There is no expectation that a child would **walk** these distances and so **walking** routes should not be used for assessing eligibility.

35. Where, during the course of an **academic year**, a child ceases to be eligible for free school meals, or their **parent** ceases to receive maximum Working Tax Credit, the local authority should continue to provide free travel to school for the remainder of that **academic year**.

36. Working Tax Credit is being phased out as claimants are transferred onto Universal Credit. This does not change the way eligibility for extended rights to free travel to school is determined. It remains the case that children will be eligible for free home-to-school travel if they are eligible for free school meals or live with a **parent** who receives maximum Working Tax Credit (and meet the criteria set out above). Once the roll out is complete, no further children will come forward who are eligible because their **parents** claim maximum Working Tax Credit.

37. No child will cease to be eligible for extended rights because of the roll out of Universal Credit. **Parents** who claim maximum Working Tax Credit will have an earned income of no more than £7,400. This means their children will become eligible for free school meals (if they are not already) when they (the **parent**) are transferred to Universal Credit. More information about eligibility for free school meals is available in [Free School Meals: guidance for local authorities, maintained schools, academies and free schools](#).

More information about suitable schools and qualifying schools

38. Children may sometimes live a very similar distance from more than one school. Where the schools are within the statutory **walking** distance, local authorities should determine which is the nearest by measuring the shortest **walking** route. (It is not necessary to determine whether they would be able to walk that route in reasonable safety for the purposes of determining which is their nearest school, but the local authority may need to determine that separately for the purposes of assessing their eligibility for free travel).

39. Where the schools are beyond **walking** distance, local authorities may consider it more appropriate to measure the shortest **road route** or the straight-line distance. It should be made clear in the local authority's school travel policy how the route will be measured.

40. Where a child's nearest school is oversubscribed and unable to offer them a place, the nearest school with places available is their nearest suitable school for school travel purposes. A child's nearest school may be in a neighbouring local authority area.

41. In most cases, a child's eligibility for free school travel will be assessed following the **normal school admissions round** once **parents** have been offered a place for their child to begin primary school or transfer to secondary school. In some cases, eligibility will need to be assessed at other times, for example due to a family moving into the area in-year.

42. When an application for travel is considered following the **normal admissions round**, it can be difficult for a local authority to know whether a child could have been admitted to their nearest school if their **parent** did not list that school as a preference when they applied for a school place. It is, therefore, reasonable for a local authority to expect **parents** to list their nearest school on their application form if they intend to apply for free travel to school. Some local authorities have alternative ways of determining whether a child's nearest school could have offered them a place.

43. Where a local authority expects **parents** who intend to apply for free travel to list their nearest school on their application form, this information should be clearly available to all **parents** at the time they are deciding which schools to apply for. It should also be clear to parents how they can find out which is their nearest school for admissions purposes and whether this is also their nearest school for school travel purposes. Some authorities have a postcode checker on their website that parents can use for this purpose.

44. Local authorities may expect **parents** to list their nearest school as their first preference. However, in the Department's view, this should not normally be necessary. School admission authorities must provide ranked lists of all applicants to the local authority. If a parent lists their nearest school as their second or lower preference, it

should be possible for the local authority to tell whether their child could have been offered a place at that school. This can be done by comparing the child in question with the last child to be offered a place at the school and determining which of them would have higher priority. This will often be a straightforward matter of determining which child lives closest to the school.

45. Local authorities may find it helpful to have a set date that they use for the purposes of determining whether a child could have been offered a place at their nearest school, for example, would they have been offered a place on National Offer Day¹⁰.

46. Where a child has begun attending a school that is not their nearest because their nearest school was unable to offer them a place, a place may subsequently become available at the nearer school. In these circumstances, some **parents** may choose to move their child to the nearer school. Where they do not, local authorities should not withdraw the child's home-to-school travel, because moving to the nearer school would be likely to cause significant disruption to their education.

Child L is eleven years old and attends School 1 which is 4.2 miles away from their **home**. Their **parents** applied for this school as their first preference. The nearest secondary school is School 2 which is 3.7 miles from their **home**. They chose not to apply for this school, despite information on the eligibility for free travel to school being readily available at the time they submitted their preferences. School 2 is undersubscribed, and Child L would have been offered a place there had their **parents** applied. Child L is not eligible for free travel to School 1 because School 2 is their nearest suitable school and has available places.

Child M is eleven years old and attends the second nearest secondary school to their **home**. It is 4.2 miles away. Their nearest secondary school is 3.7 miles from their **home**. Their **parents** applied for this school, but it was oversubscribed and they were not offered a place. Child M is eligible for free travel to school as they are attending their nearest suitable school with available places.

47. A child may be eligible for free travel to a place that isn't a qualifying school:

- where they receive education at a place other than a school by virtue of arrangements made under section 19 (1) of the Education Act 1996 (which requires local authorities to make arrangements for the provision of suitable

¹⁰ National Offer Day is the day each year on which local authorities send an offer of a school place to parents in their area. Secondary National Offer Day is 1 March. Primary National Offer Day is 16 April. Where 1 March or 16 April falls on a day that is not a working day, National Offer Day is the next working day.

education for children of **compulsory school age** who would otherwise not receive suitable education for reasons such as illness or exclusion)¹¹

- where they are suspended (temporarily excluded) from a school (but remain a registered pupil of that school) and attend an educational establishment that is not a qualifying school and is not within the statutory **walking** distance of their **home**, then that educational establishment must be treated as if it were a qualifying school for the purposes of eligibility for free travel¹²

48. We expect schools to collaborate with the local authority when arranging educational provision for a child during a suspension where the pupil might be eligible for free travel to the place where they will be receiving education. More information is available in the [School suspensions and permanent exclusions](#) guidance.

Accompaniment

49. A child will not normally be eligible for free travel to school on the grounds of their **special educational needs, disability or mobility problem**, or on the grounds that the route is unsafe, if they would be able to **walk** to school if they were accompanied. Where the local authority determines that a child would be able to walk if they were accompanied, the general expectation is that the **parent** will accompany them or make other suitable arrangements for their journey to and from school. A child will not normally be eligible solely because their **parent's** work commitments or caring responsibilities mean they are unable to accompany their child themselves, but local authorities must act reasonably in the performance of their functions.

50. In most cases, local authorities will not need to consider whether a **parent** would be able to accompany their child, but they should not have a blanket policy that they will never arrange free travel for a child who would be able to walk to school if accompanied. They must consider cases where the **parent** says there are good reasons why they are unable to accompany their child, or make other suitable arrangements for their journey, and make a decision on the basis of the circumstances of each case.

51. The circumstances that a local authority should take into account may include, but are not limited to, whether the **parent** has a **disability or mobility problem** that would make it difficult for them to accompany their child, and the **parent's** reasons for not being able to accompany their child or make other suitable arrangements.

52. Reasons such as the **parent's** working pattern or the fact they have children attending more than one school, on their own, will not normally be considered good reasons for a parent being unable to accompany their child. These apply to many **parents** and, in most circumstances, it is reasonable to expect the **parent** to make

¹¹ This is set out in paragraphs 3, 5, 7 and 10 of [schedule 35B of the Education Act 1996](#).

¹² This is set out in paragraph 8 of schedule [35B of the Education Act 1996](#).

suitable arrangements to fulfil their various responsibilities (for example, their responsibilities as an employee and as a **parent**.)

53. Where a local authority determines that a child could not reasonably be expected to walk even if they were accompanied, they are eligible for free home-to-school travel regardless of whether their **parent** would be able to accompany them or make other arrangements for their journey.

54. We know it can be difficult for local authorities to make decisions in relation to children of secondary school age whose **special educational needs, disability** or **mobility problem** mean they could not reasonably be expected to **walk** to school unaccompanied. Other children of this age may normally be expected to **walk** to school unaccompanied which might, for example, enable **parents** to increase their working hours. When deciding whether it is reasonable to expect the **parent** of a child with **special educational needs, disability** or **mobility problem** to accompany their child to school, local authorities should be sensitive to the particular challenges **parents** of such children may face.

Child N is nine years old and has autism. They attend their nearest suitable school which is 2.5 miles from their **home**. They are unaware of danger and need to be accompanied even on very short journeys. They also become distressed and can act unpredictably in noisy environments. Their **walk** to school would be along busy roads. The local authority determines that the **parent** would not be able to keep them safe on this journey. Child N is eligible for free travel to school.

Child O is seven years old and attends their nearest suitable school which is 1.5 miles from their **home**. They do not have **special educational needs**, a **disability** or **mobility problem**. The local authority determines that they would be able to **walk** to school in reasonable safety if they were accompanied. There is no good reason why the **parent** could not reasonably be expected to accompany them or make other arrangements for their journey to and from school. Child O is not eligible for free travel to school.

Child P is fifteen years old and is blind. They attend their nearest suitable school which is a short **walk** from their **home**. The local authority determines that they could reasonably be expected to **walk** to school if accompanied. Child P's **parent** is a single **parent** with a **disability** which means they would not be able to accompany Child P to school. The local authority considers the individual circumstances of Child P and decides it would not be reasonable to expect their **parent** to make arrangements for their journey to and from school. It decides to arrange free travel to school for Child P.

Child Q is fourteen years old and is also blind. They attend their nearest suitable school which is a short **walk** from their **home**. The local authority determines that they could reasonably be expected to **walk** to school if accompanied. There is no good reason why Child Q's **parent** could not reasonably be expected to accompany them or make other arrangements for their journey to and from school. Child Q is not eligible for free travel to school.

Promoting independence for eligible children with special educational needs and disabilities

55. The *Special educational needs and disability code of practice: 0 to 25*¹³ sets the expectation that professionals working with children with **special educational needs** or **disabilities** will support them to prepare for adult life and help them to achieve the best outcomes in employment, independent living, health and community participation. Planning should start early. Where a child has an **EHC plan**, local authorities must

¹³ Further information on the local authority role in supporting children and young people to prepare for adulthood is available in the [Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice: 0-25 Years](#).

ensure that the annual review of the **EHC plan** from at least year 9 onwards includes a focus on preparing for adulthood, including independent living.

56. For many children, learning to travel independently is an important part of preparing for adulthood and will help them lead fulfilling adult lives. When making travel arrangements for eligible children with **special educational needs** or **disabilities**, local authorities may take account of how best to support them to develop independence. For example, they might consider whether a child who would otherwise travel in a taxi, might be able to travel on a public service bus if provided with support to do so, or whether a child who uses a wheelchair might be able to **wheel** to school rather than travel in a minibus, if provided with support to do so.

57. **Parents** may be anxious about their child's ability to travel independently. The child may also be worried about this. It will be important to work sensitively with them to help them understand the benefits of independent travel and to build their confidence.

58. Wherever possible, local authorities should offer independent travel training to children with **special educational needs** or **disabilities** who are eligible for free travel to school and who they think will be able to complete the programme.

59. Independent travel training is a tailored programme to help children with **special educational needs** or **disabilities** travel independently, for example by public transport or **walking**. Some children may need to participate in travel training again if their circumstances change, for example if they move school.

60. Once an eligible child can travel independently, their travel arrangements may need to be reviewed. For example, they may now be able to **walk** or catch a bus to school rather than travel in a taxi. Local authorities must not withdraw free home-to-school travel from an eligible child who does not successfully complete the travel training programme.

Parental consent and independent travel

61. Section 508B (4) (b) of the Education Act 1996 requires local authorities to obtain parental consent in order to meet their school travel duty in respect of an eligible child by:

- providing someone to escort the child, or
- paying their travelling expenses.

62. This means, for example, that the **parent's** consent is required for a local authority to meet their school travel duty by providing independent travel training, or providing someone to accompany a child so they can **wheel** to school in their wheelchair. Where the **parent** does not provide consent, the local authority must make alternative arrangements for the child's travel to school.

Child R has *special educational needs*. They live in a village 4 miles from their nearest suitable secondary school and are eligible for free travel to school. Other children living in the village attend the school. The local authority meets its school travel duty in respect of these children by providing them with a pass for free travel on the public service bus. When Child R joined the school in Year 7, the local authority determined their *special educational needs* meant they would not be able to travel on the bus with their peers. The local authority arranged a taxi to take Child R to school.

When Child R moved to Year 9, the local authority reassessed their needs. They determined Child R was ready for independent travel training. Child R's *parent* was hesitant at first, but the local authority explained the benefits and the *parent* agreed, knowing Child R would need the skill in adulthood.

The travel trainer helps Child R with understanding things such as where to wait for the bus, which bus to get on and what to do if they miss the bus or it is late. Once Child R has completed the travel training programme, the local authority reassesses their needs and determines they are now able to travel independently on the bus. They withdraw the taxi and provide Child R with a bus pass.

More information about travel to school for eligible children

63. Local authorities must make arrangements to enable a child to travel to school for the beginning of the *school day*, and to return *home* at the end of the *school day*. They are not required to make arrangements:

- for children to travel between institutions during the *school day*;
- to enable children to attend extra-curricular activities and other commitments outside school hours; or
- to enable children to get to and from before and after school childcare, whether formal (for example, a childminder) or informal (for example, a grandparent)¹⁴.

64. Where particular classes, year groups or pupils have a start or finish time that is different from most pupils at the school, it will not normally be possible for the local authority to make separate travel arrangements. Schools may need to make arrangements to accommodate these pupils. There may be a small number of circumstances in which local authorities consider it appropriate to arrange transport at an

¹⁴ To note, a local authority may have a separate duty under [section 2 of the Chronically Sick and Disabled Person's Act 1970](#) to provide transport enable a child in need to access any services provided for them by the authority in accordance with [section 17 of the Children Act 1989](#). This guidance does not seek to provide advice on that duty.

alternative time of day, for example if a child has a medical condition which means they are not well enough to attend school for the whole day.

65. Where a local authority names a residential school in the **EHC plan** of an eligible child, the local authority must provide reasonable free travel to enable the child to attend that school, for example, on a Monday and Friday for children who are weekly boarders, or before and after school holidays for children who board full-time.

66. A local authority is not required to arrange travel for an eligible child where:

- suitable free travel is provided by someone else, for example, their school or the local transport authority (for example, Transport for London); or
- a **parent** chooses to make their own arrangements for the child's travel to and from school (this does not prevent the **parent** from later requesting free travel to school).

Ways in which free travel may be provided

67. It is for local authorities to decide how they will arrange free travel for an eligible child. For example, they might provide a pass for travel on a service bus or arrange a **dedicated** school bus or a taxi. The arrangements must be free of charge to the **parent**.

68. The legislation¹⁵ permits local authorities to meet their duty in respect of an eligible child in a range of alternative ways, provided they have the consent of the **parent**. For example, with the agreement of a **parent**, the local authority might:

- provide expenses¹⁶ to enable the **parent** to make their own travel arrangements for their child;
- pay a cycling allowance to enable a child to cycle to school;
- provide independent travel training to a child where it is appropriate to do so (see paragraphs 55 to 60 for more information about independent travel training);
- provide someone to escort the child, for example when they are **walking** or **wheeling** to and from school.

69. Where a **parent** has agreed to receive travelling expenses, it is for the local authority to determine how to administer this. They may require **parents** to provide copies of receipts and other supporting documentation.

¹⁵ This is set out in section [508B \(4\)\(b\) of the Education Act 1996](#).

¹⁶ Some local authorities call this a personal travel budget or a mileage allowance.

70. To ensure the arrangements are free of charge to the **parent** of an eligible child, the travelling expenses may need to be sufficient to cover the **parent's** journey **home** having taken their child to school in the morning, and their journey back to school to collect their child in the afternoon (in other words, all four legs of their journey to school and back). There will be exceptions to this, for example if a **parent** works close to their child's school and does not travel **home** after taking their child to school. (See paragraphs 72 to 74 below for information about the interaction between the payment of travelling expenses and other benefits and allowances.)

71. The examples below provide further suggestions of alternative ways in which local authorities might meet the duty if they have parental consent.

Local authority 1 has introduced a scheme it believes will promote consistency and routine for children at a local special school. Rather than contracting a travel operator, they have leased a minibus. The local authority funds the special school for the cost of a driver and fuel. The school can use the minibus during the **school day** provided they also use it to provide travel to and from school. The school knows the children well and is better able to make travel arrangements that meet their needs.

Local authority 2 has received an application for free travel to school for a child with **special educational needs**. The child is an eligible child. The **parent** would prefer to take the child to school themselves, because they get distressed when travelling with anyone else, but are unable to do so because they need to take their other child to school. The other child is not an eligible child. Local authority 2 suggests to the **parent** that the authority should make travel arrangements for the non-eligible child, enabling the **parent** to take the eligible child to school. The **parent** is happy with this arrangement, and it does not cost them any more to take the eligible child to school than it would to take their other child.

Interaction with other benefits and allowances

72. A child's eligibility is not affected by any further benefits or allowances they or their **parents** may receive. Disability Living Allowance (DLA) for children is a contribution towards the extra cost associated with being disabled. It has two components – a care component payable at three rates, and a mobility component payable at two rates. **Parents** who receive the higher rate mobility component for their child may choose to use it to lease a Motability vehicle, but there is no requirement for them to do so. Being eligible for DLA or having access to a Motability vehicle is not relevant to a disabled child's eligibility for free travel to school (except as evidence of their **disability**).

73. Foster carers receive an allowance to cover the cost of caring for a child. Being in receipt of foster care allowance does not affect a child's eligibility for free travel to school, but a local authority may meet their duty in respect of an eligible child by including

additional funding in the foster care allowance, provided this is agreed with the foster carer.

74. Regular payments made by the local authority to reimburse the cost incurred by a **parent** in providing a child's travel to school:

- will not be taken into account in a Universal Credit assessment. (Should a local authority need to pay a **parent** any additional amounts, for example to cover unexpected expenses relating to a child's travel to school, these would be treated as capital in the Universal Credit assessment and the **parent** would need to declare them¹⁷
- should not give rise to income tax liability, but individuals should satisfy themselves that they meet HMRC's requirements¹⁸.

¹⁷ When a person's Universal Credit is calculated, any capital they have is taken into account. Capital includes savings, investments and property (other than the home they live in). Claimants should declare any lump sum payment that would form part of their capital. Regular payments from the local authority which the claimant then spends on their child's travel will, therefore, not be taken into account. However, local authorities should be aware that, if they need to pay a parent any additional amounts and if, for example, they chose to pay 12-months' worth of additional amounts in one lump sum, this may be taken account in the Universal Credit assessment. This is because it would be considered to form part of their capital until such point as they need to spend it. More information is available about [Universal Credit](#).

¹⁸ Further information is available about [income tax](#).

Part 2: local authorities' discretionary power

75. Local authorities have a discretionary power to provide travel to school for children resident in their area who are not eligible children¹⁹, referred to in this part as 'discretionary travel'.

76. Discretionary travel may be provided in either direction between the child's **home** and their school, or both. It may be provided free, or a charge may be made. Any charges should be reasonable. Local authorities may wish to consider waiving or reducing charges for children from low-income families but are not required to do so.

77. With **parents'** consent, local authorities may pay all or part of a child's reasonable travel expenses, provide them with a travel allowance, or arrange for them to be accompanied by a passenger assistant. Discretionary travel need not be limited to children of **compulsory school age**.

78. It is for each local authority to decide whether and how to exercise their discretionary power. Most use it to provide free travel to school for 4-year-olds attending reception classes if they will be eligible for free travel when they reach **compulsory school age**. Some use it to enable children who are not eligible for free travel to take spare seats on vehicles providing free travel for eligible children. Local authorities will usually charge for this service.

79. They may also offer discretionary travel to support school choice, for example, by having a policy of providing travel to enable children to attend a school with a **designated religious character** or a **selective school**. The Department for Education supports this wherever it is possible but acknowledges that budget pressures often mean authorities have to make difficult decisions to balance the benefits of discretionary travel with their other priorities. Where local authorities routinely offer discretionary travel in this way, they should make this clear in their home-to-school travel policy. Part 4 provides guidance on local school travel policies.

80. There is an expectation that local authorities will act reasonably in the performance of their functions. They should not have a blanket policy of never providing discretionary travel and should be prepared to consider cases where the **parent** says there are reasons why their child needs free travel to school and make decisions on a case-by-case basis. The Department acknowledges that local authorities will not usually be able to consider matters such as the **parent's** working pattern, the cost to the **parent** of public transport, or the fact the **parent** has children attending more than one school, on their own, to be exceptional circumstances in which they will arrange travel on a discretionary basis.

¹⁹ This is set out in [section 508C of the Education Act 1996](#).

Part 3: suitability of travel arrangements

Taking account of children's needs

81. Local authorities must ensure that the travel arrangements they make take account of the needs of the child concerned. For example, it would not be appropriate to provide a pass for free travel on a service bus to a child whose **special educational needs** meant they would be unable to travel on a service bus.

82. The arrangements should enable the child to travel in reasonable safety and comfort, and without undue stress, strain or difficulty, so that wherever possible they arrive at school ready to learn.

83. It may not always be necessary to provide children with 'door to door' transport in order to meet their needs. Many will be able to **walk** to a suitable pick-up point to be collected, provided they would be able to do so in reasonable safety, accompanied by their **parent** if necessary. Some children's needs will mean they need to be collected from their **home**. Local authorities should not have a policy that they never provide door to door transport and should make decisions on a case-by-case basis.

84. Some children may need particular arrangements to be made to meet their needs. For example, some children might require the support of a passenger assistant on their journey, or a child may use a wheelchair or walking frame that needs to travel with them.

85. A child's needs may need to be reassessed from time to time, for example if their level of need changes or if they move to a new school. Some children with **special educational needs** can find change distressing. Local authorities should provide **parents** with as much notice as possible of any changes to a child's travel arrangements.

Risk assessment

86. Health and safety law requires local authorities to put in place reasonably practicable control measures to protect their employees and others (including the children for whom they arrange travel) from harm. Under the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999, they must:

- identify hazards – things that could cause injury or illness;
- assess the risk – how likely it is that someone could be harmed and how seriously;
- put in place proportionate measures to eliminate the hazard or control the risk;
- record their findings; and
- regularly review and update their risk assessments.

87. The Health and Safety Executive provides advice on managing risk, including a template and example risk assessments. Further information is available in [Managing risks and risk assessment at work](#).

88. It is for local authorities to decide what is reasonably practicable in each circumstance. They may consider that an individual risk assessment is required for some children, for example those with complex **medical needs**, but it is unlikely that all children will require an individual risk assessment.

89. Matters local authorities may need to consider could include, but are not limited to:

- the **medical needs** of the children and the likelihood of them requiring emergency medical assistance while travelling to and from school;
- their behaviour – including where this is related to their **special educational needs or disability** – and the likelihood of this causing harm to them or others while travelling;
- the safety of children while travelling on the vehicle and while boarding and alighting;
- the safe loading and tethering of wheelchairs.

Children with medical needs

90. When a local authority makes travel arrangements for a child with **medical needs**, they should consider whether and how those needs might affect the child during their journey to and from school and, where necessary, put in place proportionate arrangements to manage those needs.

91. Not every child with the same condition will need the same arrangements, so assessments should be undertaken on a case-by-case basis. The matters that should be considered are likely to include:

- the medical condition, its triggers and symptoms;
- the likelihood and consequences of the condition affecting the child on the journey to and from school; and
- the action that may need to be taken to manage the condition, for example whether the child may require medication and, if so, what dose is required, how it should be administered, and by whom.

92. Local education, health and social care services should work together to ensure children get the right support. Local authority school travel teams may need to work with local partners to make suitable travel arrangements for children with **medical needs**. They should be able to expect the support of their local authority's **special educational needs** team, local health partners, and the schools to which they arrange travel.

93. In the first instance, local authorities should consult **parents** about their child's **medical needs**. It is likely that the child's school will have arrangements in place to manage their **medical needs** during the day. They may be able to help the local authority identify whether those needs will affect them on the journey to and from school and decide what arrangements to put in place.

94. If the child has an **EHC plan** or **individual healthcare plan**, these may contain information that is relevant to the local authority's assessment. The school should share information from the **individual healthcare plan** with the local authority where it is relevant to the journey to and from school.

95. Local authorities may sometimes need to seek specialist advice about a child and their condition. A range of different health professionals may be involved in a child's care, for example a community nurse, specialist nurse or doctor. The **parent** should be able to help the local authority identify the appropriate health professional in relation to their child. The child's school and the local authority's **special educational needs** team may also be able to help with this.

96. The local authority should ensure the driver of a vehicle providing **dedicated** school transport, and any passenger assistant involved in providing the child's travel, are aware of their needs and how to respond to them and have received any training necessary to enable them to do so. See also paragraphs 102 to 107 on training.

Administering medication and performing medical procedures

97. There is no expectation that a child's routine medication will be administered on the journey to and from school, or that routine medical procedures will be carried out. It may sometimes be necessary to administer a child's emergency medication. Emergency medication should be administered in accordance with instructions from a health care professional. The driver or passenger assistant responsible for administering the medication should receive training from a health care professional.

Journey times

98. As a general guide, the maximum journey time for a child of primary school age should be 45 minutes each way, and 75 minutes each way for a child of secondary school age, including any time taken to **walk** to a pick-up point, but there will be circumstances in which this is not possible, for example in rural areas where children live in remote locations, where a child needs to travel a long way to the school named in their **EHC plan**, or when journey times are extended by traffic delays. Wherever possible, a child should not be expected to make several changes on public transport.

99. Travel arrangements for children with **special educational needs, disability** or **mobility problems** can be particularly complex to make. Shorter journeys may be

particularly desirable, perhaps because a child's **special educational needs or disability** mean they become distressed while travelling, but a child may need to travel a long way to the school that is able to meet their needs and one vehicle may need to collect several children. Travel arrangements may be relevant to the decision about the school that should be named in the plan.

100. Where long journeys are unavoidable, local authorities should consider whether there are measures they can take to minimise negative impacts for the child, for example if the child becomes distressed on long journeys the **parent** or school may be able to offer advice on effective ways of keeping them calm.

Child S is seven years old and has an **EHC plan** which names their nearest suitable school. This school is 20 miles from their **home**. The route is often very busy meaning the journey from Child S's home typically takes 45 minutes. The taxi collects one other child on the way, which adds 10 minutes to Child S's journey, meaning a total journey time of 55 minutes. Given the additional expense that would be involved in providing Child S and the other child with separate vehicles, the local authority decides it is reasonable to exceed the recommended journey time in Child S's case.

Child T is fourteen years old and has an **EHC plan** which names a school that is 10 miles from their **home**. Previously they travelled in a taxi with one other child and the journey took 30 minutes. The local authority then combined several routes into one. Child T now travels in a minibus with 11 other children. Due to the extra stops, the journey time is now 90 minutes. Child's T's school makes the local authority aware that, due to their **special educational needs**, they often become very distressed at being in the minibus for that length of time. On arrival at school, it takes them a long time to calm down. As a result, they miss some of the activities other children participate in. The local authority decides it is not reasonable to exceed the recommended journey time in Child T's case and reinstates their original travel arrangements.

Safeguarding

101. The **safeguarding** of children is of paramount importance. Local authorities should ensure that:

- an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check, with a check of the children's barred list, has been carried out for drivers and passenger assistants involved in providing **dedicated** school transport;
- drivers and passenger assistants have received any training they need to perform their role in relation to **safeguarding**;
- drivers and passenger assistants know how to report any concerns they have about the children in their care;

- they share any concerns they have about the driver of a **taxi** or **private hire vehicle** with the authority that licenses them²⁰ – the Local Government Association and Institute of Licensing have produced a [short guidance note](#) to assist with this;
- they consider whether concerns they have about a driver should be referred to the DBS – further information is available at [Making barring referrals to the DBS](#).

Training

102. Local authorities should ensure that drivers and passenger assistants working on **dedicated** school transport have undertaken appropriate training and that this is kept up to date. It is for the local authority to decide what training is required, how it will be delivered and how often it should be refreshed. These decisions should be informed by their risk assessments. The training that a driver or passenger assistant requires may be dependent on the needs of the children who are travelling. Not all drivers and passenger assistants will need the same training.

103. It is for the local authority to decide how training should be delivered, for example by the local authority, the travel operator, or an external provider. It need not always be delivered through a formal course, for example the **parents** of a child with **special educational needs** may be experts in strategies to calm the child when they become distressed while travelling.

104. School staff will receive training to enable them to manage a child's **medical needs** in school. Arrangements for delivering this training are made locally. Wherever possible, we would expect the transport staff that will be working with the child to be able to participate in this training.

105. As a minimum, training should include:

- **safeguarding**;
- the handling of emergency situations, for example what to do in a medical emergency or if there is a road accident;
- equality, for example recognising, supporting and communicating with children with disabilities;
- any training required to meet the specific needs of the children travelling – for example, administering their emergency medication or managing their behaviour.

²⁰ Local authorities will also need to consider their duties under the [Data Protection Act 2018](#) and the [General Data Protection Regulations](#). In doing so, they may find the advice on page 21 of [Working Together to Safeguard Children](#) helpful.

106. It is recommended that training in the handling of emergency situations includes training in basic life support skills. Some bus and coach drivers may have undertaken such training as part of the ongoing training they are required to do to retain their [Driver Certificate of Professional Competence](#).

107. Local authorities should also consider the training that their officers responsible for making travel arrangements need in order to do their job effectively. It is recommended that this includes equality training.

Behaviour on school travel

108. Local authorities should collaborate with schools to promote good behaviour on school travel. Schools have the power to sanction pupils for misbehaviour outside the school premises to such an extent as is reasonable, including for misbehaviour which takes place on school travel (see the guidance on [Behaviour in Schools](#)).

109. Unacceptable behaviour may include, but is not limited to, being rude, pushing and kicking, bullying, distracting the driver, refusing to wear a seatbelt, or refusing to remain seated. It may endanger the safety and wellbeing of other people.

110. Schools' behaviour policies should set out what the school will do in response to poor behaviour and bullying which occurs off the school premises and is witnessed by a staff member or reported to the school, including the sanctions that will be imposed on pupils.

111. Local authorities and schools should work together to:

- set clear expectations on seatbelt use;
- set high expectations for children's behaviour on school travel and ensure they are communicated clearly to **parents** and children;
- ensure arrangements are in place to report and manage incidents of unacceptable behaviour;
- work with operators to put in place measures to manage unacceptable behaviour where it occurs. Some local authorities have reported that interventions that have been successful include seating plans and 'bus prefects'.

112. Local authorities should ensure drivers and passenger assistants have received any training they need to manage children's behaviour while travelling.

113. An eligible child's travel arrangements should only be withdrawn as a last resort and, in these circumstances, the local authority should meet their duty in respect of the eligible child in an alternative way.

Managing behaviour that is part of a child's special educational needs or disability

114. A child's challenging behaviour may be part of their **special educational needs** or **disability** and they may use it as a way to communicate their needs, for example a child who exhibits challenging behaviour may be trying to communicate discomfort or distress. Local authorities should work with travel operators, schools and **parents** to find positive ways to manage this behaviour wherever possible.

115. **Parents** and schools may be able to help local authorities and travel operators understand the reasons for a child's challenging behaviour and the strategies that might be helpful in managing it. For example, a **parent** may be able to let the operator know that their child may shout and pull their hair because they find being stuck in traffic distressing, but that having a familiar toy can help to calm them. The Association of Transport Co-ordinating Officers (ATCO), in conjunction with the Department for Education and the Department for Transport, has published guidance which shares good practice in managing behaviour that is linked to child's **special educational needs** or **disability**²¹.

Child U is twelve years old, has **special educational needs** and is eligible for free travel. They have recently moved to a new school. Having travelled quite happily in a taxi to their original school, they become distressed when travelling in a minibus to their new school. Their **special educational needs** mean they are unable to explain why they are distressed. The driver works with Child U's **parent** to resolve the issue. They identify that Child U's distress is caused by having the radio on during journeys. The driver agrees to keep the radio switched off whilst Child U is travelling.

116. Some children may find change distressing and benefit from having consistency in their travel arrangements wherever possible. Where a change to travel arrangements is planned, time to get used to the idea of a new route or vehicle, or an opportunity to meet a new driver or passenger assistant, may be helpful.

²¹ [Alternatives to Seatbelt Buckle Guards Good Practice Guide for Local Authorities](#)

Child V is 4 years old and has ***special educational needs***. They are about to begin school for the first time and will be eligible for free travel. They can become very distressed in unfamiliar situations. The local authority arranges for their driver and passenger assistant to visit Child V's ***home*** to meet them before the start of term. This gives Child V the opportunity to familiarise themselves with the vehicle and sit in the seat they will use on the journey to school.

It also gives the driver the opportunity to let the ***parent*** know that two children will already be on the vehicle when it comes to collect Child V and that it will collect one further child after Child V. This enables the ***parent*** to talk to Child V to prepare them for what will happen on the journey to school. The ***parent*** is also able to let the passenger assistant know about some strategies they have found useful when Child V has become distressed when travelling.

Part 4: local school travel policies

117. Local authorities must:

- publish their school travel policy for children of **compulsory school age**²² on their website;
- make paper copies available on request;
- include information about their school travel policy in their composite prospectus for school admissions (which must be published by **12 September** each year);
- include information about travel to school for children with **special educational needs** and **disabilities** in their **SEND Local Offer**.

118. Local authorities should keep their school travel policy under regular review to ensure it continues to meet local needs and comply with statutory requirements. An up-to-date policy must be available by **19 September** each year so that **parents** may take it into account when deciding which schools to apply for during the **normal admissions round**.

119. An effective school travel policy will:

- be easy for **parents** to find on the local authority's website;
- be clearly written so that **parents** may easily understand it – local authorities should pay careful attention to the wording, layout and length of their school travel policies;
- enable **parents** to understand the circumstances in which a child is eligible for free travel to school, or any help the local authority provides using its discretionary power;
- tell **parents** how and when they should apply for free travel to school (or apply for help the local authority provides using its discretionary power);
- tell **parents** how they may appeal against the local authority's decision in relation to travel to school for their child.

120. A checklist of the necessary components of a school travel policy can be found in annex 5. Local authorities may find this helpful in ensuring their policies are lawful.

²² This is required by regulation 8 and 9 of the [School Information \(England\) Regulations 2008](#), and paragraphs 10 and 11 of schedule 3 to those regulations. In addition, regulation 5 and paragraphs 5 and 6 of schedule 2 to these regulations require local authorities to include information about their school travel policy in their composite prospectus for school admissions.

121. Local authorities may, if they wish, set their school travel policy out in more than one document but they should ensure that a reader of any of the documents is able to easily understand the basic provisions of the whole policy.

122. School travel policies may signpost **parents** of children who are not eligible for home-to-school travel to other sources of information about travel to school – for example, the websites of local travel providers.

School travel and school admissions

123. **Parents** should consider how their children will get to school at the time they are choosing which schools to apply for. For some, the availability of free travel to school may be an important factor in their decision making. Information about travel to school should, therefore, be easily available to **parents** during the **normal admissions round**.

124. **Parents** will need to easily understand:

- how they can find out which school is their nearest suitable school for school travel purposes, including where this may not be the same as the nearest school for admissions purposes; and
- whether the local authority expects **parents** to include their nearest suitable school in their application for a school place if they intend to apply for free travel (see paragraphs 42 to 46 for more information on this).

Policy changes

125. Where they propose changes to their school travel policy which may affect children's eligibility for transport, local authorities should consult locally. As a minimum, this should include consulting:

- schools whose pupils will be affected by the proposed changes, including those located in other local authority areas;
- **parents** whose children will (or may) be affected by the proposed changes, including those whose children attend school in a neighbouring authority, and those whose children may be affected in the future – for example, because they live in the catchment area of, or attend the feeder school of, a school affected by the proposed changes; and
- the local **Parent Carer Forum**.

126. Consultation should last for at least 28 working days during term time. Local authorities may not consider it necessary to consult on minor amendments or corrections.

127. Local authorities should give careful consideration to:

- the impact proposed changes to their policy will have on **parents'** choice of school, particularly where travel arrangements have been made to support **parents'** preference for their children to attend a school with a **designated religious character** (some such arrangements are associated with long-standing local agreements about the siting of schools);
- the financial impact the changes will have on affected families, paying particular attention to the potential impact of any changes on children from low-income families;
- the impact the changes will have on people with protected characteristics – see annex 2 for further information about protected characteristics and the public sector equality duty.

128. Wherever possible, local authorities should phase in changes so that children who begin attending a school under one set of travel arrangements continue to benefit from those arrangements until they leave that school.

Part 5: appeals

129. All local authorities have a procedure for handling complaints about the services they provide. **Parents** should be able to complain about the service they have received in relation to travel to school. They should also be able to appeal a decision taken by the local authority about their child's travel to school.

130. It is for local authorities to determine which matters should be handled as complaints and which should be handled as appeals. Typically, matters such as whether a child is eligible for free travel, or whether the travel the local authority has arranged is suitable for the child's needs will be handled as appeals. Matters such as the punctuality of a school bus, or a delay in replying to correspondence from a **parent** will be handled as complaints. The guidance in this part relates to appeals.

131. An effective appeals policy will:

- be easy for **parents** to find on the local authority's website;
- be clearly written so that **parents** may easily understand it;
- tell **parents** the circumstances in which they may appeal the local authority's decision;
- tell **parents** how and when they may appeal.

132. It is for local authorities to determine how their appeals process will operate. We recommend they adopt the two-stage process set out below. It will be similar to many local authority complaints procedures. The timings are recommended, not mandatory. Some appeals may be dealt with more quickly. Some complex cases may take longer but should still be completed as soon as possible. A flow chart setting out the suggested appeals process is included in annex 6.

Stage one: review by a senior officer

133. Stage one provides an opportunity for the local authority's school travel team to review their decision. The process should allow a **parent** 20 working days from the day they received the local authority's school travel decision to submit a written appeal. This should explain why the **parent** believes the local authority should review its decision and include any information they would like to be considered as part of the review.

134. A senior officer in the local authority's school travel team (or in the team's line management chain), should review the decision in light of the information provided by the **parent**. Some local authorities arrange for the review to be conducted by a panel of senior officers, rather than an individual, but this is not mandatory.

135. Within 20 working days of receiving a **parent's** appeal, the senior officer(s) should notify the **parent** in writing of the outcome of the appeal. They should clearly explain:

- whether they have upheld the local authority's original decision;
- why they reached that decision;
- how the review was conducted;
- the factors considered in reaching their decision;
- any other agencies or departments that were consulted as part of the review.

136. Where they have upheld the original decision, they should also explain how the **parent** may escalate their appeal to stage two of the process.

Stage two: review by an independent appeal panel

137. Stage two provides for impartial re-consideration of the case. The process should allow a **parent** 20 working days from the day they received the outcome of stage one to notify the local authority in writing that they wish to escalate the matter to stage two, and to provide any additional information that they wish to be considered in light of the stage one decision.

138. The local authority should make arrangements for an independent panel to review the case. The panel members should be independent of the original decision-making process but need not be independent of the local authority. They should have the knowledge, skills and experience to ensure that the local authority complies with its statutory duties, that a balance is achieved between meeting the needs of **parents** and of the local authority, and that children are not placed at unnecessary risk.

139. The local authority should enable any **parent** that wishes to, to attend an appeal hearing, virtually or in person, to present their case. Where a **parent** does not wish or is unable to attend a hearing, the panel should make its decision based on the **parent's** written representations.

140. The review should take place within 40 working days of the **parent** notifying the local authority that they wish to escalate their appeal to stage 2. The panel should consider information provided at stage one of the appeal as well as any additional information provided and any oral representations made at stage two.

141. Within 5 working days of completing its considerations, the appeal panel should notify the **parent** in writing of the outcome of their review. They should clearly explain:

- whether they have upheld the local authority's original decision;
- why they reached that decision;
- how the review was conducted;
- the factors considered in reaching their decision;
- which other agencies or departments were consulted as part of the review, if any.

142. The local authority should make the **parent** aware that they may complain to the [Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman](#) if they believe the local authority has made a mistake in the way it has handled their case. If a **parent** considers the decision of the independent appeals panel to be flawed on public law grounds, they may apply for a judicial review.

Part 6: sustainable school travel

Local authorities have a duty to promote the use of sustainable travel on journeys to and from places of education in their area²³. Sustainable travel in this context is that which may improve:

- the physical wellbeing of users, and/or
- the environmental wellbeing of all or part of the local authority's area.²⁴

Sustainable travel benefits children and everyone around them by helping people keep healthy, improving mental wellbeing, easing congestion and reducing toxins in the air.

In this guidance, 'sustainable travel' includes:

- public transport and shared transport'
- active travel – **walking**, **wheeling**, cycling and scooting.

Support is available to local authorities through organisations and initiatives such as:

- Modeshift STARS;
- Bikeability;
- Living Streets; and
- School Streets.

These are supported by the Department for Transport and Active Travel England. Further information can be found in annex 2.

143. The duty to promote the use of sustainable travel applies in relation to travel to and from:

- schools;
- further education institutions;
- 16 to 19 Academies;

²³ This duty is set out in section [508A \(1\) \(c\) of the Education Act 1996](#).

²⁴ This definition is set out in section [508A \(3\) of the Education Act 1996](#).

- any place where children and young people receive education by virtue of arrangements made in accordance with [section 19 \(1\) of the Education Act 1996](#)²⁵.

144. This duty applies to young people of sixth form age as well as children of **compulsory school age** and is also covered in the [statutory guidance for local authorities on travel for post-16 students](#).

145. Local authorities must:

- **assess** the school travel needs of children of **compulsory school age** and persons of sixth form age resident in their areas (paragraphs 146 to 147);
- **assess** the facilities and services for sustainable modes of travel to, from and within their area (paragraphs 148 to 150);
- **promote** the use of sustainable travel to places of education in their area; and
- **publish** a document which sets out their strategy to promote the use of sustainable travel to places of education in their area (paragraphs 151 to 155).

Assessing school travel needs

146. The school travel needs of a local authority's area relate to journeys to and from places of education undertaken by children and young people who are:

- resident in the local authority's area, or
- live outside the local authority's area but travel to a place of education in the area.

147. Local authorities should consider any information provided by schools and colleges when assessing school travel needs. Where schools have travel plans, these will include information that will be useful to the local authority.

²⁵ Section 19 (1) of the Education Act 1996 requires local authorities to make arrangements for the provision of suitable education for children of **compulsory school age** who would otherwise not receive suitable education for reasons such as illness or exclusion.

The Modeshift STARS Education system gathers much of the data that local authorities need to fulfil the sustainable school travel duty. Each participating school:

- provides data on how their pupils travel to school;
- conducts an audit of their sustainable travel and travel infrastructure; and
- provides details on the number and type of sustainable travel initiatives that they deliver.

School A is a Modeshift STARS Primary School of the Year. This recognises their excellence in growing the amount of sustainable travel to their school. The school is situated in an area of high deprivation; they knew some of their pupils may not have access to cycles and chose to concentrate on promoting the benefits of **walking** through **walking** programmes and Park and Stride points. The school also worked with other local schools to purchase a fleet of cycles to share amongst pupils and secured funding to run a community cycling hub.

Assessing facilities and services to support sustainable school travel

148. The assessment should show how places of education are served by:

- bus and other public transport routes;
- school travel arranged by the local authority, and any that may be provided by education settings;
- safe and accessible **walking** and cycling routes including footways, footpaths, off-road cycle tracks and bridleways;
- road safety and accessibility features such as crossing points and patrols, dropped kerbs, traffic calming measures and speed limits;
- arrangements such as:
 - cycle training;
 - road safety training;
 - independent travel training;
 - **walking** promotion schemes;
 - car sharing schemes;
 - park and stride/ride schemes;
 - cycle and scooter parking.

149. It should also take account of other factors that may influence travel choices, such as:

- the quality of the facilities and services and their suitability for the age and ability of the children they serve;
- perceptions of personal safety which may be influenced by factors such as:
 - volume of traffic, speed limits and parking around school gates;
 - behaviour on school travel, public transport and the **walked** route to school;
- the travel needs of children with **special educational needs, disabilities or mobility problems** and whether they would benefit from independent travel training (see paragraphs 55 to 60 for more information about independent travel training).

150. Where schools have travel plans, they may help local authorities understand any specific local issues, the views of schools and the perceptions of pupils and **parents**.

Local authorities may wonder what they can do to promote active travel for children who live a long way from their school. Schemes such as 'Park and Stride' support all children to take part in active travel. Families park away from the school gates and **walk, wheel, cycle** or scoot the rest of the way. Advice on Park and Stride and other active travel initiatives for schools is available from Living Streets. Further information on Living Streets can be found in annex 3.

Sustainable modes of travel strategy

151. Local authorities must publish a sustainable modes of travel strategy for each **academic year**. The strategy should:

- set out the local authority's vision, objectives and work programme for:
 - improving the infrastructure for sustainable travel;
 - promoting sustainable travel to places of education;
- aim to provide:
 - health benefits for children and their families through active journeys, and
 - environmental improvements through reduced congestion and improved air quality.

152. Local authorities must:

- publish their strategy on their website;
- make paper copies available on request;
- include information about their strategy in their composite prospectus for school admissions.

153. Local authorities are not required to annually conduct a formal review of their sustainable modes of travel strategy, but they should keep it under regular review to

ensure it continues to meet local needs and comply with statutory requirements. The most up to date policy must be published by the **19 September** each year.

154. Local authorities may find it helpful to make links between their strategy and other local strategies such as the Local Transport Plan, and the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan.

155. Modeshift can provide guidance and support to help local authorities produce their strategy. Further information on Modeshift and links to other sources of information can be found in annex 3.

Annex 1: explanation of terms used in this guidance

academic year	Defined in the School Information (England) Regulations 2008 as a period commencing with 1st August and ending with the next 31st July.
belief	Defined by section 509AD (3) of the Education Act 1996 as any religious or philosophical belief. A reference to belief includes a reference to lack of belief.
compulsory school age	<p>Set out in section 8 of the Education Act 1996 and The Education (Start of Compulsory School Age) Order 1998.</p> <p>A child reaches compulsory school age on the prescribed day following their fifth birthday, or on their fifth birthday if it falls on a prescribed day. The prescribed days are 31 December, 31 March and 31 August.</p> <p>A child ceases to be of compulsory school age on the last Friday in June in the academic year in which they reach age 16.</p>
dedicated transport	Transport which exclusively carries children and young people to and from their place of education and cannot be boarded by members of the public.
designated religious character	Schools with a designated religious character are schools which are designated as such under section 69(3) of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 . They may deliver religious education and collective worship in accordance with the tenets of their faith. They may also prioritise admissions for pupils of their faith and recruit staff on the basis of their faith.
disability	Defined in section 6 of the Equality Act 2010 . A person has a disability if they have (a) a physical or mental impairment, and (b) that impairment has a substantial and long-term effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities. A chronic physical or mental health condition may constitute a disability. Not all disabilities are visible.

<p><i>Education Health and Care (EHC) plan</i></p>	<p>An Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan details the education, health and social care support that is to be provided to a child or young person who has special educational needs or a disability. It is drawn up by the local authority after an EHC needs assessment of the child or young person has determined that an EHC plan is necessary, and after consultation with relevant partner agencies.</p> <p>Home-to-school travel arrangements are not normally considered to be special educational provision. In exceptional cases travel arrangements may be deemed to constitute special educational provision because they fulfil an education or training function. In these circumstances the travel arrangements should be recorded in section F of the EHC plan.</p> <p>Travel costs can also be provided as part of a Personal Budget, where one is agreed and included in the EHC plan as part of the special educational provision. This should be recorded in section J of the plan.</p>
<p><i>home</i></p>	<p>The place where a child is habitually and normally resident. Local authorities should make clear in their school travel policies how they will determine a child's home address for the purposes of assessing their eligibility for travel, including in circumstances where their parents do not live together and the child spends part of the week with each parent. In these circumstances, there is no expectation that local authorities should provide travel to and from two separate addresses.</p>
<p><i>individual healthcare plans</i></p>	<p>Drawn up by schools in consultation with parents and relevant health professionals. They capture the key information and actions that are required to effectively support a child with medical needs in school. For more information about supporting children with medical needs in schools see Supporting pupils with medical conditions at school. This guidance suggests that schools may wish their policies on supporting pupils with medical conditions to refer to home-to-school travel.</p>
<p><i>licensing authority</i></p>	<p>Taxi and private hire operators and drivers must be licensed by a local licensing authority – usually a unitary authority or district council in a local area, but Transport for London is the licensing authority for all London boroughs.</p>

medical need	A health need that has the potential to put a child's safety or wellbeing at risk while travelling to and from school.
mobility problem	A physical impairment that impacts a child's ability to walk to school.
normal admissions round	The period during which parents apply for school places. The deadlines for applications are 31 October for secondary school places and 15 January for primary places. Places are offered to parents on National Offer Day. Secondary National Offer Day is 1 March, or the next working day. Primary National Offer Day is 16 April, or the next working day.
parent	References to parent in this document include birth parents, adoptive parents, foster parents, carers or legal guardians with parental responsibility.
parent carer forum	Voluntary organisations made up of parents and carers from a local area who have children with SEND. They work with local authorities, schools and other professionals to support the strategic participation of parents, carers and their families in local SEND policy service and delivery.
private hire vehicles (PHVs)	May carry up to 8 passengers and can only be pre-booked via a licensed private hire vehicle operator. See also the definition of taxi below.
religion	Section 509AD (3) of the Education Act 1996 defines religion as any religion. A reference to religion includes a reference to lack of religion. See also definition of belief above.
road route	A route passable by a motor vehicle.
safeguarding	Defined in Keeping Children Safe in Education as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • protecting children from maltreatment • preventing the impairment of their mental and physical health and development • ensuring they grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care • taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.
school day	Schools are responsible for deciding when their school day will start and end. The expectation is that local authorities will arrange

	<p>travel for eligible children to enable them to attend for the ‘normal’ school day.</p> <p>Schools should organise the school day and school week in the best interest of their pupil cohort. They are expected to act reasonably when making changes to their school day or week. It is unacceptable for them to shorten their day or week unless it is a direct action to enhance pupils’ education.</p>
selective school	A school that can select all or some of the children it admits by testing for aptitude or ability, for example a grammar school.
SEND Local Offer	Sets out, in one place, information about the provision local authorities expect to be available across education, health and social care for children and young people in their area who have SEN or are disabled, including those who do not have an EHC plan. Further information can be found in the Special education needs and disability code of practice: 0 – 25 Years .
special educational needs (SEN)	Defined in section 20 of the Children and Families Act 2014 . A child or young person has special educational needs if he or she has a learning difficulty or disability which calls for special educational provision to be made for him or her.
taxis	Also known as hackney carriages, black cabs and cabs. May carry up to 8 passengers. May be pre-booked or can be hired immediately by hailing on the street or at a rank. See also definition of private hire vehicle above.
walk	In this guidance walk has its literal meaning. A child could not be considered to be able to walk to school if they would need to travel in a wheelchair, but a local authority may decide, for example, that suitable travel arrangements for a child would be an assistant to push them in a wheelchair.
wheel	Refers to people who use wheelchairs and mobility scooters and may not identify with walking.

Annex 2: further information

Equalities legislation and home-to-school travel

Local authorities must comply with the [Equality Act 2010](#) and the [European Convention on Human Rights](#) (which is incorporated into UK law by the [Human Rights Act 1998](#)) when exercising their school travel functions.

The Equality Act 2010

The Equality Act (the Act) prohibits a local authority from discriminating against someone on the grounds of a 'protected characteristic'. The protected characteristics are:

- age
- disability
- gender reassignment
- pregnancy and maternity
- race
- religion or belief
- sex
- sexual orientation

Through an exemption in Part 2 of Schedule 3 of the Act, the discrimination provisions on age and **religion** or **belief** do not extend to a local authority's school travel arrangements. So, for example, a local authority would not be unlawfully discriminating on **religion** or **belief** grounds if it arranged a school bus to a school with a **designated religious character** but not to another school in the area.

The Act also places a legal obligation on local authorities to comply with the public sector equality duty. This means they must consider how their school travel decisions and policies affect people with protected characteristics, and must have due regard to the need to:

- eliminate discrimination against people with protected characteristics;
- promote equality of opportunity between people who have a protected characteristic and those who do not;
- foster good relations between people who have a protected characteristic and those who do not.

The European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR)

Article 2 of Protocol 1 of the ECHR gives **parents** the right to have their children educated in accordance with their religious and other views.

In addition, section 509AD of the Education Act 1996 requires local authorities to have regard to any wish of a **parent** to have their child educated at a school based on their **religion** or **belief** when exercising their school travel duties.

This does not mean that **parents** have a specific right to have their children educated at such a school, or to have travel arrangements made by their local authority to and from any such school.

Local authorities should, nonetheless, have regard to the provisions of the ECHR and section 509AD when considering any request made by a **parent** for travel assistance to a school they have selected on the grounds of their **religion** or **belief**.

They should not, for example, have a blanket policy that they never provide travel assistance to schools with a **designated religious character**. Should they receive a request from a **parent** for travel to such a school, they should consider whether it would be appropriate to exercise their discretionary power.

Parent's responsibility to ensure their child receives education

[Section 7 of the Education Act 1996](#) requires **parents** to ensure their children of **compulsory school age** receive a suitable full-time education. If a child of **compulsory school age** is registered at school but fails to attend school regularly, their **parents** may be guilty of an offence and can be prosecuted by the local authority. Under [section 444 \(3B\) of the same act](#), **parents** will have a defence in law against such prosecution if the child is eligible for free travel to school and the local authority has failed to make home-to-school travel arrangements for them.

Children registered at more than one qualifying school

Some children may be registered at more than one qualifying school, for example if they attend a hospital school or a special school on temporary basis. Children of no fixed abode may be registered at more than one qualifying school because their **parent's** trade or business requires them to travel from place to place. This is known as dual registration. Children with **EHC plans** may have a 'dual placement' and attend more than one school²⁶.

The School Travel (Pupils with Dual Registration) (England) Regulations 2007 clarify a child's eligibility for free travel to school in these circumstances. Where a child is registered at two qualifying schools which are not pupil referral units, the local authority's duty to provide free travel to school applies to whichever of the schools the child is attending on any **school day** on which travel is required.

²⁶ See paragraph 9.85 of the [Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice: 0-25 Years](#).

Disclosure and Barring Service checks

A Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check is a check of a person's criminal record. There are 4 types of DBS check:

- a basic check which shows unspent convictions and unspent conditional cautions;
- a standard check which shows spent and unspent convictions, cautions, reprimands and final warnings;
- an enhanced check which shows the same as a standard check plus any information held by local police that is considered relevant;
- an enhanced check with a check of the relevant barred list, which shows the same as an enhanced check plus whether the applicant is on the barred list.

The DBS keeps two barred lists – one of people who have been barred from working in regulated activity with children, and one for people barred from working in regulated activity with adults.

People who carry out regulated activity are eligible for an enhanced check with a check of the relevant barred list. It is a criminal offence for a barred person to work in regulated activity and for an employer to knowingly employ a barred person to work in regulated activity.

'Driving a vehicle which is being used only for the purpose of conveying children and any person supervising or caring for the children'²⁷ is regulated activity if:

- the driver is doing it as part of their job – paid or otherwise²⁸, and
- it is carried out by the same person once a week or more often, or on more than 3 days in a 30-day period.

Dedicated school transport will almost always be regulated activity.

Taxis, private hire vehicles and public service vehicles

Taxi and **private hire vehicle** drivers must be licensed. **Licensing authorities** must not issue a licence to an applicant unless they are satisfied that they are a fit and proper person to hold such a licence, and they should revoke a licence if they consider a driver is no longer a fit and proper person. Each **licensing authority** decides on the requirements that applicants must meet for them to issue a licence.

All **licensing authorities** require an enhanced DBS check and most include a check of the children's and adults' barred lists. They may also require a medical check, a knowledge test and a driving test. Vehicles used as **taxis** and **private hire vehicles** are

²⁷ [Paragraph 2\(1\)\(f\) of Schedule 4 of the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006.](#)

²⁸ [Regulation 3 of The Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 \(Miscellaneous Provisions\) Regulations 2009.](#)

usually required to pass an annual MOT test²⁹. They must also be inspected and licensed by a **licensing authority**. The **licensing authority** may set additional requirements, for example around roadworthiness, comfort and cleanliness, and safety and security.

Operators of buses and coaches must have a public service vehicles operator's licence issued by the [Traffic Commissioners](#). Vehicles must have an annual MOT test and operators are required to keep them in a roadworthy condition. They may be inspected by the Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA). If local authorities have any concerns about a bus or coach operator, they can [report it directly to DVSA](#).

Professional bus and coach drivers are required to hold a Driver's Certificate of Professional Competence. This requires them to undertake 35 hours of approved training every five years. Training providers offer a range of courses from a set syllabus. No specific part of the syllabus is mandatory. The [syllabus](#) includes, amongst other things:

- ability to assess emergency situations;
- ability to anticipate, assess and adapt to risks in traffic;
- ability to ensure passenger comfort and safety.

Organisations that provide transport on a 'not-for-profit' basis can apply for permits under section 19 or section 22 of the Transport Act 1985. These permits allow the holder to operate transport services for hire or reward without the need for a full public service vehicle operator's (PSV 'O') licence. Further information is available from the [Department for Transport](#).

Seatbelts and standing passengers

All minibuses, coaches and buses – except for buses designed for urban use with standing passengers – must be fitted with seatbelts. This means that many vehicles used for travel to school will have seatbelts fitted.

Buses designed for urban use with standing passengers (the types of bus typically used as public service buses) do not have seatbelts fitted and may also be used for travel to school.

Local authorities and schools that choose to arrange home-to-school travel for their pupils may, if they wish, specify in their contracts with school travel providers that they will only accept vehicles fitted with seat belts. In deciding whether to do so, they will need to consider factors such as:

²⁹ Legislation that exempts new vehicles from the MOT test applies to PHVs but not taxis.

- the speed at which the vehicle will be travelling, and at which other vehicles on the same route may be travelling;
- the likelihood of an accident happening on the route the vehicle will be travelling (local authorities may find road accident statistics helpful);
- the cost and availability of suitable vehicles fitted with seat belts.

It is also important to note that:

- although primarily designed for use on urban routes, public service buses are also widely used to provide public bus services in rural areas;
- public service buses are generally a very safe mode of travel with a very low casualty rate.

[The Public Service Vehicles \(Carrying Capacity\) Regulations 1984](#) provide that three children under the age of 14 may count as two passengers when travelling on a service bus and occupying seats which do not have seatbelts fitted (for example, on a service bus they may occupy a bench seat designed for two adults). Few of this type of vehicle are now in service. Local authorities should only make use of this concession on an exceptional basis.

Public Service Vehicles Accessibility Regulations (PSVAR)

The Government's vision is for disabled people to have the same access to transport as everyone else³⁰. The [Public Service Vehicles Accessibility Regulations 2000](#) (PSVAR) require buses and coaches with more than 22 seats, used on local or scheduled services (including home-to-school journeys) that carry at least one fare-paying passenger to have features which enable disabled people to board, alight and travel in comfort and safety.

When commissioning home-to-school services that are in scope of PSVAR, local authorities should procure compliant vehicles where possible, but may procure non-compliant vehicles where necessary if they are covered by medium-term exemptions.

Medium-term exemptions are valid from 1 July 2022 until 31 July 2026. These are qualified exemptions that require operators to take specific steps to make their fleet progressively more compliant. Further information is available at [Apply for an exemption from PSVAR accessibility regulations for home to school or rail replacement services](#).

The Government has committed to review PSVAR by the end of 2023.

³⁰ More information is available in the [2018 Inclusive Transport Strategy](#).

Annex 3: additional resources

Assessment of Walked Routes to Schools Guidelines	Produced by Road Safety GB (a road safety organisation made up of representatives from groups across the UK, including local authority road safety teams) to provide advice to local authorities on assessing the risk posed to pedestrians by traffic.
DBS checks	DBS checks: detailed guidance
Behaviour in Schools	Behaviour in schools
Statutory taxi and private hire vehicle standards	Statutory taxi and private hire vehicle standards Taxi and private hire vehicle licensing: best practice
LGA safeguarding guidance	School transport guidance note Local Government Association Provides guidance on the role of local authorities and licensing authorities with regard to safeguarding and taxi and private hire vehicles used for travel to school.
Climate change: a strategy for education and children's services	Sustainability and climate change strategy Includes the Department for Education's commitment to support the Department for Transport in increasing active travel to school.
Active Travel England	Active Travel England The Government's executive agency responsible for making walking, wheeling and cycling the preferred choice for everyone to get around in England.
The second Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy	The second cycling and walking investment strategy Sets out the Government's ambition for walking and cycling until 2025. Includes an objective to increase the percentage of children aged 5 to 10 who usually walk to school from 49% to 55% in 2025.
Planning local cycling and walking networks	Planning local cycling and walking networks Guidance and tools to help local authorities plan cycling and walking infrastructure.

The Healthy Schools Rating Scheme	Healthy schools rating scheme A voluntary scheme for schools that recognises and encourages their contribution to supporting pupils' health and wellbeing. Includes active travel to school.
Bikeability	Cycle Training for Everyone – Deliver Safer Training Bikeability Department for Transport's flagship national cycle training programme aimed at children, young people and families in England.
British Cycling	Home – British Cycling National governing body for cycling. Can provide advice on cycling to school and cycle training.
Cycling UK	Cycling UK The UK's cycling charity Enabling and inspiring more people to cycle more often, including to school.
Modeshift	Modeshift – Sustainable Travel – UK's leading sustainable travel organisation Membership organisation that shares best practice in the delivery of sustainable travel. Over 100 local authorities are members. Modeshift STARS – Travel Plan in Education, Business & Communities The Modeshift STARS Education scheme supports schools and local authorities to develop and monitor school travel plans and provides a tool for local authorities to assess the sustainable travel and transport infrastructure in their areas and the school travel needs of pupils.
Sustrans	Home – Sustrans.org.uk Sustainable transport charity that provides a range of advice and support to enable children to walk, wheel and cycle to school safely.
Living Streets	Living Streets

	Charity for everyday walking. Runs the annual WOW Walk to School challenge and offers resources and support to schools and local authorities.
Armed Forces Covenant Duty	Armed Forces Covenant Duty Places a legal obligation on local authorities to have due regard to the Covenant principles when exercising certain functions, including their home-to-school travel functions.
Driving school minibuses	Driving school minibuses advice Advice on when a school employee with a car driving licence may drive a minibus.
Length of the school week: minimum expectation	Length of the school week: minimum expectation The Government has set the expectation that all state-funded mainstream schools will deliver a school week of at least 32.5 hours by September 2023.
REAL disability equality training	REAL training: bus and coach modules Training to improve confidence and skills in delivering inclusive journeys for disabled passengers.
Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice: 0 to 25 years	SEND code of practice: 0 to 25 years
SEND and alternative provision improvement plan	SEND and alternative provision improvement plan
THINK! - the government's road safety campaign	Education resources – THINK! Advice for road users – THINK!
Travel to education and training for	Transport to education and training for people aged 16 and over

young people aged 16 and over	
Trust quality descriptions	Commissioning high-quality trusts
Alternatives to Seatbelt Buckle Guards: Good Practice Guide for Local Authorities	Alternatives to Seatbelt Buckle Guards Good Practice Guide for Local Authorities Guidance from the Association of Transport Co-ordinating Officers (ATCO) on minimising the use of buckle guards. Includes good practice in managing behaviour that is linked to child's special educational needs or disability.

Education Act 1996	
Section 7	Duty of parents to secure education of children of compulsory school age
Section 19 (1)	Provision of education in pupil referral units
Section 444 (3)	Offence: failure to secure regular attendance at school of registered pupil
Section 508A	Duty to promote sustainable modes of travel
Section 508B	Travel arrangements for eligible children
Section 508C	Travel arrangements for other children
Section 508D	Secretary of State's duty to issue guidance in relation to sections 508B and 508C
Section 509AD	Duty to have regard to religion or belief in exercise of travel functions
Schedule 35B	Meaning of eligible child
Other relevant legislation	

[The Public Service Vehicles Accessibility Regulations 2000](#)

[The School Travel \(Pupils with Dual Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2007](#)

[School Information \(England\) Regulations 2008](#)

Annex 4: questions local authorities may find helpful when reviewing their policies and procedures

Transparency

- Is the school travel policy easy for parents to find and understand?
- Is it available to parents at the point they are choosing which schools to apply for?
- Is it easy for parents to find out which is their nearest suitable school?
- Is it easy for parents to find out how and when to apply for travel, and when they can expect to receive a response?
- Is it easy for parents to find out how to appeal the local authority's decision, or complain about their service?
- If a parent's application is refused, or their appeal is unsuccessful, are the reasons communicated to them clearly?
- If the local authority is unable to comply with expected timescales, does it let parents know and explain why?

Fairness

- Does the local authority always follow its published procedures when handling applications, appeals and complaints?
- Does the authority consider all relevant information when making decisions in response to applications, appeals and complaints? Are irrelevant considerations ignored and assumptions avoided?
- Does the authority keep an open mind when considering applications, appeals and complaints?
- At appeal, are parents given sufficient opportunity to make their case? Are they able to attend an appeal hearing, virtually or in person, at stage 2 if they wish to?
- Does the local authority keep a clear and accurate record of the information it considered during an appeal, the decision that it reached and the reasons for that decision?

Annex 5: home-to-school travel policy checklist

A local authority school travel policy needs to contain a number of elements to be considered lawful. There are other elements a school travel policy should include to ensure it is clear and easy for parents to understand. The main elements are listed below, but this is not an exhaustive list. Authorities may add elements they consider necessary, provided they are lawful.

- The policy includes a clear introduction explaining what the reader can expect to learn from the document.
- The policy clearly explains all four categories of eligible children (statutory walking distances; special educational needs, disability and mobility problems; unsafe walking routes; and extended rights).
- Where a local authority has a separate policy document for a category of eligibility (for example, special educational needs) they should refer to this in the main policy so parents reading one document may easily understand all the categories of eligibility.
- The policy includes information on how a parent can apply for travel to school.
- The policy clearly explains terms such as 'home address' and 'nearest suitable school'. It explains how, in instances of dual living arrangements such as equal shared custody for separated parents, the local authority determines the child's home.
- Where appropriate, the policy explains that a child's nearest school for school travel purposes may not be their nearest suitable school for admissions purposes.
- The policy clearly explains how a child's eligibility will be assessed. This includes how distances will be measured and how route safety is assessed.
- The policy clearly explains that the eligibility of children with special educational needs, a disability or mobility problems will be assessed on an individual basis.
- The policy clearly explains the ways in which travel is provided, for example, passes for public service buses, dedicated school buses, taxis.
- The policy clearly explains any other arrangements that are in place for children who are not eligible for free home-to-school travel, such as spare seat schemes, and any charges that may be made for these.

The policy clearly explains how a parent may appeal the local authority's decision in response to their application for travel to school.

Annex 6: flowchart of the suggested appeals process

Officer A declines a parent's school travel application or offers travel arrangements that a parent considers unsuitable.



Within 20 working days of receiving Officer A's decision, the parent submits their written appeal.



Stage one: review by a senior officer

Within 20 working days of receiving the parent's request, Officer B (a senior officer) reviews Officer A's decision and notifies the parent in writing of the outcome.



Within 20 working days of receiving Officer B's decision, the parent submits written notification that they wish to escalate the matter to stage 2.



Stage two: review by an independent appeal panel

Within 40 days of receiving the parent's notification, an independent appeal panel considers written/oral representations from the parent, Officer A and Officer B, and reaches a decision.



Within 5 working days of reaching their decision, the independent appeal panel notifies the parent in writing.



A parent may make a complaint to the LGSCO if they feel the local authority has made a mistake in the way it has handled their case; or may request a judicial review if they believe the decision to refuse travel is flawed on public law grounds.



Department
for Education

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Appendix C

Proposed:

Home to School Travel Policy - for children from Reception to Year 11

July 2024

Implementation date: 1st September 2024

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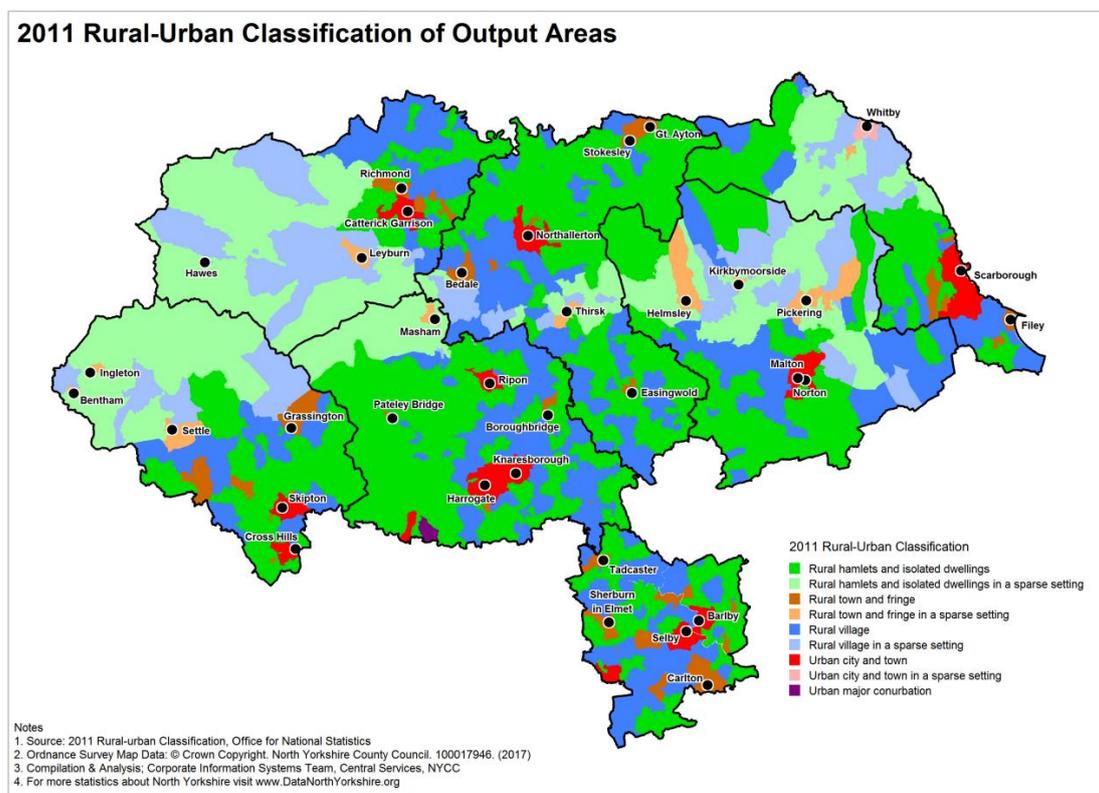
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Appendix

Background

North Yorkshire Council is responsible for setting a Home to School Travel Policy which ensures the equitable provision of transport to those who qualify under the Council's statutory duties and to explain when discretionary transport provision might be available.

North Yorkshire is England's largest county, stretching from the North Sea coast to within 12 miles of Morecambe Bay and from the South of the M62 to the edge of Teesside. It is sparsely populated with some 600,000 people across 3,300 square miles; with 40% of the area being within either the North Yorkshire Moors or the Yorkshire Dales National Parks and over half the population living in areas classed as "sparse" or "super sparse". Around 20% of the population live in the two major urban centres – Harrogate and Scarborough.



There are approximately 125,000 children and young people aged 0-19 in the county, of those 79,000 are of school age, including 4,800 in post-16 education. There are 43 secondary schools (including a University Technical College), 296 primary schools and 10 special schools. North Yorkshire Council transports approximately 10,000 pupils per day to school or college.

About this Policy

North Yorkshire Home to School travel policy is based on the Education Act 1996 and the statutory guidance from the Department for Education, published in June 2023 (revised January 2024).

The policy is for children and young people, parents, schools, and other professionals to inform them how North Yorkshire Council (the Council) has implemented the statutory guidance, when carrying out its duties in relation to:

- arrangements for travel to school for children of compulsory school age;
- the promotion of sustainable travel to school

There is separate guidance on travel to post-16 education and training. This is published on the North Yorkshire Council website on or before 31st May each year.

This policy applies to residents of North Yorkshire only.

Review date:

This guidance will be kept under review and updated when necessary.

Minor changes will be published alongside the guidance as an amendment to policy.

Major changes will be consulted upon, and the policy amended to reflect this.

What legislation does this policy adhere to?

This policy has regard to the duties placed on Local Authorities in relation to the following legislation governing travel to school for children of compulsory school age, in particular:

- section 508A of the Education Act 1996: sustainable travel to school;
- section 508B of and Schedule 35B to the Education Act 1996: travel arrangements for eligible children;
- section 508C of the Education Act 1996: travel arrangements for other children;
 - Section 509A of the Education Act 1997; travel arrangements for children attending early years settings
- Equality Act 2010
- Chronically Sick & Disabled Persons Act 1970
- the School Information (England) Regulations 2008: publication of informal arrangements.

Section A: Eligibility

1. Eligible Children

The Council must make free-of-charge travel arrangements to facilitate the attendance at school of eligible children resident in North Yorkshire.

A child is eligible if they are of

A: compulsory school age (term after the 5th birthday to 30th June in year 11)

and:

B: attend their nearest suitable school to their home address

and:

- live more than the statutory walking distance from that school (section 3), **or**
- could not reasonably be expected to walk to that school because of their special educational needs, disability, or mobility problem, even if they were accompanied by an appropriate adult (section 4), **or**
- would not be able to walk to that school in reasonable safety, even if they were accompanied by an appropriate adult (section 5).

There are 'extended rights' to free travel to school for children from low-income households (section 6)

As a discretionary element the Council will extend the eligibility age from the start of Reception year instead of the term after the child's 5th Birthday or in some circumstances to include children attending Early Year settings.

In most cases, a child's eligibility for free school travel will be assessed following the normal school admissions round once parents have been offered a place for their child to begin primary school, or transfer to secondary school.

In some cases, eligibility will need to be assessed at other times of the school year, for example due to a family moving house.

It is parents' responsibility to inform the Council of any changes in their circumstances which may affect their eligibility for travel assistance.

Eligibility will normally be calculated using the home address provided at the time of application for a school place or following a change of circumstances.

In line with DfE (Department for Education) guidance, transport will only be assessed and, if eligible, provided from one home address.

2. Suitable School

A suitable school for the purpose of applying this policy is a 'qualifying school' that is suitable for the child's age, ability, aptitude, and any special educational needs they may have.

It should also be suitable for the child's sex, for example a girls' school could not be considered the nearest suitable school for a boy.

'Suitable school' does not mean the most suitable school for a child, or one that the parent considers suitable. The nearest secondary school to the home of a child of secondary school age, for example, will almost always be their nearest suitable school (provided it would be able to admit them).

A nearest suitable school may also be in a neighbouring Local Authority.

Qualifying schools are:

- community schools, foundation schools, voluntary aided and voluntary controlled schools;
- academies (including those which are free schools, university technical colleges, studio schools and special schools);
- alternative provision academies;
- community or foundation special schools;
- non-maintained special schools;
- pupil referral units;
- maintained nursery schools (where attended by a child of compulsory school age);
- children receiving early years provision otherwise than at school and
- city technology colleges and city colleges for the technology of the arts.

For children with special educational needs, an independent school is also a qualifying school if it is the only school named in their Education, Health, and Care plan (EHCP), or where more than one school is named in the EHCP, the school nearest to the home address named in the EHCP will be the qualifying school.

Where a child's nearest school is oversubscribed and an application has been made for the school during the normal admissions round, and the admission authority is unable to offer them a place, then the next nearest school with places available is their nearest suitable school for school travel purposes.

When a child moves into the area, outside the normal admissions round, the suitable school for transport purposes is the nearest provision which can offer a school place. The eligibility criteria will then be applied.

Where a child changes preference of school during the school year, eligibility will be assessed based on the ability to secure a place at their nearest qualifying school.

The nearest qualifying school for school travel purposes **may not** be the catchment school used for admissions purposes.

3. Statutory Walking Distances

Statutory walking distances are used to determine whether a child is eligible for free travel to school.

Where a child lives within the statutory walking distance (and is not eligible for free travel on any of the other grounds set out in this guidance) the parent is responsible for arranging their child's travel to and from school. There is no expectation that the child will walk, it is for the parent to determine what arrangements would be suitable for their child.

A child under the age of 8 is eligible for free travel to their nearest suitable school

- if it is more than 2 miles from their home.

A child aged 8 years or over is eligible for free travel to their nearest suitable school

- if it is more than 3 miles from their home.

As a discretionary element the Council will extend the 2 miles statutory walking distance to the end of the academic year (year 3) instead of the child's 8th birthday.

The Council assesses whether the distance between a child's home and their nearest suitable school is further than the statutory walking distance. The assessed route will be the shortest route along which a child, accompanied as necessary, may walk in reasonable safety.

When deciding on eligibility for assistance with transport, the measurement from home to school will be taken from the fixed point within the property to the nearest entrance point (not always the main entrance) to the school following the nearest available walked route, as defined by the Council's Geographical Information System (GIS).

The distance is not the shortest distance by road and the route may include footpaths, public rights of way, bridleways, and other pathways as identified on the GIS.

This means that in some cases all pupils living in the same street or even in adjoining properties may not be eligible for free home to school transport.

Eligibility on the grounds of statutory walking distance will be calculated on the home address provided at the time of application for a school place or following a change of circumstances.

4. Special Educational Needs, and/or Disability

A child is eligible for free travel to school if:

- they attend their nearest suitable school, and
- it is within the statutory walking distance of their home, and
- they could not reasonably be expected to walk there because of their special educational needs, disability, or mobility problem, even if they were accompanied by an appropriate adult

To be eligible on these grounds, a child does not need to:

- have an Education Health and Care plan (EHC plan); or
- have travel to school specified in their EHC plan if they have one; or
- attend a special school; or
- live beyond the statutory walking distance.

Not every child with an EHC plan or who attends a special school will be eligible for free travel to school.

To qualify for eligibility on the grounds of special educational needs, disability or mobility problems, the Council is required to complete an individual assessment of the child, and this will take into account the child's physical ability to walk to school, and any health and safety issues related to their special educational needs, disability, or mobility problems.

The Council may take into account whether the child would be able to walk to school if they were accompanied by an appropriate adult. The Council will consider each case on its facts.

Information the Council may consider when assessing a child's eligibility may include (but is not restricted to) the following;

- information provided by the parent;
- information provided by any professionals involved in the child's care;
- information provided by the child's school;
- any relevant information in the child's EHC plan if they have one;
- any relevant information in their individual healthcare plan if they have one.

Parents that wish to request an application to be considered on the ground of Special Education Needs/Disability will need to apply online (a link will be inserted when the policy is published). Paper copies will be available on request

5. Unsafe Walking Route

A child is eligible for free travel to school if they attend their nearest suitable school, it is within the statutory walking distance of their home, and

- the nature of the route means they could not be expected to walk there in reasonable safety even if accompanied by an appropriate adult, and
- there is no alternative route within the statutory walking distance that they would be able to walk in reasonable safety, even if accompanied by an appropriate adult.

When assessing whether a route can be walked in reasonable safety, the Council will consider the whole of the route. This will include, for example, any sections that use footpaths or bridleways, as well as sections that use roads.

The Council uses the 'Assessment of Walked Routes to Schools Guidelines,' published by Road Safety GB, which provides advice to local authorities on assessing the risk posed to pedestrians by traffic. These guidelines can form the basis of the assessment and are used in conjunction with local context and knowledge.

Where a child is assessed as not eligible to transport and the parent/carer believes the route to the nearest school is unsafe they can request for the route to be assessed, by making a request online (a link will be inserted when the policy is published)

6. Extended Rights (Low Income)

Extended rights are designed to support low-income families to exercise school choice. A child is eligible for free travel to school if they are eligible for free school meals or a parent with whom they live receives the maximum Working Tax Credit or Universal Credit equivalent and they are:

- aged 8 or over but under 11, attend their nearest suitable school and it is more than 2 miles from their home; or
- aged 11 to 16 years, and attend one of their three nearest suitable schools provided it is more than 2 miles but not more than 12 miles from their home; or
- aged 11 to 16 years, attend a school that is more than 2 but not more than 15 miles from their home that their parents have chosen on the grounds of their religion or belief if, having regard to that religion or belief, there is no suitable school nearer to their home.

When the Council assesses transport, for the purposes of extended rights, the first 2 miles will be the walking route. When assessing whether a child lives within the 6 or 15-mile upper limits, the Council will measure road routes only.

Where, during the course of an academic year, a child ceases to be eligible for free school meals, or their parent ceases to receive maximum Working Tax Credit, the Council will continue to provide free travel to school for the remainder of that academic year.

Working Tax Credit is being phased out as claimants are transferred onto Universal Credit. This does not change the way eligibility for extended rights to free travel to school is determined. It remains the case that children will be eligible for free home to school travel if they are eligible for free school meals or live with a parent who receives maximum Working Tax Credit. Once the roll out is complete, no further children will come forward who are eligible because their parents claim maximum Working Tax Credit.

Universal Credit: No child will cease to be eligible for extended rights because of the roll out of Universal Credit. Parents who claim maximum Working Tax Credit will have an earned income of no more than £7,400. This means their children will become eligible for free school meals (if they are not already) when they (the parent) are transferred to Universal Credit.

Where a child attends a North Yorkshire school and is in receipt of free school meals, the travel eligibility will, wherever possible, automatically be assessed under the criteria of extended rights. There are some limited circumstances where the parent may need to notify the Council of their free school meals status to enable that assessment to take place.

Where a child does not claim free school meals or is attending a school outside of North Yorkshire, please apply using the online form (a link will be inserted when the policy is published).

7. Further Information on Eligibility

Parental Preference

Parents have the right to preference any school of their choice when applying for a school place, they do not however have a right to free-of-charge travel arrangements to that school. Travel eligibility will be assessed in line with the eligibility criteria in this policy.

If the nearest school is undersubscribed with places available, then it will be the nearest suitable school for travel purposes, and free travel would not be provided to an alternative school that is further away.

If the nearest school is fully subscribed without places available, then the Council will need to assess if the child could have secured a place had one been applied for. This will be done by comparing the child with the last child to be offered a place at the school and determining which of them would have higher priority. This will often be a straightforward matter of determining which child lives closest to the school.

Transport to other education settings

A child may be eligible for free travel to a place that is not a qualifying school:

- where they receive education at a place other than a school by virtue of arrangements made by the Council under section 19 (1) of the Education Act 1996.

- where they are suspended (temporarily excluded) from a school (but remain a registered pupil of that school) and attend an educational establishment that is not a qualifying school and is not within the statutory walking distance of their home, then that educational establishment will be treated as if it were a qualifying school for the purposes of eligibility for free travel

Schools should collaborate with the Council when arranging educational provision for a child during a suspension where the pupil might be eligible for free travel to the place where they will be receiving education.

Travel assistance will not be provided to alternative provision and work experience, where the provision has been arranged by the school.

Discretionary Arrangements.

Discretionary transport is a Council decision to provide travel arrangements beyond the statutory requirements.

The Council provides discretionary travel arrangements in five areas

- Eligibility extended to cover children eligible for travel assistance who are starting in reception in September but are under statutory school age.
- Extend the 2 mile statutory walking distance to the end of year 3 instead of a child's 8th birthday.
- Post 16 provision – please refer to the post 16 policy statement for details.
- Paid travel permits – where there is capacity in existing dedicated transport services provided for eligible children, spare seats may be purchased by parents/carers- applications are made through the Council website.
- extend the eligibility for travel assistance for secondary age pupils from low income families to attend one of their three nearest suitable schools provided it is more than 2 miles but not more than 12 miles

Exceptional Circumstances

The eligibility criteria as outlined in this policy will apply to most situations; however, the Council also recognises that at times assistance may be required where the Council considers it necessary. This will be considered at the Council's discretion on a case-by-case basis. Any travel assistance awarded will normally be expected to be short-term.

Where a child is not eligible for travel assistance under the policy and requires consideration of travel assistance under exceptional circumstances parents will need to apply online in the first instance, or an alternative method upon request (a link will be inserted when the policy is published).

The Council does not usually consider matters such as parent's working patterns, the cost to the parent of transport, or where parents have children attending more than one school, to be exceptional circumstances, although will consider each case on a case by case basis.

Removal of Travel Assistance

Where a child has been awarded transport in error – the Council will provide 6 weeks' notice to the parent and transport will be removed.

Where a child's eligibility changes on the child's 8th Birthday, travel arrangements will be removed at the end of that academic year, under the Council's discretionary arrangements.

8. Accompaniment

A child will not normally be eligible for free travel to school on the grounds of their special educational needs, disability, or mobility problem, or on the grounds that the route is unsafe if they would be able to walk to school if they were accompanied.

Where the Council determines, following an individual assessment, that a child would be able to walk if they were accompanied, the general expectation is that the parent will accompany them or make other suitable arrangements for their journey to and from school.

A child will not normally be eligible solely because their parent's work commitments or caring responsibilities mean they are unable to accompany their child themselves although each case will be decided on the individual circumstances.

Consideration will be given where parents have a disability or mobility problem that would make it difficult for them to accompany their child. The Council will consider the parents' reasons for not being able to accompany their child or make other suitable arrangements and would require evidence of the parental disability as part of the application.

Reasons such as the parent's working pattern or the fact they have children attending more than one school, on their own, will not normally be considered good reasons for a parent being unable to accompany their child. These apply to many parents, and, in most circumstances, it is reasonable to expect the parent to make suitable arrangements to fulfil their various responsibilities (for example, their responsibilities as an employee and as a parent).

Where the Council have determined, following an assessment, that a child could not reasonably be expected to walk even if they were accompanied, they will be eligible for free home to school travel regardless of whether their parent would be able to accompany them or make other arrangements for their journey.

Section B: How travel assistance will be provided

9. Facilitating Attendance

The Council will make travel arrangements to enable a child to travel to school for the **beginning** of the school day, and to return home at the **end** of the school day.

There are no requirements to make arrangements:

- for children to travel between institutions during the school day; or
- to enable children to attend extra-curricular activities and other commitments outside school hours; or
- to enable children to get to and from before and after school childcare, whether formal (for example, a childminder) or informal (for example, a grandparent)

Where particular classes, year groups or pupils have a start or finish time that is different from most pupils at the school, it will not normally be possible for the Council to make separate travel arrangements. Schools may need to make alternative arrangements to accommodate these pupils.

There may be a small number of circumstances in which the Council considers it appropriate to arrange transport at an alternative time of day, for example if a child has a medical condition which means they are not well enough to attend school for the whole day – this will be through an application, supported with evidence to request transport through exceptional circumstances.

The Council is not required to arrange travel for an eligible child where:

- suitable free travel is provided by someone else, for example, their school or Local Transport Authority
- a parent chooses to make their own arrangements for the child's travel to and from school (this does not prevent the parent from later requesting free travel to school, consideration will need to be given for the period involved in arranging alternative travel provision)

Transport for social care purposes such as respite and after school activities are not covered by this policy.

When a child is unwell and needs collecting from school, it will be a parent's responsibility to collect them and to determine what action needs to be taken with regards to the child's illness.

Transport will not be provided to facilitate work experience/placements.

10. Residential Children

Where the Council names a residential school in the EHC plan of an eligible child, the Council will provide reasonable free travel to enable the child to attend that school, for example, on a Monday and Friday for children who are weekly boarders, or before and after school holidays for children who board on a termly basis.

Where the Council has named a residential school on a 52-week basis, transport will only be provided in exceptional circumstances via the social worker assigned to the family.

11. Travel Arrangements

It is for the Council to decide how to arrange free travel for an eligible child.

The transport will be the most efficient, environmental, and economical method and route suitable for the child's needs.

This could be,

- A pass on a public service (bus or train), or
- A seat on a school bus service, or
- A direct commissioned service – taxis or coaches

12. Parental Travel Allowances

The Council may also provide a parental mileage allowance in some circumstances and with the agreement of the parent. For example, in the event that no existing service is available to accommodate an eligible child.

Allowances are paid in arrears at 45p per mile for four journeys a day for daily students, and two journeys for residential days travelled.

In some circumstances the Council will also pay an enhanced allowance where the child requires additional support with transport to meet a medical, mobility or special educational need. These are calculated on individual circumstances based on distance and travel time.

Regular payments including mileage allowance made by the Council to reimburse the cost incurred by a parent in providing a child's travel to school:

- will not be taken into account in a Universal Credit assessment. (Should the Council need to pay a parent any additional amounts, for example to cover unexpected expenses relating to a child's travel to school, these would be treated as capital in the Universal Credit assessment and the parent would need to declare them)
- should not give rise to income tax liability, but individuals should continue to satisfy themselves that they meet HMRC's requirements

Where a parent has agreed to receive a travel allowance, it will be based on attendance at school, the school will need to sign and confirm attendance.

The Council has the right to revoke an allowance if a child's attendance is deemed unsatisfactory and to provide assistance through an alternative travel arrangement.

A parent can surrender the allowance at any time; however, consideration will need to be given for the period involved in arranging alternative travel provision.

Section C- Suitability of Travel arrangements

13. Considering the Child's Needs

The Council will ensure that any travel arrangements they make will take account of the needs of the child concerned. For example, it would not be appropriate to provide a pass for free travel on a

service bus to a child whose special educational needs meant they would be unable to travel on a service bus.

Any travel arrangements should enable the child to travel in reasonable safety and comfort, and without undue stress, strain, or difficulty, so that wherever possible they arrive at school ready to learn.

It is not a requirement to provide all children with 'door to door' transport. Many will be able to walk to a suitable pick-up point from the home or school address, provided they would be able to do so in reasonable safety, accompanied by an appropriate adult if necessary.

If, following an assessment of needs, a child is not able to walk to a pickup point accompanied as necessary, the Council will provide an alternative which can meet their need.

The waiting point for transport to school or college will be a public stop or station or, in the case of commissioned transport, a named point which is suitably safe, both for children to wait and vehicles to stop. The Council will carry out risk assessments on pick up and drop off points.

If the transport provided needs to meet a connecting service, the driver of the first vehicle will wait with children until the connecting vehicle arrives. The waiting time between connections will normally be no longer than 10 minutes. The meeting point will be suitable for the safe transfer of children.

When children are transported using a taxi or private-hire vehicle, that is not a public service vehicle, it must have one seat belt, and where appropriate child car seat or booster seat, for each person carried.

Some children may need additional arrangements to be made to meet their needs. In these cases, the Council would request that parents complete a travel assessment, so the Council can review and make suitable arrangements if required.

If children travel in a wheelchair this must be to ISO 7176-19;2022 standards and properly fixed in the vehicle in accordance with current Department for Transport guidelines. The Council will carry out a risk assessment to ensure that children are transported safely in these circumstances.

14. Children with Medical Needs

When the Council makes travel arrangements for a child with medical needs, the Council will consider if and how those needs might affect the child during their journey to and from school and, where necessary, put in place proportionate arrangements to manage those needs.

Not every child with the same condition will need the same arrangements, assessments will be undertaken on a case-by-case basis.

The assessment will consider

- the medical condition, its triggers, and symptoms; and
- the likelihood and consequences of the condition affecting the child on the journey to and from school; and
- the action that may need to be taken to manage the condition, for example whether the child may require medication and, if so, what dosage is required, how it should be administered, and by whom.

If a child has a medical need, parents must alert the Council to discuss their child's conditions, this may result in a risk assessment requirement before any transport can be arranged. This request should be made via the online form (a link will be inserted when the policy is published).

If a child has an EHC plan or individual healthcare plan, these may contain information that is relevant to the Council's assessment of medical need. There is a requirement for the school to share information from the individual healthcare plan with the Council, where it is relevant to the journey to and from school.

The Council may sometimes need to seek specialist advice about a child and their condition. A range of different health professionals may be involved in a child's care, for example a community nurse, specialist nurse or doctor. A parent should be able to help the Council identify the appropriate health professional in relation to their child.

The Council will ensure the driver of a vehicle providing dedicated school transport, and any passenger assistant involved in providing the child's travel, are aware of the child's needs and how to respond to them and have received any necessary training.

There is no expectation that a child's routine/daily medication will be administered on the journey to and from school, or that routine medical procedures will be carried out. Where a risk assessment recognises that it may sometimes be necessary to administer a child's emergency medication, the Council would deploy a passenger assistant who would be responsible for administering the medication.

The passenger assistant will receive all relevant training and the medication would be administered in accordance with instructions from a health care professional in the Health Care Plan.

15. Journey Times

The statutory guidance states that as a general guide, the maximum journey time for a child of primary school age should be 45 minutes each way, and 75 minutes each way for a child of secondary school age, including any time taken to walk to a pick-up point. However, there may be circumstances in which this is not possible, for example in rural areas where children live in remote locations, where a child needs to travel a long way to the school named in their EHC plan, or when journey times are extended by traffic delays. Wherever possible, a child should not be expected to make several changes on public transport.

North Yorkshire by the nature of its geography, makes transporting within the general guidelines difficult to achieve. Whilst the Council would expect any direct journeys not to exceed the guidance, to ensure transport is provided as efficiently and environmentally as possible, and to reduce the number of vehicles required in order to meet its sustainability duty, the Council anticipate some journeys may exceed this recommendation. Where this is the case, the Council will not expect the child to make several changes on public transport.

Travel arrangements for children with special educational needs, disability or mobility problems can be particularly complex to make. Shorter journeys may be particularly desirable, perhaps because a child's special educational needs or disability mean they become distressed while travelling, but a child may need to travel a long way to the school that is able to meet their needs and one vehicle may need to collect several children.

Travel arrangements should be considered when deciding which is the school that should be named in the EHCP.

Where long journeys are unavoidable, the Council will consider whether there are measures that can be taken to minimise the negative impacts for the child, working with parents and schools to develop a plan or risk assessment.

16. Safeguarding

The safeguarding of children is of paramount importance. The Council will ensure that:

- an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check, with a check of the children's barred list, has been carried out for drivers and passenger assistants involved in providing dedicated school transport;
- drivers and passenger assistants have received any training they need to perform their role in relation to safeguarding;
- drivers and passenger assistants know how to report any concerns they have about the children in their care;
- they share any concerns they have about the driver of a taxi or private hire vehicle with the authority that licenses it;
- they consider whether concerns they have about a driver should be referred to the DBS.

Where concerns are present regarding the safeguarding of a child a referral must be made via the North Yorkshire Safeguarding Partnership as soon as possible.

<https://www.safeguardingchildren.co.uk/>

Where there are concerns around safety, but they do not relate to an individual child, these can be raised via email to:

IPT.compliance@northyorks.gov.uk

17. Training

The Council are currently developing a training package which will be mandatory for all drivers and passenger assistants to undertake.

The training package will include the following as a minimum standard

- Safeguarding
- Handling of emergency situations
- Equality, diversity and inclusion
- Any specific training to meet the needs of the children in their care.

Passenger Assistants employed to administer medication will receive relevant training to ensure they are competent to fulfil that responsibility.

18. Behaviour on School Transport

The Council will collaborate with schools to promote good behaviour on school transport. Schools have the power to sanction pupils for misbehaviour outside the school premises to such an extent as is reasonable, including for misbehaviour which takes place on school transport.

Unacceptable behaviour may include, but is not limited to, being rude, pushing and kicking, bullying, verbal abuse, distracting the driver, refusing to wear a seatbelt, or refusing to remain seated. It may endanger the safety and wellbeing of other people.

The Council and schools will work together to:

- set high expectations for children’s behaviour on school transport and ensure they are communicated clearly to parents and children;
- ensure arrangements are in place to report and manage incidents of unacceptable behaviour;
- work with operators to put in place measures to manage unacceptable behaviour where it occurs.

The Council will ensure drivers and passenger assistants have received any training they need to manage children’s behaviour while travelling.

Where a child’s behaviour is indicative of their special educational needs or disability, for example a way of communicating they are in distress, personalised guidance or risk assessments will be provided to the transport provider, following information gathered by school and parents, on how to best manage these situations.

An eligible child’s travel arrangements may be withdrawn as a last resort and, in these circumstances, the Council will meet their duty in respect of the eligible child in an alternative way.

19. Additional Information about Travel Arrangements

Severe weather

In circumstance where severe and adverse weather conditions are forecast, which may result in a school closure, schools will follow their emergency procedures and;

- inform parents and staff.
- inform home to school transport contractors.
- inform the Council.

The Council will make suitable arrangements to provide transport to enable eligible children to return home. The arrangements may be different to the normal commissioned provision in the event of an emergency.

School closures are published on the Council website and through local radio stations.

[School closures | North Yorkshire Council](#)

Change of school hours

If a school or academy wants to change its start and finish times it should follow best practice and, before carrying out a consultation with affected parties, advise the Council of their proposed changes so that the Council can review and advise of the implications for school transport.

Any consultation should be at least three months before the planned change, and the school must include the Council in their consultation. Good practice suggests that schools can only change the times of the school day at the start of the academic year, i.e. in September.

Where a school or academy, following the consultation alters its hours, without agreement of the Council, the school will be expected to meet any additional transport costs for the remainder of the council's contract for applicable services.

Early finishes – end of term

Where schools finish earlier in the school day than normal, for example the last day of term, it will be the school's responsibility to make such arrangements with the transport provider, including reimbursement of any additional cost, and ensure parents are notified of the early finish.

If a transport provider is unable to accommodate the early finish, it is the school's responsibility to make alternative arrangements.

Co-ordination of training days

There are three common training days agreed across North Yorkshire. The agreed school term dates and training days for each academic year can be found on the North Yorkshire Council website.

Schools with shared transport arrangements are encouraged to co-ordinate their remaining two training days to ensure the most efficient use of the transport network and reduce additional carbon emissions, in line with the Council's sustainability duty.

Federations of schools

Where a group of schools agree to a federation in which pupils may be temporarily taught on different sites, travel arrangements will only be provided in line with the eligibility criteria. Any transport between school sites is the responsibility of the school/federation.

Transition days

The Council is unable to provide additional resources to cover transition days. It is the responsibility of the school and parents to enable children to participate in these activities.

Transport assistance following a school closure or reorganisation

The Council's normal home to school transport policy will be followed. However, depending upon circumstances, the Council would, following a school closure consultation, have discretion to determine that alternative arrangements should apply.

Section D: Local school travel policies

20. Home to School Travel Policy for children from reception to year 11

The Council will;

- publish the policy on the Council's website;
- make available on request a paper format of the policy;
- include information about the school travel policy in the Council's composite prospectus for school admissions (which must be published by 12th September each year);
- include information about travel to school for children with special educational needs and disabilities in their SEND Local Offer.

The Council will keep the home to school travel policy under regular review to ensure it continues to meet local needs and comply with statutory requirements.

Any reviews will be completed, and the published policy will be available by 12th September each year, so that parents may take it into account when deciding which schools to apply for during the normal admissions round.

Parents should consider how their children will get to school at the time they are choosing which schools to apply for. For some, the availability of free travel to school may be a key factor in their decision making. Information about travel to school and checking which is your nearest school can be found on the Council's website at;

www.northyorks.gov.uk/education-and-learning

When reviewing and proposing changes to the Council's home to school travel policy which may affect children's eligibility for transport, the Council will consult locally. As a minimum:

- schools whose pupils will be affected by the proposed changes, including those located in other local authority areas;
- parents whose children will (or may) be affected by the proposed changes, including those whose children attend a school in a neighbouring authority, and those whose children may be affected in the future, for example, because they live in the catchment area of, or attend the feeder school of, a school affected by the proposed changes;
- the local Parent Carer Forum.

Consultation will last for at least 28 working days during term time.

The Council will have consideration for;

- the impact proposed changes to the policy will have on parents' choice of school, particularly where travel arrangements have been made to support parents' preference for their children to attend a school with a designated religious character (some such arrangements are associated with long-standing local agreements about the siting of schools);
- the financial impact the changes will have on affected families, paying particular attention to the potential impact of any changes on children from low-income families;
- the impact the changes will have on people with protected characteristics.

Wherever possible, any changes made to the home to school travel policy will be phased in to allow children who begin attending a school under one set of travel arrangements continue to benefit from those arrangements until they leave that school or have a change in circumstances.

21. Transport Beyond Compulsory School Age

A separate policy statement will be published on or before 31st May each year outlining the Council's position and travel offer for Post 16 and Post 19 with an EHC plan.

The Post 16 Policy statement including any discretionary offer is reviewed and published on a yearly basis and is valid for the forthcoming academic year only.

Section E – Transport Appeals

A transport appeal can only be made on the following grounds;

- Eligibility;
- Distance measurement of the walked route;
- Safety of the walked route;
- Transport arrangements that have been made for an eligible child.

22: Appeals Procedures

Where a parent wishes to challenge the initial decision in relation to statutory transport there is a two-stage appeal process.

Stage 1:

A request for a stage 1 review must be made in writing within 20 working days of the initial decision letter. The request:

- Should clearly state the reasons for the challenge and include any new documentary evidence.
- Will be reviewed by senior officers, the original decision may be upheld, overturned or alternative solutions suggested.
- Where travel assistance is agreed the Council will make the necessary transport arrangements.
- Where transport is not agreed, parent/carer will be told in writing and parents who are not satisfied with that decision will be informed of the next and final stage of the appeal process.

Stage 2:

A stage 2 appeal must be made in writing by completion of an appeal form within 20 working days of receipt of the stage 1 response:

- The appeal form must clearly state the reasons why parent/carers challenge the stage 1 response and provide any new documentary evidence.
- Stage 2 appeals are heard within 40 days of receipt of the appeal form by the Appeals Committee which consists of a small group of elected members of the Council.
- Parent/carers can attend the appeal hearing
- Each case is considered on its merits
- The Committee considers the policy guidelines but may recommend departure from those guidelines in exceptional cases
- When a decision is made, this will be communicated in writing within five working days, including the reasons for the decision. This decision is final.

Where the person is unhappy with the outcome, they will be advised how to escalate it to the Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman at, www.lgo.org.uk, who may investigate to decide whether there has been any maladministration.

23. Complaints Procedure

The Council wants to maintain high standards of reliability of the transport it provides for pupils. The Council makes sure that complaints by parents and schools are investigated and satisfactorily resolved. Account will be taken of any previous unsatisfactory operation in awarding contracts.

[Complaints, comments or compliments | North Yorkshire Council](#)

Section F: Sustainable Travel

Changes to legislation brought about by the introduction of the Education and Inspection Act 2006 added to the Education Act 1996 a general duty on the Council to promote the use of sustainable travel and transport.

Under the School Information (England) Regulations 2008 the Council is required to publish the general arrangements and policies in respect of transport for pupils of compulsory school age to and from school, sixth form centres and further education colleges.

There are four main elements to the duty:

- An assessment of the travel and transport needs of children and young people within the Council's area;
- An audit of the sustainable travel and transport infrastructure within the Council that may be used when travelling to and from or between schools/institutions;
- A strategy to develop the sustainable travel and transport infrastructure within the Council, so that the travel and transport needs of children and young people are better catered for;
- The promotion of sustainable travel and transport modes on the journey to, from and between schools and other institutions.

24. Sustainable Travel Strategies

The Council is developing a Sustainable Modes of Travel Strategy which will combine information from existing policies and aspirations.

The Council is committed to reducing climate change and promoting sustainable travel as set out in its priorities in the following.

- North Yorkshire Council Climate Change Strategy 2023-2030
- Yorkshire and Humber Climate Commission's Climate Action Pledge
- Safer roads, healthier places, the road safety strategy of the York and North Yorkshire Road Safety Partnership
- Local Transport Plan 4 – 2016 (2025 in draft)

25. Sustainable Travel Programmes

Modeshift

Modeshift STARS is the national school's awards scheme that has been established to recognise schools that have demonstrated excellence in supporting cycling, walking and other forms of sustainable travel. The scheme encourages schools across the country to join in a major effort to increase levels of sustainable and active travel to improve the health and well-being of children and young people.

Modeshift STARS has a 3-stage approach to achieve accreditation.

- Create a travel plan
- Monitor and evaluate travel plans
- Recognising and rewarding best practise.

Currently in North Yorkshire there are 82 schools registered with Modeshift.

Open North Yorkshire

Open North Yorkshire is a North Yorkshire Council programme encouraging active travel to create cleaner, safer communities and encourage active travel and the benefits it can bring, to help you save time, save money, and get fitter.

www.opennorthyorkshire.co.uk

Independent Travel Training -ITT

Travel Training is a step-by-step process by which a person learns to travel a specific route, between two given places, on their own and in a safe and responsible way.

The Council currently does not have a travel training programme; however, resources are available for parents, schools and professionals to utilise on the website.

Some schools may offer travel training within their curriculum – please speak to your school if this is something they offer.

Bikeability

The Council offers level 1 and 2 Bikeability courses to year 5 and 6 pupils via primary schools. For adults and older children, Bikeability level 3 is also available – please contact your school directly.

Section G – Useful Information

26. Contact details of School Transport Teams

Duties	Contact details
General enquiries	Schooltransporteligibility@northyorks.gov.uk
General enquiries SEN, medical, mobility and EHCP	SENDTransport@northyorks.gov.uk
Enquiries relating to existing transport Enquiries relating to paid travel permits	0300 131 2 131
Enquiries relating to transport operators including delays	0300 131 2 131
Payments of parental transport allowances and paid travel permits	0300 131 2 131
Stage 2 appeals	Appeals@northyorks.gov.uk
All other telephone enquiries	0300 131 2 131
<p>Useful Webpages</p> <p>https://www.northyorks.gov.uk/education-and-learning/school-and-college-transport</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School transport for reception to year 11 • Transport to sixth form or college • Paid bus passes • Bus timetables • Replace a school bus pass <p>Department for Education statutory guidance</p> <p>https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/home-to-school-travel-and-transport-guidance</p>	

Glossary of terms

Term or Reference	Explanation
Accompanied	Where a child is not eligible for transport under the policy, the expectation is that a parent will accompany their child to and from school or make other suitable arrangements for their journey to and from school.
Bulk Admission Round	The application round when children normally start at school for the first time i.e. Reception, when they transfer from an infant school to a junior school and when they start secondary school in year 7. See Normal admissions round.
Catchment Area	This is a defined geographical area that is served by a named primary and secondary school. Most home addresses fall into a catchment area for school admissions purposes. The catchment school may not be the nearest school to the home address and eligibility for free transport to that school would not apply in that circumstance.
Compulsory School Age	A child reaches compulsory school age on the prescribed day following their fifth birthday, or on their fifth birthday if it falls on a prescribed day. Prescribed days are the 31 st of December, 31 st of March and 31 st of August. A Child ceases to be of compulsory school age on the last Friday in June in the academic year in which the reach age 16.
Dedicated School Transport	Transport which exclusively carries children and young people to and from their place of education and cannot be boarded by the public.
Designated Religious Character	Schools with a designated religious character are schools which are designated as such under section 69(3) of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998. They may deliver religious education and collective worship in accordance with the tenets of their faith. They may also prioritise admissions for pupils of their faith and recruit staff on the basis of their faith.
Disability	Defined in section 6 of the Equality Act 2010. A person has a disability if they have (a) a physical or mental impairment, and (b) that impairment has a substantial and long-term effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities. A chronic physical or mental health condition may constitute a disability. Not all disabilities are visible.
Education Health and Care (EHC) plan	An Education, Health, and Care (EHC) plan details the education, health and social care support that is to be provided to a child or young person who has special educational needs or a disability. It is drawn up by the local authority after an EHC needs assessment of the child or young person has determined that an EHC plan is necessary, and after consultation with relevant partner agencies.
Free School Meal Criteria (extended rights)	The eligibility criteria is: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Universal Credit (provided you have an annual net earned income of no more than £7,400, as assessed by earnings from up to three of your most recent assessment periods) • Income Support • Income-based Jobseeker’s Allowance • Income-related Employment and Support Allowance • Support under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999 • The guaranteed element of Pension Credit • Child Tax Credit (provided you are not also entitled to Working Tax Credit and have an annual gross income of no more than £16,190)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Working Tax Credit run-on – paid for four weeks after you stop qualifying for Working Tax Credit.
Geographical Information System (GIS)	This is the NY measuring system which is used for measuring the home to school distances for both admissions and transport purposes. It includes footpaths, roads, and public rights of way as identified at the time a school place is allocated. This is used consistently for all measurements and the distances will vary to other measuring systems.
Home address	This is the place where a child is habitually and normally resident with their main carer/parent. There may be circumstances where a pupil has more than one home address for example where parents are separated, the address used for assessing eligibility will be the one used to apply for a school place. The Council will not provide assistance with transport from more than one home address.
Individual Healthcare Plans (IHP)	Are drawn up by schools in consultation with parents and relevant health professionals. They capture the key information and actions that are required to effectively support a child with medical needs in school. Schools may wish their policies on supporting pupils with medical conditions to refer to home to school travel and the Council may ask for the IHP when assessing transport for pupils with medical conditions.
Licensing Authority	Taxi and private hire operators and drivers must be licensed by a local licensing authority – usually a unitary or district council in a local area.
Medical need	A health need that has the potential to put a child’s safety or wellbeing at risk while travelling to and from school.
Mobility Need	A physical impairment that impacts a child’s ability to walk to school.
Normal Admissions Round	Also known as bulk rounds. This is the period during which parents apply for school places at the normal point of entry into a school i.e. reception and transfers to Year 7. The deadlines for applications are 31 October for secondary school places and 15 January for primary places. Places are offered to parents on National Offer Day. Secondary National Offer Day is 1 March, or the next working day. Primary National Offer Day is 16 April, or the next working day.
Parent	References to parent in this document include birth parents, adoptive parents, foster parents, carers, or legal guardians with parental responsibility.
Personal Safety	The matter of personal safety for a child who is not eligible for transport under the policy is one of parental responsibility. It is also the responsibility of the parent for the child’s safety to and from the transport provision.
Private Hire Vehicles (PHV's)	May carry up to 8 passengers and can only be pre-booked via a licensed private hire vehicle operator. See also the definition of taxi below.
Religion	Section 509AD (3) of the Education Act 1996 defines religion as any religion. A reference to religion includes a reference to a lack of religion.
Safeguarding	Defined in Keeping Children Safe in Education Keeping children safe in education - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk) as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> protecting children from maltreatment preventing the impairment of their mental and physical health and development ensuring they grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.

School day	Schools are responsible for deciding when their school day will start and end. The expectation is that the Council will arrange travel for eligible children to enable them to attend for the 'normal' school day. Schools should organise the school day and school week in the best interest of their pupil cohort. They are expected to act reasonably when making changes to their school day or week. It is unacceptable for them to shorten their day or week unless it is a direct action to enhance pupils' education.
Selective school	A school that can select all or some of the children it admits by testing for aptitude or ability, for example a grammar school. Selective schools are not normally considered when identifying a suitable school unless the child has secured a place there.
Special Educational Needs (SEN)	Defined in section 20 of the Children and Families Act 2014. A child or young person has special educational needs if he or she has a learning difficulty or disability which calls for special educational provision to be made for him or her.
Taxis	Also known as Black Cabs or Hackney Carriages – unlike the definition of PHV – these can also operate on taxi ranks and can be accessed if hailed on the street.
Walk	In this guidance walk has its literal meaning. A child could not be considered to be able to walk to school if they would need to travel in a wheelchair, but the Council may decide for example, that suitable travel arrangements for a child would be an assistance to push them in the wheelchair.

Appendix 1 – Examples provided by the Department for Education

Eligibility examples

Child A is thirteen years old. Their nearest school is a co-educational secondary school that is 3.4 miles from their home. Their parents choose to send them to a single sex secondary school that is 5.3 miles from their home. Child A is not eligible for free travel to the single sex school because the co-educational secondary school is their nearest suitable school.

Child B is twelve years old. They attend School 1, a secondary school 3 miles from their home. Their parents chose this school because it offers a choice of several modern foreign languages at GCSE. School 2 is 1 mile from Child B's home and would have been able to admit them, but it only offers one modern foreign language. Child B is not attending their nearest suitable school because School 2 would have been able to provide them with an education that was suitable for their age, ability, and aptitude.

Statutory Walking Distances examples

Child C is six years old and attends their nearest suitable school. It is 2.3 miles from their home. Child C is eligible for free travel to school.

Child D is seven years old and attends a primary school that is 2.6 miles from their home. There is another suitable primary school 1.2 miles from their home which has places available. Child D is not eligible for free travel to school, as they are not attending their nearest suitable school.

Child E is eleven years old and attends their nearest suitable school. It is 2.6 miles from their home. Child E is not eligible for free travel to school.

Special education needs and or disability examples

Child F is fourteen years old and has a disability that requires them to use crutches to walk. They need to take their time to ensure they are balanced. They attend their nearest suitable school. It is 1 mile from their home. The local authority decides that they could not reasonably be expected to walk to school. Child F is eligible for free travel to school.

Child G is eleven years old and has been diagnosed with a long-term medical condition which causes them to take a long time to recover after strenuous physical activity. They attend their nearest suitable school which is a short walk from their home. The parent applies for free travel to school on the basis that the child needs to recover for a long time after any strenuous activity. Based on the information available to them, the local authority decides that Child G would not need to recover for a long time after the short walk to their school. Child G is not eligible for free travel to school.

Unsafe routes example

Child H is twelve years old. They attend their nearest suitable school. It is 2 miles from their home. The only walking route to this school is along a busy road with no footpaths or stepping off points. The local authority carries out an assessment of the route and decides it would not be possible for a child to walk it in reasonable safety, even if they were accompanied by their parent. Child H is eligible for free travel to school.

Extended Rights examples

Child I is eleven years old and eligible for free school meals. Their nearest suitable school is 2.5 miles from their home. Their second nearest suitable school is 3 miles away. Their third nearest is 5 miles away. Child I would be eligible for free travel to any of these schools.

Child J is eleven years old and eligible for free school meals. Their three nearest schools are School X, School Y and School Z. School X is 1.5 miles from their home, School Y is 2.2 miles from their home, and School Z is 5.5 miles from their home. Child J would be eligible for free travel to School Y or School Z, but not to School X.

Child K is thirteen years old and is eligible for free school meals. Their parents are Sikh and wish them to be educated in a school with a religious character. They attend a designated Sikh school that is 8 miles from their home. There are other schools which are nearer to their home, but none of these is a Sikh school. Child K is eligible for free travel to the Sikh school.

Parental Preference examples

Child L is eleven years old and attends School 1 which is 4.2 miles away from their home. Their parents applied for this school as their first preference. The nearest secondary school is School 2 which is 3.7 miles from their home. They chose not to apply for this school, despite information on the eligibility for free travel to school being readily available at the time they submitted their preferences. School 2 is undersubscribed, and Child L would have been offered a place there had their parents applied. Child L is not eligible for free travel to School 1 because School 2 is their nearest suitable school and has available places.

Child M is eleven years old and attends the second nearest secondary school to their home. It is 4.2 miles away. Their nearest secondary school is 3.7 miles from their home. Their parents applied for this school, but it was oversubscribed, and they were not offered a place. Child M is eligible for free travel to school as they are attending their nearest suitable school with available places.

Accompaniment examples

Child N is nine years old and has autism. They attend their nearest suitable school which is 2.5 miles from their home. They are unaware of danger and need to be accompanied even on very short journeys. They also become distressed and can act unpredictably in noisy environments. Their walk to school would be along busy roads. The local authority determines that the parent would not be able to keep them safe on this journey. Child N is eligible for free travel to school.

Child O is seven years old and attends their nearest suitable school which is 1.5 miles from their home. They do not have special educational needs, a disability or mobility problem. The local authority determines that they would be able to walk to school in reasonable safety if they were accompanied. There is no good reason why the parent could not reasonably be expected to accompany them or make other arrangements for their journey to and from school. Child O is not eligible for free travel to school.

Child P is fifteen years old and is blind. They attend their nearest suitable school which is a short walk from their home. The local authority determines that they could reasonably be expected to walk to school if accompanied. Child P's parent is a single parent with a disability which means they would not be able to accompany Child P to school. The local authority considers the individual circumstances of Child P and decides it would not be reasonable to expect their parent to make arrangements for their journey to and from school. It decides to arrange free travel to school for Child P.

Child Q is fourteen years old and is also blind. They attend their nearest suitable school which is a short walk from their home. The local authority determines that they could reasonably be expected to walk to school if accompanied. There is no good reason why Child Q's parent could not reasonably be expected to accompany them or make other arrangements for their journey to and from school. Child Q is not eligible for free travel to school

Travel training example

Child R has special educational needs. They live in a village 4 miles from their nearest suitable secondary school and are eligible for free travel to school. Other children living in the village attend the school. The local authority meets its school travel duty in respect of these children by providing them with a pass for free travel on the public service bus. When Child R joined the school in Year 7, the local authority determined their special educational needs meant they would not be able to travel on the bus with their peers. The local authority arranged a taxi to take Child R to school.

When Child R moved to Year 9, the local authority reassessed their needs. They determined Child R was ready for independent travel training. Child R's parent was hesitant at first, but the local authority explained the benefits and the parent agreed, knowing Child R would need the skill in adulthood.

The travel trainer helps Child R with understanding things such as where to wait for the bus, which bus to get on and what to do if they miss the bus or it is late. Once Child R has completed the travel training programme, the local authority reassesses their needs and determines they are now able to travel independently on the bus. They withdraw the taxi and provide Child R with a bus pass

Journey times examples

Child S is seven years old and has an EHC plan which names their nearest suitable school. This school is 20 miles from their home. The route is often very busy meaning the journey from Child S's home typically takes 45 minutes. The taxi collects one other child on the way, which adds 10 minutes to Child S's journey, meaning a total journey time of 55 minutes. Given the additional expense that would be involved in providing Child S and the other child with separate vehicles, the local authority decides it is reasonable to exceed the recommended journey time in Child S's case.

Child T is fourteen years old and has an EHC plan which names a school that is 10 miles from their home. Previously they travelled in a taxi with one other child and the journey took 30 minutes. The local authority then combined several routes into one. Child T now travels in a minibus with 11 other children. Due to the extra stops, the journey time is now 90 minutes. Child's T's school makes the local authority aware that, due to their special educational needs, they often become very distressed at being in the minibus for that length of time. On arrival at school, it takes them a long time to calm down. As a result, they miss some of the activities other children participate in. The local authority decides it is not reasonable to exceed the recommended journey time in Child T's case and reinstates their original travel arrangements.

Managing behavioural needs examples

Child U is twelve years old, has special educational needs and is eligible for free travel. They have recently moved to a new school. Having travelled quite happily in a taxi to their original school, they become distressed when travelling in a minibus to their new school. Their special educational needs mean they are unable to explain why they are distressed. The driver works with Child U's parent to resolve the issue. They identify that Child U's distress is caused by having the radio on during journeys. The driver agrees to keep the radio switched off whilst Child U is travelling.

Child V is 4 years old and has special educational needs. They are about to begin school for the first time and will be eligible for free travel. They can become very distressed in unfamiliar situations. The local authority arranges for their driver and passenger assistant to visit Child V's home to meet them before the start of term. This gives Child V the opportunity to familiarise themselves with the vehicle and sit in the seat they will use on the journey to school.

It also gives the driver the opportunity to let the parent know that two children will already be on the vehicle when it comes to collect Child V and that it will collect one further child after Child V. This enables the parent to talk to Child V to prepare them for what will happen on the journey to school. The parent is also able to let the passenger assistant know about some strategies they have found useful when Child V has become distressed when travelling.

Appendix D1

Free text comments received via the online consultation exercise – redacted where required

We chose our primary school based on the fact it was our catchment school and transport was provided. It was a deciding factor in our admission choices. It is not our nearest primary school by a miles difference. In the future I will have one child at secondary school and two at primary. Currently all would be able to access free transport from our rural village. The removal of free transport would impact the school run and inevitably lead to one journey running late - affecting attendance records as I would not see it financially viable to pay for school transport for one or both sets of children. I would also have two children at one school, one currently accessing transport, the other, still at pre-school would no longer be eligible. I absolutely want my youngest to attend the same school as my older children as we are part of the school family. Also, I don't understand the relevance of catchment schools going forward if the nearest school will now be the dominating factor in decision making when applying.

My daughter attends a high school in our catchment area that is not nearest by distance. Under the new proposed rules my son would not receive free transport when he goes to high school in 2 years time

1. Younger siblings will end up in different secondary schools to the ones their older siblings currently attend. This will be stressful for the younger children and will be difficult for parents to juggle the requirements and demands of different schools. 2. These proposals may result in a fall in pupil numbers in some secondary schools, meaning diminished funding - resulting in staffing cuts and a reduction of facilities and courses on offer 3. In some areas, neighbouring children will attend different secondary schools - children will be split up from their primary school classmates, making the transition to secondary school more stressful. 4. In looking purely at distance, there is no consideration of the type of roads involved and the safety for the children having to use these roads. In a rural county like ours, some of the high, moorland roads are dangerous in wintry weather and children should not have to travel on these roads twice a day.

Both my daughters wish to attend Settle College the youngest is currently in Yr 4 so if these changes go ahead she won't be able to attend Settle. We desperately want our daughters to go to Settle but if the proposed changes go ahead they won't be able to. Please don't stop my daughters from attending Settle College.

I have a year 4 child at Ingleton primary school and the current proposal regarding the nearest suitable school is detrimental to the community, multiple generations have gone on to attend Settle secondary school and a vast percentage of children and parents send their children to Settle school from Ingleton. QES in Kirkby has never been the secondary school for Ingleton children. On another note Ingleton is in Yorkshire, I chose to continue to bring my children up like many generations before me in a Yorkshire village and attend Yorkshire schools, and now you're going to force them in to Cumbria. This is after you close our middle school system and overpopulate the local schools to the detriment of children - Ingleton Primary is forced to have shared year groups as they are still a classroom short from the middle school closures. As a low income earner I'm very unhappy at the proposal that's going to try and force me to send my child to an unacceptable school. 3/4 of Ingleton and Bentham children have attended Settle for at least 4 generations. I believe a precedent has been set that Settle is the school for Ingleton children and you should not be allowed to change that.

After reading the information I think it's disgraceful to be left in a situation where I'm unsure where my children will attend secondary school. I currently have a daughter in year 6 who has just had her place accepted for secondary school which I do hope she will have school transport accepted for there, I also have a son who is year 3 and now he's made to go to a different secondary to which my daughter will go to. I would have never considered staying where I lived two years ago if I knew this situation would have happened.

I live in (Redacted). Our catchment school is Ryedale, our nearest school is Thirsk. My son is at Ryedale so a bus comes into the village (redacted). My daughter (in Yr 4) will not be eligible for this bus as our nearest school is Thirsk. So, to qualify for transport she will have to attend a different school to all the other children AND you will have to send a bus UP SUTTON BANK. This is in no way a saving (in fact it will be massively costly given that there is already a bus going to Ryedale in the village that she could hop on) and makes a mockery of the concept of catchment schools. It will also be pretty distressing and disruptive to my daughter. I am not alone in this, there are other families who will be affected. I'm really disappointed and find this quite stressful.

I wholeheartedly disagree with the nearest school change. If this change occurs my children currently in primary school will only be eligible for transport to secondary school in Thirsk when they move up. Whereas my oldest child is already attending Ryedale as that is our catchment school so they will then be attending different schools. This would therefore increase costs of transport as a bus to Ryedale and another bus to Thirsk would be coming to the same village, this would include going up and down Sutton Bank on a daily basis for the Thirsk bus. This would not be cost effective! I cannot see how this is in anyone's, let alone the children's, best interests.

ChatGPT 3.5 User Write me a haiku about beer ChatGPT Golden brew sparkles, Frothy head whispers stories, Cheers to hops and malt. User Rewrite this to sound better "The proposed changes will cause huge disruption, anxiety and financial issues in our family. We will have one child in secondary school in Richmond and one forced to go to Hummersknot in Darlington as we will not be able to afford to transport her ourselves. We will have no choice of schools. In addition, the schools in 2 different local authority areas have different holidays which will cause issues financially, will mean family holidays will be very difficult to plan and the children will not be able to attend after school activities as we will not be able to pick them up from 2 places at once. This policy will also cause numbers to drop in Richmond school, affecting its finances and risking the quality of its offering. I disagree with this proposed change so strongly on environmental grounds too, we will be taking one bus off the roads and instead putting 30 or 40 cars out instead. I believe this proposal has been made by simply considering financial benefits and has totally disregarded the needs of the young people the local authority is tasked with providing for. Once again, I strongly disagree with this policy proposal and would consider it discriminatory to my children as they are having reduced choice and forced apart from siblings. " ChatGPT The proposed changes spell disruption, anxiety, and financial strain for our family. With one child destined for secondary school in Richmond and another compelled to attend Hummersknot in Darlington due to transportation costs, our school options dwindle. The diverging holiday schedules between two local authorities compound our challenges, making family vacations and after-school activities nearly impossible to coordinate. Moreover, the imbalance in student numbers threatens the financial stability and quality of education at Richmond school. Beyond financial concerns, the environmental impact of this policy shift cannot be overlooked, trading one bus for dozens of cars on the road. It seems this proposal prioritizes financial gains over the well-being of our youth, leaving little room for the needs and choices of our children, who now face reduced options and separation from siblings.

The main change that affects my family and that of others within the Kirk Hammerton area is that, children will no longer be entitled to free travel to their catchment school. So, for us (and other local families), we will no longer qualify for free school travel to our catchment school of Boroughbridge High as there are schools that are nearer - Boroughbridge High is our fifth nearest school! There are four other secondary schools that are classed as nearer to our home address according to the (not currently publicly available - why not?) system used. Only one of these four alternative schools currently has school transport operating from our village and for two of the schools listed as nearer it would be impossible for children from Kirk Hammerton to get to them unless driven by a parent as there is no public or school transport available. We already have an older child at our catchment school of Boroughbridge High (redacted), we are happy with the school and would have liked our younger child (redacted) to also go there - if the consultation is agreed then we may either have to pay for her school transport or have children at different secondary schools. I'm also concerned that parents may make secondary school choices based on what they believe their catchment school to be, without realising the consequences if it is not their nearest school. Currently, the admissions guidance advises parents to ensure that they apply to their catchment school, however, this would then mean that they could be liable to pay for transportation costs – admissions policy and school transportation policies from the same authority should be consistent, unless of course the plan is to deceive parents in order to make money from them. Links have been made between catchment primary and their secondary schools, in order to aid children's transition to their new schools, often with the secondary school premises being used for sporting events etc. for the younger children. The proposed change to policy would erase years of hard work to make the transition smoother and mean that more children will attend unfamiliar secondary schools. It also looks like the proposed changes would affect future families choosing to send their children to our village primary school (Kirk Hammerton CofE Primary school) who would have used the current Hunsingore school bus, thus affecting the future viability of this school too. Finally, certain families are being disadvantaged due to our rural area. There is a proposal in the consultation that children who receive free school meals will not be affected in the same way - they will receive free school travel to their nearest three schools if the school is more than 2 miles but less than 6 miles (for secondary schools). For a free school meal family in Kirk Hammerton there is no secondary school within this radius (the nearest secondary school, although not our catchment one is 7.5 miles away). Therefore, such families are being discriminated against due to living in a rural area compared to similar families in less rural areas who, according to the proposed policy, would be entitled to more choice of secondary school chosen. So, in summary the proposal if approved could have a significant impact on families in Kirk Hammerton and surrounding villages and I am concerned that families are not aware of the consequences. It will also have a significant detrimental impact on school attendance, if families are unable to afford to pay for school transport themselves (I imagine there will be families who whilst they don't qualify for free school meals would still struggle to find the cost) particularly at a time when there is a real push to improve school attendance nationally.

I think it's vital that parents can choose the most suitable school for their children based on their child's needs and not which is the closest school. My children are currently being assessed for neurodivergent issues and as such may get left behind in schools less suited to this. If transport to these schools is taken away as they aren't the closest ones to where we live then that takes away our access to them, this directly affects their futures for the sake of saving money.

I am unclear if I wished to send my child to a CofE school for example that is further away than a non religious affiliated school would the child no longer be eligible for travel. Equally suitability of school may be influenced by being near a workplace rather than distance from home.

The removal of free transport to your child's nearest denominational school was wrong. I know that this has had a significant impact on pupil numbers at my child's school. A large number of families have been forced to attend other schools because of the cost involved. This is a huge shame

Religious beliefs are important to my family and I wish my children to have a Catholic education. I think it is reasonable for the cost of transport to school to be covered by the Council in lieu of not having a more local Catholic Secondary school

There are a great deal of caveats to meet to enable families to access the free transport. There is also a disparity between schools that are non-denominational whereby they receive free public transport (eg HGS and Rossett) and then the faith schools (eg SJF and St Aidan's) have to pay for their transport. The reason given is that the families have a preference for these schools over the proximity... This seems unfair when so much attention and sensitivity is given to SEND cases, families that have a faith are financially penalised. It seems fairer for NYC to cover the transport costs on all public transport for students to help all families and reduce the necessity of having to choose a school based on its closeness or the option of free transport.

We have had to pay for a school bus for our daughter to attend sfx, this school is on the same road as richmond school but because the council class richmond as the closest we had to pay, it has put a lot of financial pressure on our family trying to find the extra money every month and at nearly £70 a month it is ridiculous all because we chose a religious school and not the mainstream school on the same road. All the children get picked up at the same bus stops and are 0.2 miles apart from each other. I appealed this but it was thrown out. My youngest daughter will not be attending schools in richmond as we simply cant afford the cost of transportation. The council have let so many parents and children down with these ridiculous policies.

I agree with almost all of the proposed changes. The only area of this policy that I have an issue with is the favouritism toward people of faith. It is the parents' choice to send their children to such schools, and they should not receive favourable treatment with regard to distance to school and funded transport. Going further, if the nearest school is a faith-based one then the family must not be penalised if they choose to send their child to the nearest non-faith school if it is further away. This is discrimination on the basis of [lack of] faith - I would be interested to see this tested in court.

I understand the need for the council to save money. On transport costs but feel that these proposed changes will disproportionately affect those on a low income.

Living rurally it is important that are children are not disadvantaged by the lack of services. There is no public transport whatsoever in our village, the village school was closed down in the 1960's so we have no option other than to travel our children to school. School transport is an absolute must for us.

We live rural with no public bus we expect that our daughter will be provided transport either taxis or bus to take her to the local high school out catchments school and those outside catchment should be refused

I feel that the proposed policy changes negatively impact children living in villages whose catchment school is not geographically the closest. This will likely lead to increased cars on the road adding to congestion.

There are many times villages require buses to transport children from home to school (during strikes/bad weather etc). You would save a lot of money if collected the children in neighbouring villages all together rather than sending coaches (not even mini buses!!) to collect our children. There have been occasions when buses have been used and a coach has arrived with 2 students on it. Yet nearby villages with more children have a mini bus thats nearly packed. Total waste of money.

The walking distance criteria is too generic. Rural communities have no other option than transport. Removal of funded transport could impact on pupil attendance. This appears to be another way of shaving resources with the badge of 'equality county wide' with no consideration of the equitable needs of each area. Parents may become extremely distressed at the prospect of paying or finding alternative transport impacting on their home/work life balance. Who completes the road safety assessment? One person(a grown adult probably with no additional needs) cannot determine the ability of children to safely navigate the road system which regardless of footpaths being available may fall foul of the lack of working street lighting. Two 14 year olds could have very different approaches to and understanding of road safety or being streetwise. In order to complete exceptional circumstances assessments, surely this results in more work, employing staff to complete these assessments or delaying access to the transport in a timely manner for term.time. Please consider area specific distances for walking by area rather than county wide in a document. Please also take into account the vast rurality and definitive need for transport not only for safety but to ensure attendance for pupils

Firstly, you have no villages in Swaledale listed on your options for question 1. I had to select Hawes as nearest to home, but we are in Swaledale and would have expected Reeth to have been an option. I trust you have considered the weather conditions impact on deciding which school you think children should attend. Living at the top of Swaledale it is absolute common sense to travel down the dale to Gunnerside/Reeth school even though Hawes/Kirkby Stephen schools may be geographically closer in distance. Travelling over the high moor roads into another dale/county would not be sensible.

Personally we were affected and disappointed by the fact there was officially another school that was 0.1 miles closer (as the crow flies) than the one my children attend - although it is clearly more convenient and safer than the alternative. Additionally when we originally chose the school we were living at the same address we live now and were entitled to the school travel expenses then but, seemingly, no longer. Personally, I think where there is a living distance which is 2+ miles from a school AND there are no public transport OR safe walking OR cycling options (which is the case with us) - there should be an exception to the rule - as with any rule, there are exceptions. Disappointing in such a sparse community like Settle where, frankly, transport options are pretty much non-existent.

I think that it is crucial that the travel arrangements in place when a child accepted a place at a school are upheld. I think that it would cause significant mental health issues for young people if they found themselves in a position where they had to move schools. I think that this would not just be disruptive to their education but would be extremely damaging to their emotional health. I pay for my child to use school transport as I live outside of North Yorkshire. If this was withdrawn it would be impossible for my child to get to school. There is no way of accessing the school via public transport. The only route to school is miles down a 60 mile an hour country road with no footpaths. He would be forced to leave the school which would be utterly devastating. The schools near where I live are now all oversubscribed and so my child would be left without a school place. It is so important that children currently in schools are not displaced. I think that when school buses are withdrawn there is a huge increase in traffic congestion and parents parking outside of schools which is far more damaging to the environment. This should be taken into consideration when examining environmental concerns. I think that school buses are far less damaging to the environment than huge numbers of parents suddenly driving their children to and from school. I think that the option of walking or cycling to school is less safe in rural areas where there are long country roads often without footpaths or street lighting. Very few secondary age children are walked to school by a parent. I think that it is a huge safeguarding issue if the safety of the route travelled by a young person is assessed on whether or not it would be safe for an able bodied adult. I think that this is extremely dangerous and would likely lead to fatalities. I think that it is wrong to assume that it is possible to access rural schools by public transport or that all parents have access to a car. It would be cruel to displace children who are happily settled in their schools. I think that young people have had their lives so disrupted in recent years and it is crucial that they can stay in their schools.

School catchment areas determine admissions but I have read that these will not change. Therefore parents will find it very difficult to understand the complexities of which schools they can gain a place for their child in alongside where they can afford to transport them to. The two things must be aligned fully so that your catchment school/schools are also where you can be transported to. It seems ridiculous to have to choose a school based on transport rather than catchment. Clearly the council wishes to save money but is not willing to take on the extremely difficult task of sorting out school catchments. Parents in rural areas like mine will end up with school places that they can't afford to transport their children to. There will be mass appeals and attendance will be impacted even further. This change to policy is not workable in a widespread rural county such as North Yorkshire.

I am worried that it will impact the number of students that go to our rural secondary school as a lot of pupils come from other areas which have secondary schools nearer to them.

Whilst it is right that the policy should be regularly amended to ensure it aligns with legislation, I do not see the fact recognised that North Yorkshire is a very large, predominantly rural county and that several primary schools have been closed over the last 10 years, with children forced to travel further and further each day for their education as a result. The situation is particularly difficult for families and children situated in the north of the county where school provision is even more sparse than towards the south.

For rural children, nearest school is not the same as optimal school. There should be some margin for decision making here. Possibly... you have some choice but not more than say 25% further than the nearest school. The area is so geographically diverse that attempting to apply rules for major cities and rural areas is meaningless and loses nuance. These changes would mean our preferred school has to change despite being only fractionally further away. I think they need reviewing with this nuance adding in. Additionally, providing post-16 transport should be considered in rural circumstances. Our child is mandated to attend post-16 training but cannot do that without travelling, and we may not be able to afford the costs despite not being a low income family. I can understand that the council needs to balance the books, but there are many other areas you could start rather than impacting education.

The DfE's "statutory walking distance" may make sense in towns or cities, but in a sparsely populated rural area with poor pedestrian access and footways (narrow roads, high hedges, fast traffic) the two and three mile rule does create problems for many of our families: where both parents are working, where a single parent is working, where there is no car in the family. This is not, of course, new! The revised document is admirably clear, even if there are statutory elements which are outwith the control of the council.

I have two disabled children who are able to access main stream schooling. For the eldest this was only because he attend a smaller, more rural secondary school. This school was named in my eldest sons EHCP before he moved to post 16. I have applied to the same school for my youngest child for September. Our "Nearest" school has places, but is totally inappropriate to meet my children's needs due to their Autism and anxiety (they have demonstrated they can't cope with larger, more crowded schools). Currently my husband (who is a full time career) drives one child to one school and we pay towards post 16 transportation for our eldest. It is the only way we can meet our children educational and SEMH needs. I think that there really does need to be some kind of consideration taken into account for selecting a school (within reason) that better meets my child's needs.

We live in Malham. A place with no suitable public transport for children to reach school. We moved to Malham on the basis of catchment areas to Skipton as well as Settles schools and the provision of transport. With remote jobs we brought badly needed new families and economic activity into this rural area. From Malham Skipton is actually the more accessible location in winter weather. Settle is closer as the crow flies but as the bus (or car in winter weather) drives it is further. On the basis of this new policy our children could only attend Settle schools with transport and would be precluded from applying for a place at the Grammar schools in Skipton as we work full time and so could not drive them to and from school ourselves. There is no public transport. I think this is damaging and limits social mobility for children from rural areas and would discourage families like ours moving to the Dales. There is a 500 year history of Skipton providing education for children from the Dales. This policy rides roughshod over that.

I have paid and continue to pay for my children to use the school bus, we pay over £100 per child each month that is over £300 a month for us as a family. I work in a school where parents are paid by the council to bring their children to school as there are not enough places on the school bus, yet many parents do not take up the places they have been allocated and there are unused seats. I feel the system is unfair. We live rurally and have to drive our children to the bus as it is. School transport is a nightmare!!!

School transport has been extremely valuable to our family living rurally, due to the distance to the nearest catchment school (primary and high school). We are disappointed with the provision laid on from April as we don't feel confident in a taxi service when the same company has been doing it since the beginning of our child's time at school. Get the feeling they'll be very unreliable too. Also seems extremely unviable when the current provider is actually in the area. The school our child attends would benefit massively from a bus service run from Pateley Bridge and I believe many parents would pay for it - the school is dangerous at drop off and collection due to the volume of traffic! Can NYCC look on putting on services like this to try and generate money were a high volume of non catchment children are attending a school? I wholeheartedly support NYCC in any decision about children getting priority into catchment schools based on where they live. We would not get into our current school now due to the amount of non catchment siblings coming in. This is unfair especially when for us it would mean at least 6 miles to the nearest school then!

We only have two secondary schools to choose from in our catchment area, we live in Ingleton. By changing the eligibility to the nearest school with places this would mean QES is the only school we can apply for where we would get free transport. When I have to make my choice for my children as to which secondary school they attend I do not want my child going to QES and would choose Settle. This is for many reasons but I also want my child to attend a school in North Yorkshire and not Cumbria. North Yorkshire would lose a huge amount of children from their numbers if this were to happen as parents who live in the Ingleton/Bentham area and wider areas would choose a Cumbrian school rather than North Yorkshire due to free transport being provided. It seems very unfair to penalise parents that live in rural areas and have little choice in secondary schools anyway.

The council must look at the impact changes to policy will make to the children. All children currently in a school must remain there regardless of the proposals and not be made to move simply because of transport issues. There must be more consideration for the rural areas and for the impact on village schools which are often the heart of a community. This proposal could mean siblings are split between schools. Parents should have a right to choose the school that their child attends within reason and be supported to have a choice. The council should not dictate where poorer families, who may have no income to transport, school their children.

We live in a rural area, which means that access to public transport and safe non-vehicle travel (Cycle paths, cycle lanes, lit footways) are very limited. The only justification of removing the current free travel arrangements is on cost-saving grounds, but this conflicts directly with the council's statutory duty to promote the use of sustainable travel to places of education. I cannot speak for all areas but in our village there are no suitable 'sustainable travel' options available, public transport does not connect with Selby and there are no walking or cycling routes suitable for children (it would involve walking or cycling along National Speed Limit country roads with no pavements, verges or street lighting and with numerous blind bends and dips).

I pay what I consider to be very high council tax. We picked our catchment school as it had travel support. Parents that work need travel support to get their children to school at all. In the villages we often live many miles from our school and most have recently lost public transport. Removing school transport would make living here at all unviable for many families.

NYC have a responsibility not to deny parents the opportunity to choose a school for their child due to their location. Rurality should not limit parental choice. Limited finances are no excuse for this to happen.

We currently live in North Yorkshire but close to a county boundary. Our child has attended the local village primary school, in North Yorkshire since the start of Reception. We drive him to school even though more than distance away. We are isolated from the village due to living on a farm and therefore friendships made in school are important. 3 of our older children are attending secondary school in North Yorkshire, Richmond being our closest catchment school. However, our nearest secondary school would be under the proposed changes in County Durham. I would not send our fourth child to this school, due to no other reason then it is not a school which his primary school feed into. As such we would be forced to fund and provide transport to enable him to go to the school with peers from his Primary school. I feel sending children to the nearest distance school is appropriate, if in the same catchment as the Primary that each child has been attending, but not appropriate, if like my child it is different. I feel otherwise this is detrimental to the children's social and emotional development. We chose to live in North Yorkshire in an area close to Richmond because we wanted our children to attend it- but as an Agricultural family we are unable to live in a town, so school transport has been vital for us to get our children to school. If we had to pay for 3 children to get the bus to school we would financially difficult.

Living rurally we do rely on a taxi run, I feel strongly against an outside company taking the tender for the taxi run as I would not like a complete stranger taking my children to school. Also the local taxi drivers that do take our children know the area and also the conditions that they can be faced with in the winter, where an outsider will not.

We live in a rural area and rely on home to school transport, as we are unable to walk to school. Our home address and primary school are in catchment for a few different secondary schools. Our primary school is a feeder for our preferred secondary school but our home address is nearer to another that we do not want to go to. I think that if we are in catchment for a secondary school then we should get free transport to that school, as we are in area.

You have merged our council and since have consistently provided a poorer service to Selby rural communities. There are no alternative public transport services to any secondary school in North, West or South Yorkshire, and the closest school in South Yorkshire is a several mile walk on isolated country lanes with no pavements or streetlights. The cars travel at 60 miles an hour on straight sections and there are several blind bends. The alternative is not safe. People cannot afford to pay the extortionate fees to take them to our catchment school which is 12 miles/ 25 min drive (without rush hour traffic). If you take away free access, anyone who doesn't drive AND can work flexibly to get to work on time, won't be able to live here with kids. You'll take another step towards strangling our community in favour of funnelling money into bigger towns and cities which already have significantly more resources proportionally than rural communities combined.

This policy is taking away the parental choice to send their child to a school that is the best fit. There is already limited availability re transport in our village and reducing that further to just one school is not acceptable- the choice of only providing transport to knottingly which is based in a very deprived area (even the school website highlights this as a major issue!) again is not acceptable. Our children work incredibly hard and reducing the option to only pay for transport to one school is just not fair to them. As parents we pay incredibly high council tax and since the council has merged we have been told we now have to pay for our garden waste and now this. I am so angry that this policy is a cost cutting policy- our children's education should not be part of your cost cutting! You are effectively once again expecting hard working parents to pay for something that we already pay taxes for.

This decision will take away the parents choice to choose a secondary school. Transport to secondary school is vital in rural villages around Selby where council cuts have already decimated the public transport links. The distance and road type to any school makes it impossible for children to walk. Parents who work will be unable to take the children to school by car. The council will still end up paying for transport so savings will be limited and you will be harming the excellent schools like Brayton who will have reduced numbers on role. The schools in other councils like West Yorkshire and east rising will benefit. It doesn't make any sense.

In remote areas where children have to walk significant distances to get to a bus door to door transport is essential for school attendance. This must be properly funded and continue as this can't always rely on parents transport.

Happy in the main. Safety will still need to play a major part in rural areas. Unlit roads obviously precluding and exempting villages where the distance criteria is not met.

Consideration needs to be made within areas that no other transport options are in place. In small villages that have had transport services removed it limits options and by further reducing the offering this reduces parents choices. Pupil and parents should in fact be supported to attend the school that fits their need and not just because they have no other choice due to financial impact from transport. Pupils all thrive in different settings and children can be negatively impacted if this is removed not to mention the lack of motivation to attend and participate which in turn could reduce progress levels, attainment and outcome. A child being forced into a school that they don't not wish to attend could infact negatively impact that child's future.

Based on our rural location, our nearest school would not be a viable option for our three children during the winter months. Therefore, it is important they continue to have transport available to the school within our catchment area. Their education would be severely disrupted if this was no longer the case.

It was first shared by NYC (Redacted) - Who when contacted came back quickly, now to no longer work for the council. It feels to me that there are to be big losers in this situation, where there is great competition for students, ultimately leading to impacts in schools and communities. We are rural in setting and by no way make up the average stats created for this survey, and within areas this to me needs to be taken into account. Our feeder schools, could essentially no longer by the case in communities we work in and serve - I would appreciate someone coming back to both me and the Governing body here. I have contacted (Redacted) as advised on (Redacted) email. It doesn't feel fair, nor potentially allows for sustainable planning and futures. We work hard to ensure a balanced budget, living within our means, but how can we effectively provide an education to our community, where year on year numbers could end up being far more volatile. Please do call and we can meet to discuss -My number is 01729 822451. - Kind regards, Gareth Whitaker

North Yorkshire is a large area, mostly rural with very poor rural transport links. Most people may choose to live in rural areas, so either they 1. should contribute more for their children to travel to school, 2.the council should take the public transport system back in house and 3 the government should give our council financial assistance for children's transport If I had children of school age I would take responsibility for them and not expect others to have to pay.

With regard to sustainability and the future. We live in quite a remote place so the bus for the nearest primary school only has about 8 children travelling. Some children at the same school live at the starting point or on the route of the bus but are not eligible for free transport. As a council you need to promote and advertise that parents can pay for a bus pass to travel to the school - fill the empty seats and reduce number of cars dropping off outside school.

I feel that yet again, changes disproportionately affect those living in rural areas in a negative way. Reducing choice and increasing cost.

The proposal makes a lottery of funded bus places and makes it even more confusing for parents. It makes no logical sense, I have 4 young children and using the current bus proved it would cost me over £20k in bus fees just to get them to school in their catchment areas, secondary schools are different and suit different children and decisions shouldn't be made on finances. The changes are not fair, especially for more rural people. It would make me drive my children to school this increasing pollution and congestion.

Why should we suffer because we live in a rural area. We should be able to select the school we want within a reasonable distance and just because we live in a rural area this may be a further distance than in other countries. That does not mean we should be forced into not having a choice of schools. Our local secondaries are not that dissimilar in distance from our home, but with these new proposals we would only be able to attend one - the one that we do not wish to attend due to its size, pastoral care system and ethos. We make decisions very carefully about our children's futures and it is unfair to force anyone into 7 years of education at a place where they do not wish to be. I do not understand the need for this change. I also worry about the survival of smaller secondaries when their students are limited. Is this for on the schools?

I think changing free transport to only the nearest school would be a huge mistake, for pupils, parents and schools alike, especially in rural areas. I think the current criteria of the nearest school or catchment area school is by far the correct criteria to have and the proposed change to that would be devastating to not only many families to also schools.

Current primary schools and friendship groups should be looked at when reviewing any transport policy. We live in a small village at the very edge of the North Yorkshire boundary and our preferred secondary school is a North Yorkshire school but the proposed changed mean that our child would only be eligible for free transport to 1 school in West Yorkshire and 1 school in South Yorkshire of which, none of their friends will be attending, nor do we as parents want to send out child to them. There is an absolute minimal difference in the mileage to the North Yorkshire school but it is not an option for free transport. Our village transport links have been cut to almost nothing and this is a further blow to us villagers (who already feel like second class citizens). Many of the children in our village will attend the North Yorkshire School at the huge cost to the parents but this shouldn't be the case.

If I live in North Yorkshire then I would expect that North Yorkshire would support my children to travel to a North Yorkshire school each day. We live in a rural area on the outskirts of the county and the nearest school with places available is in another LA area to which we have no connection. The policy in 2019 already stripped back provisions (catchment school or nearer school originally) and this measure takes it too far. I believe that the equality impact assessment is also flawed as it does not take into account the effect of the changes on those living in rural communities that are more likely to be those with protected characteristics and hence this is indirectly discriminatory. The consultation does not provide any evidence of the calculations of potential lost per capita school funding for the schools and academies that may be caused by a loss of students to other areas

outside of the district and whether this off sets any savings when viewed together. This is very much a penny pinching measure that will affect the North Yorkshire communities that elected members and officials are here to serve.

I like that the policy is being refreshed. It is very difficult to compare areas such as Scarborough to more rural villages such as Leyburn and hopefully the new criteria will allow for personal judgement calls to be made based on the areas current state not its historical features,.this is particularly in refernce to suitable walking distance where footpaths are no longer available/street lighting is not used due to financial constraints and roads that are used more now by large vehicles that were 10+years ago. Im excited to see the new policy ideas and feel the new phrase 'nearest suitable school' is much more relevant than 'catchment school'.

My daughter's been offered a place at Settle College and we live in Ingleton. A bus has always been provided as this school is within the same County. It would be devastating to the local children and also Settle College if transport was removed. Please do it take this transport away.

Whilst I understand that Home to School Travel is a large proportion of a shrinking budget for the Council, I do feel that efficiencies could be gained by allowing more children to use the service and this would also improve safety, congestion and air pollution around schools. Having witnessed a child being hit by a car outside our local school last year I feel that the fewer cars travelling to schools would be a good thing. Particularly in rural areas where cars are travelling at higher speeds near to the school. We chose for our daughter (and son in due course) to attend a school that is not our nearest, although we don't have a school within safe walking distance anyway. We would welcome the ability to drop our children at a point along the bus route to our chosen school to avoid congestion etc in the village and ensure that the buses are at maximum capacity. Depending on cost we would possibly be willing to contribute.

The number of pupils eligible may have been affected by school closures, forcing pupils to travel longer distances. Low pupil numbers are an issue in my area, putting schools at risk of closure. I think this factor should be considered when making changes to policy. I think the environmental impact of changes should also be considered. For each pupil that is no longer eligible because of policy changes this will be replaced by a car journey, often with only 1 pupil per car. School drop off areas are already congested with a lack of available parking, this will add to the problem. On a separate point, where a pupil loses eligibility at age 8 because they live over 2 but below 3 miles away from school, this is too far to be expected to walk twice a day at that age, on dark roads that are often unsafe in rural areas. It will inevitably be replaced by a car journey, further adding to the environmental points above.

I feel it is a money making exercise with no thought or consideration about rural communities that are already struggling to afford to live in the Dales. I work here and live here, I moved my children to school here in Reeth from (Redacted), knowing (from the policy) that they would attend Richmond school at secondary age. The road to Wensleydale school is not safe and it is not a priority road that is gritted, & it is a dangerous suggestions. A coach is also not allowed to travel on the road to Leyburn above Grinton Moor due to the size of the vehicle. It would mean that mini buses would need to be provided-how does this save the council money as you would need more? In our large area but small communities our children have built friendships at Reeth and Gunnerside school - why should this be broken up in secondary school? I would suggest someone from NYCC come to Gunnerside and drive the proposed new routes in a coach and then tell us if they believe it is safe for our children to travel on these roads. Wensleydale school is over subscribed- you are ruining communities and our childrens future of these by splitting them up when going to secondary school.

I think the amendment to change to the nearest school for us in the far west of the county is absolutely ludicrous!! We live on the Cumbrian border so our closest school would be Kirkby Stephen! Have any of you actually driven this road! Even in a car this road is very scary and quite life threatening in my eyes if you were to send a bus full of school children over this top to the nearest school!! We also have 2 if not 3 rather narrow bridges in which the buses could struggle to get over (these have been knocked down the past and having to be closed due to the severity of the road condition once knocked down and open hole dropping straight to the river) there is also a part of the road which is subsiding on the moor heading over to Kirkby Stephen, and again to send a bus of all that weight is just damn right stupid!! The road which we'd have to travel over sits at a height of 1740ft which obviously for a road in the Dales is rather high!! This road never ever gets gritted so this would have to be changed to a category 1 for the school access! I believe as a dale we have been told by Westmorland council this road has not been deemed safe to grit due to the height and severity of the hill!! So I'd love to know how this is going to change the gritting priority?! We are hill farmers here in the Dales and (Redacted), my husband has had to go and rescue an incredible number of people from this road in winter due to getting stuck! I would love to know how many days of school in winter they would miss, this isn't just because of snow but ice! And like this winter ice and cold weather has paid a massive impact on the road this year! I seriously think this part of the new policy needs looking at whether it be as a whole or whether it can change for certain areas within North Yorkshire!! I don't think it's very fair that if we have to apply to Kirkby Stephen school still and we chose to apply down the dale (Richmond or leyburn) for our own safety of our children and then have to try and find our own transport for getting our children to school just sounds very very unfair and in really does feel like you are punishing us for the area of the Dale we live in!! We are a farming family living in the Dales and wanting to access the schools in which all others members of the primary school would be attending!! And it's just not possible for us to move house as I said we farm and our livelihood is all in this area!!

I have ticked Richmond as our nearest town although Richmond is still an hours drive from where we / my family with children live therefore I feel this survey is flawed from the start as it doesn't give participants the opportunity to stress how very rural our homes are. I am very concerned about the council's proposal to drop 'the catchment' aspect of home to school transport and the introduction of the possibility of offering transport to schools in other local authorities. If this was the case for my family's children they would miss an awful lot of school during winter as the road rises to 1800 feet above sea level. It is a single track moorland road with standing water / running water in many places. Not to mention the very steep, long hill down into the next county. It is doubtful a bus or minibus could safely get here never mind the perilous return journey required to get the children to school. The safest route is always down dale on a road that is conscientiously gritted by the council for which we are very grateful as it means the school bus can get to the top of the dale safely without incident. I implore the consultation committee to consider geographical locations such as ours as an important safety issue alongside the attendance implications that transporting children to school/s in bad weather would create.

Living in Ingleton, we are right between two secondary schools, but slightly nearer to one. Those schools are very different, and I would want to send my child to the best school for their needs, rather than being forced to attend the 'nearest school' because of financial reasons. Furthermore, secondary schools with smaller feeder primary schools/few feeder primary schools will suffer - redundancies due to not enough students, funding cuts because of fewer PP/SEND pupils attending,

Whilst I appreciate that savings may need to be found there needs to be some exceptions to this proposal. One size does not fit all. Children in upper Swaledale cannot travel to Kirkby Stephen for the following reasons: 1 Safety. This is a moor road, 1700 + feet above sea level . B road and no winter gritting provision by Cumbria council. It has a 1/4 hill which is treacherous with only minimal ice on it I travel this route for work, missing many days in winter due to bad weather. On many days my husband grits the hill for me to descend which if in a 2 wheel drive or bus would be unsafe. I think the proposals are not considering the hostile environment this route travels through. Also weather conditions change rapidly on this route. The weather may be fine going to school then change and the children cannot or struggle to get home. I can assure you this is can be a frightening experience 2 Disruption to education As several / many days will be lost due to the inability to provide safe transport the children's education will be impacted. The argument they can be set work at home is detrimental to both education and socialisation and establishes inequality I hope you will reconsider this part of the proposal for the children in upper Swaledale. They currently have to travel to Richmond which is accepted as it is a safe journey. Your proposal would not be. I will be raising my concerns with Muker Parish council and Rishi Sunak Thank you

The closest secondary school to our home would be Kirkby Stephen. I am sure that when assessed, it will be decided that the route is unsafe and not a ressonable route. The alternative diversion in poor weather would be 50 miles+ so completely impractical. The second closest option would be Wensleydale School. Again, this route poses challenges due to lower gritting priorities. I believe a large majority of families have chosen to send their children to schools in Richmond from this area due to it being the best and safest route in the winter months. I appreciate other counties do not have a choice of catchment schools but due to the rural nature of our area, I can't see how it can work any other way.

I appreciate why you are looking to change to this. however, it affects student and parental choice of where they wish to go. While you can argue, that they can make alternative arrangements to go to their school of choice, not every household is logistically or financially capable, therefore the policy changes discriminate against those with lower income. Settle College is further away from more populated areas. We have a good portion of students who choose to come to us from areas like Skipton. By removing their eligibility for free travel. We will see a drop in student numbers which means less money to run the school effectively. I do not agree with the changes at all.

Having been involved in the fight to keep a school open in my local area in the past (Ingleton middle)I am again feeling disappointed that there is a real ulterior motive for this decision to change the agenda on how families will have to pay for school transport to the chosen school in the county they live in. Being in North Yorkshire but on the boundary of Lancashire and Cumbria the new criteria seems to me to be a good method of moving pupils away from Settle College to schools nearer to many pupils in Skipton and Kirkby Lonsdale by the means of removing the free school transport, thus removing much needed pupils (and the funding that goes with it). We all know how councils all over the country are struggling to cope financially, but living at the extreme furthest boundaries of the councils jurisdiction I feel again funding will be removed from this area. The bureaucracy and poor management of councils/ governments in the past few years as per normal will ultimately have a detrimental impact on the local community. There is a lot more to discuss on this matter and many,many local people will find this new transport infrastructure on schools utterly despicable and financially driven. Waiting with interest on how this progresses.

You haven't considered Ingleton in this policy review. A village sat between a North Yorkshire secondary and a Cumbrian secondary. The proposed changes in policy will significantly affect admissions to Settle College. Children who already have siblings in Settle College will have to apply to a different school with different holidays etc unless parents can afford transport. Transport to the nearest county school should absolutely be funded by the county !!! This change in policy could have devastating consequences for schools such as Settle College. Transport links within North Yorkshire are already difficult for post 16 education. Please reconsider this proposed change in policy and consult with your local primary and secondary schools!

I appreciate that the Council want to align themselves with Government policy and save money, but the Council must recognise that it has many rural areas where the nearest school is not always the catchment school/suitable school. In rural areas the nearest school in time taken to get there is not always the same as nearest school in distance. If the policy was to change as suggested then this would have significant impacts on those families that reside in the deepest rural areas of the County. Unless the Council are going to upgrade the roads and significantly improve gritting and snow plough services in winter then these pupils will miss out on schooling. A discretionary and common sense approach must be taken.

Please think carefully about any changes to the services provided to very rural areas. It has been hard enough managing with extremely limited services. We need more not less!

I think it not fair you should be able to send your children to what school they would better themselves at how can we afford two children at such a costly price to pay for school transport and if we worked we wouldn't have an option i for one will not be sending my kids to school at Leyburn as I don't feel it has the education I want for my kids or the background for them to see past the rural community having grown up in the countryside it a struggle to get to school as it is especially with the snow I've been bullied in small schools as a little girl and I do not want the same for my children it will affect us massively especially when my kids get to secondary I just can't afford that money and I will not be sending them to Leyburn instead of Richmond ! I also think Reeth is a lovely school and a lot of little ones will not have the opportunity to send them there I don't agree with the changes being a mum of two in the rural area I always think it us that has everything much harder as it is living in the middle of nowhere so no close facilities we need that transport to get to a to b when we are busy mums ourselves

I feel that providing transport to our nearest secondary school, which is outside of our local authority is ridiculous. My choice would be for my child to attend our local authority secondary school in Settle but QES in Kirkby is closer. How can removing the number of children accessing your own school be beneficial to the school. Personally, my child would not cope with the size and number of students at QES but Settle College would provide the appropriate support and needs for my child. You will reduce the number of children attending your own school with this new policy which could lead to the school closing. The new policy is a money saving agenda and is not taking the needs of children in a rural area into account. I believe there would be better ways of saving money than reducing who you can provide transport to, it is despicable!

Our 'closet school' would be QES.... I do not want my children to go hear. The amount of friends with problems here and have moved to other schools is countless. I want my children to go to settle, a smaller school where my children will not just be a number to the teachers. Somewhere they will know their individual personalities, in Yorkshire. It's not fair if we can't afford it we should be punished by send out our children out of the county to a worse school. We live in a rural community where this amendment could ruin countless children's education. Work harder on driving down the cost of the busses. From what I hear they are been paid a fortune for the school runs. Drive down these prices to save money where it won't affect hundreds of parents/children's mental health. There are other things to be looking at before this, why attack children's choices who can't defend themselves

This policy unfortunately will have an extremely negative impact on community schools, as well as removing all element of parental choice of which school their child should attend when reaching secondary age. While I appreciate there are financial constraints which may be alleviated by these changes, we are already hugely disadvantaged as a community by lack of access to services (as an example a 4 hour round trip for nail surgery for one of my sons just this week). We are underfunded in the west of the county and have the minimum access to services across public transport, health and education- special educational settings for SEND students, autism support, Early help are all focused to the east leaving the bare bones of a service for this side of the county. A change such as this will be devastating- meaning parents have no choice but to send their children elsewhere and in a catchment with low numbers of young people, schools are left struggling to recruit enough students to remain viable. Schools such as Settle College are a welcome and popular choice for parents and children across the area, which allows them to provide an excellent quality of education despite funding issues. Should numbers decline due to a policy which discriminates against parental choice (fast becoming a luxury which is available only to urban dwellers) schools like Settle College will suffer enormously. I ask the council to consider what it wants for its population- a hugely discriminatory east/west divide already appears to exist and these changes will make an already unacceptable situation even worse. While there are many challenges to balance within the council I feel that we deserve better, as do our children.

Whilst I agree in principle with nearest school equates to free transport it should also include and account nearest safest route especially in the winter months on high ground on roads that are not gritted. It amounts to discrimination of the Dales communities and puts lives at risk or at the very least restricting education to those living in the Dales. Safety of children should be a priority.

Some comments about the questionnaire: Not sure why Q1 has been included. Will responses be reliable? Does it matter if a respondent has read or hasn't read a text? How will that influence the overall decision making process? Q2 asks respondents' where they live. There is no radar button for Swaledale nor the larger village of Reeth nor any of the Upper Swaledale villages. Richmond is the option for people in Reeth, or is it Leyburn that is nearer but in a different valley. Again, how will this affect decision making when its validity and reliability is questionable? Essentially Q3 asks, who / what are you? Yet again, what bearing will the outcomes have on the overall decision making? Q4 asks about the respondents perception of question clarity. Ditto above comments. At last in Q5 we have a question that relates to the amendment that is of most concern. Yet it uses a Likert scale of 'agreement to disagreement' for each response. Q6 ? Q7 may be useful. Not sure why 'Not Mandatory' is used against these last two questions.

Buckden Parish Council has very real concerns about the amendment to the main eligibility criterion to: 'nearest school (with places available)'. We appreciate that this is to match the statutory requirement, however, given the potential specific implications for our parish, we believe what is proposed is both impractical and unreasonable. This relates to the specific topography of this part of the Dales. Specifically, there are three hamlets within the parish of Buckden – Oughtershaw, Greenfield and Beckermonds - where children have always gone to Kettlewell School, even though Hawes school is marginally closer – in distance, if not in time. This is because the single-track road over Fleet Moss which stands between these locations and Hawes rises to a height of some 1900 feet; it is the highest road in Yorkshire and is the 13th highest in the UK. It is a single-track road, is frequently blocked by snow and even when not blocked can be dangerously icy as the gritters often can't get up the 1 in 4 gradient section. The parish council strongly believe it is not acceptable for NYC to put our children in danger by requiring them to travel to school on such a road; a secondary consideration is that it would inevitably have a negative impact on their attendance record in winter. We propose that a better way of amending the policy to meet the regulations would be to define a specific catchment area for each school based on the "nearest school" criterion but adjusted to take into account such special factors as roads which are completely unsuitable for school transport. We trust that you will give our proposal serious consideration in your consultation process.

Our chief concerns relate to the impact on our local secondary school provider, Settle College. Speaking with the Headteacher of Settle College we are concerned that the proposed changes would see a significant reduction in roll and in effect discriminate against those families who wish their children to travel to Settle College from places such as Bentham and Ingleton. The policy therefore potentially impacts on parental choice in North Craven. A significant fall in roll, as calculated by the Head of Settle College and as attested to by other local Primary headteachers, would negatively affect provision at the College and impact on the life chances of pupils at Settle Primary School, who in the main attend Settle College. We fear that County's proposed Policy as it stands would negatively impact on provision in North Craven though it may bring savings in less rural areas. The North Craven area seems to frequently overlooked when it comes to policy decisions - the recent decision to reject the application of Settle Primary School to be a targeted mainstream provision for high needs, vulnerable pupils was made in part because of transport decisions (ie it was felt a TMP would be better nearer to Skipton and thus save on transport costs). The proposed transport policy likewise discriminates against schools in North Craven with potentially a devastating impact on Settle College - making us wonder, when we consider all the school closures we have had in our area recent years (Low Bentham, Clapham, Rathmell, Horton, Langcliffe, Richard Thornton, Settle Middle, Ingleton Middle) if the Local Authority truly understands and values the fragile educational infrastructure we have in our rural area.

Our chief concerns relate to the impact on accessibility to our remote local school and to our secondary school provider, Settle College. Pupils who attend Kirkby Malham Primary come from a very wide area - anything that compromises eligibility for parents coming from areas such as Bell Busk, Otterburn / Hellifield will not help the viability of our small school. The majority of children attending our school are out of the Malhamdale area - we live in a remote location and are concerned as to the impact of any policy that may affect the roll of our small school community and would need further reassurance that we would not be detrimentally affected. We are also concerned that transport policy changes will reduce eligibility for those families who wish their children to travel to Settle College from places such as Kirkby Malham, Bentham and Ingleton. The policy potentially impacts on parental choice. A significant fall in roll at our school or at Settle College would negatively affect the life chances of pupils in our area.

We live in a deeply rural area, with bus travel the only option for secondary school, without driving almost 80 miles a day if no school transport. There will be no choice for the children in which school to go to or subjects to take

This would be absolutely catastrophic for myself and many other families. As a single parent the cost associated with getting (redacted) to settle school (she starts in September) would have a massive negative impact. I also have (redacted) so this would eventually affect both. This is a terrible change for myself and so many other families. (Redacted) has chosen her school already and that choice shouldn't have to be made based on whether or not (redacted) can get a free school bus. Please don't implement this change.

We live in Ingleton and are both working parents who will be reliant on school transport to and from school. Providing transport is a must for our rural communities and to revoke or reduce that will massively impact ALL children. Especially vulnerable. Reducing it will remove choices for our children and future generations.

This proposal may be fine for large towns, but in a rural area this could be catastrophic for local schools. In Bentham this would entirely cut off 1 of the local high school as an option, having a huge impact on staffing and potentially leading to a closure. The modelling does not utilise projected student numbers so is entirely flawed. Settle College receives a quarter of its pupils from this area that would now be sent to another school. The primary school will lose families to Ingleton (and already has too few numbers for its size) which again will lead to redundancies. This is ill thought out and based on weak modelling. The impact of this consultation if implemented will decimate the local schools, to the benefit of schools outside of North Yorkshire.

The proposal may save money in parts of Craven but for the areas of Ingleton and Bentham this will create issue. Our children will no longer have their nearest county school as an option. Parents do not need to be left to pay for transport to their nearest county school. The proposal has not been thought through. Schools like Settle College will be massively impacted. Schools like Settle College are few and far between. Why take this choice away from our children? The people making these proposals should get out of offices and go and speak to schools, pupils and parents. Hear and understand why they choose schools within their county. Please do not make this proposal policy.

With our nearest 2 schools been Settle college and QES, this will have a huge impact on both schools. More people will choose QeS due to the free transport, even though there is very little difference in distance (we live in Bentham). It also takes away free choice from parents, when children may benefit from Settle college as it is smaller. It will negatively impact on the college too, as numbers will drop dramatically. As a parent with one child already at Settle and another currently at Primary. we have already discussed moving our child to QES. This is not something we want to do as Settle supports the needs of our child. But we also cannot take the extra financial burden of school transport. We moved to this area from the city on the understanding our children would have equal access to schooling through provided transport to their chosen, nearest school (There is very little difference in distance between QES and Settle from our location-10 miles and 11 miles) Living in rural areas can be challenging enough when it comes to equality of access to services, without this extra pressure. Many people struggle with the cost of living crisis, and Bentham is known to be one of the poorest towns in North Yorkshire. This will put more pressure on families and cause more stress/poverty/mental health issues, when it could easily be avoided. Currently Bentham is undergoing regeneration and has proposed the Bentham master plan to NYCC. A major part of this is supporting children and families. I would expect NYCC to be supporting families in this area, not penalising them and causing more financial stress and poverty. Living in North Yorkshire, we would expect our children to be able to go to school in North Yorkshire and not have to attend a school in a different county-QES is in Cumbria. Our nearest school in the NYCC catchment area is Settle and therefore free transport SHOULD be provided.

It is ridiculous to think sending children to school in Cumbria from Upper Swaledale is a sensible option. The road down Swaledale to Richmond can be treacherous at times in winter but to then think it is safe to send children on untreated roads over a hill to Kirkby Stephen is lunacy. The weather can change in minutes at that altitude. Have any of the people making this decision ever travelled this road and if so would they want their children to on a cold frosty snowy day. The alternative route is by the A66 which can also be closed to vehicles when bad weather hits so then what happens, children stuck miles away from home and no way of getting them home. Why should children in remote areas be the ones to suffer when cuts have to be made they get little enough as it is. Yorkshire children should go to school in Yorkshire not shunted off elsewhere to save money

Yet again rural communities suffer and the choices removed.

The proposal is most likely made with care, but there is a lack of understanding of the infrastructure of some rural areas. The proposed closer school for one area is reached by using a minor road (winter maintenance shared by two counties) due to the altitude it is often affected by ice and snow. To take and collect the pupils would entail passing the school they are at present attending, plus another 20 min drive. This is not ideal for working families, the pupils, the environment, or the health of a rural community.

Ripley Parish Council wish to note a concern that provision for home to school travel could disadvantage rural children attending a school within their catchment area if not the closest.

Rural secondaries need to be considered, how are the council supporting the schools that this will affect to ensure they remain open? Surely 'nearest school' should be 'nearest NYCC' school? Seems short sighted in relation to the Craven area in particular.

Moving to a "nearest school" policy means that my child will be sent to a school outside of North Yorkshire, moving away from all their friends and in isolation as the sole student in the year group. The costs will not be reduced by changing the policy - there are currently two buses from our area (one coach, one mini bus) travelling from Swaledale/Arkengarthdale to Richmond School - this will have to be changed to at least one coach and two mini buses travelling to Leyburn, Kirkby Stephen and Barnard Castle. Accessibility in winter has not been considered - travel to our nearest school will involve a journey from Arkengarthdale to Barnard Castle, crossing the Stang. This road over the highest moors is not gritted in winter and is often impassable in a 4x4 truck. Children from upper Swaledale will be sent to Kirkby Stephen - a similarly ungritted and dangerous road. Children from Reeth will be sent to Leyburn over Grinton Moor, another ungritted route over the high moors. Unless the Council plans to extend both their gritting responsibilities, and insist that Cumbria and Co Durham also adopt their parts of the routes as priority one, you are putting lives unnecessarily at risk. These changes will cause divisions in rural communities. Children in Swaledale are a tight-knit group, having gone through primary school together, and these policy changes will highlight those who can afford to pay for transport/drive their children to school and those who cannot, and whose children are forced to move school.

The policy does not account for a rural community and the distances that pupils have to travel for school. It is important that primary schools feed into secondary school that is considered part of their community. This policy does not recognise the importance of feeder schools and their relationships with the secondary schools that they feed in to. A one size fits all approach is not going to work for some schools and it will see the numbers decimated, making the future of the secondary school precarious.

Being brought up and continuing to live in this rural community we are challenged with our Authorities Financial Cuts. Our taxes and particularly Council Tax continues to rise and we are receiving significantly less services. A significant cut has been in winter gritting and snow ploughing. We struggle to commute from our rural community, and cannot imagine how you envisage our child to be expected to use a proposed transport system that will cross high altitude county / parish borders to alternative schools in potentially dangerous winter weather conditions. Clearly in our region the school catchments have aligned with sensible road networks to local schools, maybe this is already a financial saving not considered. I have taken a copy of this note allowing it to be referenced in the future as we experience your investment cuts to our rural community, where our children are put at risk.

Pupils that live in Swaledale mainly go to Richmond School. This makes sense because it is the safest and most reliable route to a secondary school. All other routes to secondary schools other than Richmond involve travelling over high passes that are much more likely to be closed due to snow than the main road to Richmond. It does not seem fair that parents choosing a secondary school should be financially impacted for choosing a school that is safer for their children to travel to and that they will be able to attend more regularly. Further to this, there are good links between primary schools in Swaledale and Richmond School, yet under the new policy none of the children that have attended primary school in Swaledale will have free transport to the secondary school in their catchment. Pupils that attend primary school in Reeth or Gunnerside usually go to secondary school together, supporting community cohesion, and pupil friendships and pupil wellbeing. Some families will have siblings in two different schools if they attend the school associated with free transport. We understand that the policy is intended to save money, but its implementation will have an unfair impact on this community. It seems that, at least, there needs to be special consideration for some communities to mitigate the negative impact of this policy.

All policies require exceptions. This points to someone looking at a map with no concept or understanding of rural communities. The routes to nearest schools in Upper Swaledale are all over high ground much ungritted and not safe in Winter. For example the road to Kirkby Stephen is poor. It requires substantial remedial work to restore it to its original state, for it to be safe. It needs more passing places and the introduction of reflective way marker posts so if ploughed or gritted it is known where the road is. It is been unmaintained for many years the shoulders of the road have collapsed in many places caused by vehicles trying to pass each other on a primarily single track road. You cannot have siblings going to different schools. This survey is restrictive and channeled to the benefit of the Council a very biased document to minimise opposition. A blanket urban style policy cannot fit fairly remote rural communities. The key question is why for well over 50 years have pupils attended their current schools. Because our elders used common sense and knew what was best. This is a money saving exercise at the expense of children's education and mental well being.

We don't need transport to primary school so I am looking at this in relation to the time our daughter moves to secondary school. We live in (Redacted) so our nearest secondary school is QES in Kirkby Lonsdale, Cumbria and our nearest North Yorkshire school is Settle High School. I worry that under this proposed policy more Bentham children will feel forced to apply to QES on transport grounds and therefore Settle will lose out on pupils which would lead to a spiral of decline as fewer children = less funding = fewer subject options and resources and so children will stop applying to this school and it will eventually close. This would have a terrible impact on our communities and I think it would lead to fewer families living in our communities ending up with them becoming towns full of second homes and an aged population. I already feel that our area (North Craven) often gets the short end of the stick when it comes to county matters and this just adds to that feeling. We pay over (Redacted) in council tax yet feel like we don't get much in return. There are already quite a few challenges to raising a family in this area, please don't make it harder. As I read it the policy doesn't make clear if we would be able to pay for transport should we not meet the nearest school criteria. This needs to be clearer so that parents & children can make informed decisions.

Whilst I understand that costs have gone up and need lowering I'm baffled by your suggestion over the 'nearest suitable school'. I live in a rural area that has a very close knit community. This proposal will have a truly devastating effect on our area for a number of reasons. My main concern is safety. Whilst your proposal covers a safe journey for students walking to school it does not cover a safe bus journey and the roads that would have to be used under the new proposal. In our area the roads that would have to be used are simply unsuitable as a school route. They are high altitude and are impassable in winter due to snow. Also one route would mean crossing a dual carriageway which is deeply concerning and unsafe, this road is also routinely closed in winter due to high winds. The alternative route would go past our preferred and sensible choice of school in Richmond or miss an unacceptable amount of days of school. Another point to consider is that currently we have 2 school buses for secondary school in the area, your new proposal would mean that 4 buses would be needed which surely costs more and adds to your carbon footprint?! As mentioned before, we have a very close community and that involves our children who would be split apart from lifelong friends to go to a school where they don't know anyone. This will cause serious social issues and anxiety in our children which means their education will be negatively affected. Another detrimental effect on our community would be that parents like myself who work in the area would have to seek employment out of the area so we could transport our children ourselves as we cannot afford the extortionate bus pass fees. This will undoubtedly negatively affect our local economy. Another point I have been made aware of is the devastating effect this would have on Richmond School and Sixth Form. We have been notified that if your proposal passes as it is then Richmond School would have to offer a vastly reduced curriculum and that the sixth form would cease to exist. This would not only upset people in the area but put unnecessary strain on other schools and sixth forms in neighboring areas that would have to take students that would have preferred to go to Richmond school and sixth form. I strongly urge you to take my points into consideration because your proposal puts finances above the safety of our children and that is simply wrong! One final thought, I pay council tax in North Yorkshire. Why should other councils be expected to educate our children?! Our council tax is eye watering, put it to better and more sensible use like safely getting our children to a truly suitable school that doesn't put them at risk!

Re free travel restricted to 'nearest school': Richmond School has a broader range of facilities and better academic results than Leyburn School; however Leyburn is smaller and more vocationally-focused, offering a different set of strengths. The children of Reeth currently benefit from free transport to either, based on which their parents deem to be the most fitting environment for them to flourish; NOT an agonising decision based on what they can afford. In Swaledale, we already face higher living across a whole host of areas; including a 20 mile round trip to the nearest childcare provider until kids turn 3. It would be catastrophic for the community to have more essential services cut, and the secondary education of their children become an agonising cost-return analysis. Winter conditions in rural areas such as ours must be taken into serious consideration too. Routes quickly become impassable in inclement weather; and the nearest 'suitable school' should take into account the 6 months each year where travel on ungritted, non priority roads can become extremely precarious. In our case, Richmond Road (the road between Reeth and Richmond) winds through the bottom of a valley, at a lower altitude than the road to Leyburn, and is often the only route passable and well gritted in frosty conditions. We have already suffered numerous instances of thoughtless roadworks this winter from NYCC who obviously haven't thought through the repercussions of cutting off the most reliable thoroughfares during periods of bad weather; and it has been up to the parish councils to remind them. This change in policy seems another case of a complete lack of understanding of the specific geography and needs of our rural Swaledale community; and the drawback of a one size for all proposal for such a huge and diverse county. I urge you to reconsider.

I am struggling to understand how the council think that this “ one size fits all “ solution with transport is the correct way. It may well be feasible in an urban area but in the rural communities where I and my family live this plan is completely unworkable and dangerous. Our roads are narrow and susceptible to weather related issues especially in the winter. Many of the roads are not deemed as a priority for gritting etc so I fail to see how expecting children to be transported on unsuitable roads or even diverted, increasing travel time can even be a consideration. As a council you will be forcing a parent to take the decision that it is unsafe for their child to travel due to the weather and therefore preventing that child the right to a full education. Also putting lives of children in jeopardy expecting them to travel on unsuitable roads in treacherous conditions. I also fail to see how this is going to be cost effective when adverse weather conditions will require longer journey times. How will this work in reality when the schools such as Wensleydale are full? I am also very disappointed that as a council you have seen fit to organise a few meetings at unsuitable times and places and have made very little effort in advertising it and therefore prevented a lot of parents, families and residents the opportunity to question and seek answers. Not a very democratic way to propose a change of policy by attempting to bring it in via the back door. The whole thing is completely ridiculous and unrealistic. To try and change something that is so important and not allow a full and open discussion with the people who this will affect the most is disgraceful. I hope that this will be fully reviewed and not instigated in the rural areas. This is going to split communities families and friends.

Settle College is a small but brilliant high school with catchment areas that include Ingleton and Bentham your proposal means that people won't choose Settle College but go for QES in Cumbria not because they want to but because it is nearer and therefore is eligible for free school transport. Settle College will reduce in numbers and fall into demise - so many primary schools in North Craven area have had to close due to falling pupil numbers. How can we keep Settle College alive and thriving? -by offering parents a choice . A choice not based on whether they get a free bus to school during these financially difficult times but a choice based on what's best for their children and their needs. Settle College has a great sense of community, offers a good range of opportunities and needs supporting as a North Yorkshire School. Okay so some parents will choose QES in Cumbria over Settle College but it is their choice. The distances travelled and time taken to get to either schools are very similar it would be ridiculous to make QES in Cumbria an oversubscribed mega school whilst forcing the decline of a very good North Yorkshire high school. Don't apply town and city rules of 'nearest' school to an area so close to other counties. We live in a rural area and this needs to be taken into account . We pay council tax to North Yorkshire for services in our county not the neighbouring one.

I have just attended a meeting which showed the planned proposal for school transport would effect the area more than I originally thought. The owner of the coach company providing the transport service to both high schools in the area confirmed that it costs the same amount of money to transport children to high school in either direction with one being in a different county so even though the school in a different county is closer it will not make a difference to the financial aspect of the proposal which is what North Yorkshire is intending. Yet many families will be impacted with this change. We have (Redacted) at a school in our local area which is North Yorkshire and we will then have to send our (Redacted) children to a school in Cumbria which we personally see as a school with only numbers and grades as their main purpose. When the North Yorkshire school sees pupils as people and aim to find ways of them personally developing and finding themselves in a safe community so in short I see it as doing this to our rural community a huge strain on the wellbeing of students having to attend a non preferred school. It will also effect the wider community as the different council have different school holidays meaning work loads of parents during different school holidays will be greatly troubled. For us personally with our jobs it will then put a strain on other aspects of expenditure for the council as I, along with the majority of the company I work for, have the capability to provide myself for work in health and social care during school hours. If this is done and my children along with all my colleagues families in the same position are put in this situation it will put a bigger strain on the already struggling budget to provide these services. Then childcare needs from the government will be forced to pay more. Other businesses in the area will have a drop in staffing for the same reason too. Making the ongoing effect on the finances of the whole area in a disruption. We are a community where generations of families have all attended the same high school yet this generation is going to be split. What then happens when the intake at the North Yorkshire school is so low that it can not stay open and children from the area then have to travel over an hour to get to their closest high school. The costs for this will be even higher. A child living close to that school would then be left to travel a greater distance to a school. Rural communities are put to the side constantly and we don't get the respect deserved. The council have taken away our local police. They are not paying attention to the struggles of local doctors surgeries. The roads are more holes than road. Public bins overflow and public toilets becoming non-existent. Yet our council tax % is one of the highest in North Yorkshire as our recent bill has just stated we are paying the same for a band B as the rest of North Yorkshire will for band D yet despite this we can not send our children to the local high school because the school 2 counties away is 2 miles closer. This is ridiculous.

I attended the meeting in Ingleton today 21.03.24 which was very well attended by concerned parents, local bus companies, local school governors, local Headteachers and councillors. It was clear from the views in the room that this proposed change would have a very negative impact on a lot of rural families. My main points are; * the cost of providing a school bus for a child to QES from Ingleton/Bentham/Burton would be the same as sending them to Settle college therefore no saving is being made by the council in this rural area. People living in this area will be penalised to make savings for other areas of North Yorkshire, meaning we lose out again due to where we live. *parents could have siblings that may attend Settle college already and get free transport, they will now have to pay for their second child to attend the same school or choose free transport to QES and have siblings in two different schools. Cumbria and North Yorkshire have different term dates, this means having children off school at different times and means families have to pay for more childcare. *North Yorkshire will lose school places in their own North Yorkshire school by changing the policy to the nearest school as parents will choose QES (an academy school in Cumbria!) this then doesn't become a cost saving as you've lost potential pupils attending your own schools. *why should someone who pays council tax's and rates as a North Yorkshire resident not get free transport to a North Yorkshire school. *Settle college is a much smaller school than QES and would suit my child much better than QES, I don't see

why I should have that free transport right taken away when Settle would be more suitable for his mental health and wellbeing. I suggest that an amendment is made and rural areas are considered separately to urban areas as there is a big difference between the two. Thank you

I just think the proposed policy for the nearest school will just not work for our area! We are one of the most rural communities who don't even have mobile phone signal when at home or even for the journey you are proposing to send our children over! Here where we live you are saying the nearest school, well for us it would be going over to a neighbouring county. This would mean going over the most dangerous roads and for a bus or even a car at that matter, I think there could end up been devastating outcomes whether it be full of school children or just the driver!! The road at the moment is starting to subside in places and this is even before you start sending over more traffic! With the subsidence comes very high drops off the side of the carriage way, this then drops onto open moorland running down to a beck in the bottom on the valley! I would hate to think that a bus had to stop to let traffic past in some of these places and it would get stuck! With no mobile phones signal for a matter of 6 miles is just absolutely crazy! We then come onto the winter period! For a lot of people winter doesn't affect them in the way it affects us! Normally when it can be even raining 4 miles down the road, you starting travelling further west and start to realise very quickly that it is starting to snow very heavy and the road start to become very challenging! Our farm sits at 1200ft which is high enough for all the snow fall when forecasted and given that you have to climb to 1740ft to reach the summit of the road, and this is before you drop down a rather steep hill in the Cumbrian border! From the Cumbrian border this road does not get gritted what so ever! Over the years they have lost several gritter over the edge of the barrier and into the grassland below due to the severity of the gradient! Because of this, when us a community ask for the hill to be gritted due to having to get to vets, garage etc. The council have told us that that the hill is not deemed safe! And yet you're trying to send my children over this road! Also another example could be the children have got to the neighbouring council school ok at 9am but by 12pm the weather takes a sudden turn for the worse, the bus sets off back and gets stuck! There is no mobile phone signal to contact anyone, some as young as 11 year olds are on that bus absolutely petrified what impact is this going to have on the children, they'll never want to go to school again! You then probably say right we will find an alternative route! So this would be going up to scotch corner and accessing the A66, this is a 67 miles journey would take easily 1 hour 30 minutes! In this journey you are passing our 'catchment' school! This new route certainly for our area will not save any amount of money! There is already 2 buses running to a locals schools and yet you're wanting to add an extra bus to the journey to go the opposite direction! Crazy!! You talk a lot about safe travel when walking to school, surely there could be a change in the policy in stating if the transport provided whether it be bus/taxi/car is not safe to travel you then go to your catchment school! At one of the meetings you were saying about if transport wouldn't take the tender due to the road parents would then have to take the responsibility in getting the children to school, you still face the same challenges in getting there in a car! But also parents in the community work, how is this going to affect families if they have to leave their job purely to take children to school, they won't be able to put food on tables or even purchase the school uniform which is needed! They also work in the opposite direction due to knowing they don't have access over this road in many months of the year! Please please please could you consider making an exception for the swaledale community within the policy for us due to these points listed above!

Settle College offers young people a broad and balanced curriculum, alongside excellent pastoral support. The proposed transport change would cause a significant reduction in student numbers on roll and therefore risk the schools' future viability. The transport cost savings would be negligible in this area because the students would still require transport to their nearest secondary school, with little change to actual distances travelled. The proposed change is of huge concern to our community and to parents, not just because families will no longer have a choice for where their child is educated, but because of the potential impact on the College caused by such a drop in pupil numbers both immediately and in years to come, and the effect this decline will have on the local area. The line drawn between Settle College and Cumbria's QES places the Ingleton and Bentham cohorts clearly under the "ownership" of QES, when roughly half the students from these towns choose Settle College currently. Whilst QES can absorb these whilst shedding numbers from their Morecambe side, Settle College will only lose. The change feels like closure of this community school by stealth, because it has not been made clear to parents that the change will have such an impact on Settle College it will inevitably decline, becoming vulnerable to closure. Unless all catchment parents are made aware of the North Craven/border impacts, they will be unaware of the risk to the school and therefore unlikely to object to the change during this consultation purely due to unsuspecting ignorance. In this way North Yorkshire Council are effectively concealing / fudging the issue. Indeed I am not convinced NYC even understand, since Settle College's Headteacher himself had to point out the glaring errors in their data, which has resulted in a hastily republished dataset and extension to the consultation period. Our own councillor David Staveley in conversation was unaware of the potential impact on Settle College, another illustration of this issue not being understood locally even by the council itself. Being largely a rural county we expect North Yorkshire Council to protect the interests of rural people, who by the nature of where they live and the outcome of this change will have all choice removed as to which local school their child attends. The town of Settle risks further degeneration into a ghetto of holiday homes and retirement properties, with young families driven away. Settle College is a small rural community school which is lauded for its excellent pastoral care for children from the rural community; many parents choose it for this reason as other schools are felt to be too big or too urban. It is so disappointing that the council are considering sacrificing this investment in sustaining the rural character of the children of the county. The council have a responsibility to be transparent to parents about the long-term effects of this change if they intend to pursue it. However, it is the strong hope of parents, staff and governors of Settle College that the Council, having been misled by the erroneous data first provided to it by its own data team, will now realise the risks, listen to our concerns, and take steps to adjust the home-to-school transport policy to protect children in this area by maintaining home-to-school transport for all students in our catchment should they wish to attend Settle College.

As a school in rural area that is fed by small local schools the number of students from the wider North Yorkshire area has a positive impact on my child's experience of Settle College in a personal and pastoral capacity and in the range of subjects and extra curricular activities. Removal of school transport will reduce student numbers which will have a negative impact on the school and in businesses and groups in the Settle area. The area is already challenged with the risk to the swimming pool and Victoria Hall, village schools closing and the cost of family homes, and the number of retirees that move to the area. The impact to Settle College and risk to school provisions will further deter people from moving to the area and local services will suffer.

It would be detrimental to the local area not just in terms of the schools, pupils, parents and staff but to the wider community. It would be the beginning of a knock on effect of decline to standards of education, decline for business, jobs and economy. Another blow to the rural communities who already struggle with disadvantages of rural poverty. Schools are hugely important, taking away choices of education impacts communities negatively. Loss of local schools in recent years has already proved this. 'Settle College offers young people a broad and balanced curriculum, alongside excellent pastoral support. The proposed transport change would cause a significant reduction in student numbers and therefore a potential impact on this offer. The savings would not be realised in this area as the students would still require transport to their nearest secondary school, with little change to actual distances travelled. There is serious concern in the community about the potential impact on Settle College caused by such a severe drop in pupil numbers both immediately and in years to come, and the after-effects of this decline on the local area.' I would urge all involved to seriously consider the impact of the proposed changes especially to Settle as it does not fit into the general demographic of your facts and figures. Throughout this valley the negative impact of changes to schools, transport decisions and loss of schools has been of significant and detrimental impact.

After speaking to a friend from a neighbouring village it comes to my attention that the transport to the school beyond the county boundaries has no space on the current school busses provided for the intake of septembers new students. This means that if more children from the area are to attend the school 2 miles further than the preferred school in north yorkshire this will cost north yorkshire more overall as they still have to provide transport for more children to attend the school out of the county along with the school within the county which coaches are also full. Even if there is no further intake for the north yorkshire school thus transport will still need to be provided. And the company that provide this service will still be providing the service to pupils attending the north yorkshire school which leaves from the village that is no longer eligable for the service for children that live in this village. This makes no sense financially to run extra transport for children to attend a school they and their families dont want them to attend in a different county. This is indeed putting a bigger financial burden on north yorkshire to provide the service in our area. So not only will it upset the local children families and ability for them to go to the school that previously was not even a question to do so. It will not generate the financial resources to make this a reasonable proposition. The owner of the coach company even agreed that going to either school is financially the same even though it is further to the school in north yorkshire the school route to collect children is more direct so they end up doing the same miles. This really needs cocideration not just because of this financial non viability but because of the mental health of our children. Many children have support from sibilings at the school they are. How can all children from 1 family go to same school without having to transfer children already at secondry school? Ourselves have to concider this option yet we dont want to transfer our older child for the benefit of our younger children we nay have to yet we will still feel QES is not the school fitting for any of our children. School bus for both depart from the opposite side of main road it makes no sense in any way. Is this how north yorkshire want to make a generation of children not have any trust in their council? Is it because we are a little village that can be bullied? How can this be justified in any way? It is upsetting not just children and parents now but for the future. And many in any generation of the community are outraged for this to be even suggested for our rural area.

If transport is no longer provided to schools within catchment, rural schools such as Settle College will suffer from huge drops in pupil numbers, which will have a devastating impact on the local community. Also, whoever decided that an 8 year old child can walk 3 miles to school and back each day has never tried it. My children walked 1.8 miles to school and back from 5 years old, in rain or shine. They are now at secondary school and still walk. Obviously this is fine, they are a suitable age for this. We had no car, and in rural North Yorkshire, there are no buses! Ridiculously, there are 3 buses a day here. The first one arrives in Settle at 9.50am, and the last one leaves Settle at 2.40pm. Why wouldn't you just change the times slightly to allow for school (and work!) commuting?? It isn't cost that stops families like mine using buses to get to school. It is the fact there are no buses to school!!! You can't remove school buses, you don't even run public buses! It's an absolute disgrace.

A blanket policy for a huge area such as NYCC just will not work for rural communities on county lines. Settle College will struggle and leave the older children and their families with the potential of the school closing. QES is too big for a lot of children leaving a rural primary school. They do not know each child or care. They are just a source of funding. There would be no cost saving to NYCC to send children out of county, and in fact could potentially cost more. Loss of tax money paid to NYCC would go to Cumbria, to a school which is already oversubscribed. Choice of school is being taken away, as a lot of parents will have to send their child to a school that they don't want to as they can't afford school transport. You could end up with older siblings at Settle and younger siblings at QES. Different term dates, extra stress and cost for parents to find (expensive) child care. Increased risk of unauthorised absence trying to accommodate holidays out of term time across two different sets of holidays.

As usual this policy will affect the forgotten rural west of this county and have a significant impact on the viability of our local secondary schools future. It feels like a tactic to eventually force the closure of smaller schools as they will struggle to maintain student numbers. Many local primary schools have been lost over recent years, don't let this happen to secondaries as well. Constantly cutting services, but council tax only ever goes up!

Children of Gunnerside Estate's employees, residing in Upper Swaledale will face difficulty attending their closest secondary school due to adverse winter weather conditions in this area and the road conditions on these higher levels. The route to Kirkby Stephen (350m above sea level) would certainly not be a reasonable route to school. It is unlikely a suitable bus company would tender for the work and the alternative diversion is 50+ miles. The second option for these children would be Wensleydale School. Again, the travel routes would be difficult in the winter months, hence, this explains why the greater majority of children attending Reeth and Gunnerside School have historically chosen Richmond School as their first choice for secondary education (priority one gritting route down Swaledale). The Estate are concerned that a change in the policy will adversely affect their ability to retain and recruit good employees. Education for families is an extremely important factor and one that they will consider when looking at a career choice. In addition, if transport to school for children of existing employees is not suitable, there is the risk that these employees will miss valuable work time when they have no choice but to collect their stranded children. This can be for a period of 4 months + during a hard winter. Equally, we do not believe implementing the change for this area will save the Council's funding, as additional bus routes will be required rather than economising the system. Living, working and being an employer in this rural area already involves many challenges and expenses. Please consider this change carefully before adding to these challenges.

In my understanding, the 'nearest suitable school' criteria would be very problematic for secondary school children in the rural areas surrounding Skipton but who may be nearer to a different school. The grammar school system in Skipton but not, for example, Settle means that a child living in Malhamdale could be attending his or her catchment school in Skipton such as Ermysted's or Skipton Girls High, but could lose eligibility to this catchment school as Settle High is closer. This in principle would be understandable if the school systems operated were the same, but because the grammar school system in Skipton sits alongside the comprehensive system in other local towns, the school offering cannot be considered like for like. This is therefore a big penalty on the students who attend their local, in catchment grammar school who will have their transport taken away from them

It is ridiculous that your catchment school is not the one to which you provide free transport. Home choices may well have been made on the basis of catchment schools! If we are in a selective school system how can we possibly send one child to the selective school and one to the catchment school that won't necessarily be the nearest school. Rural areas are significantly affected by the suggested changes.

We live in a rural area sometimes the catchment school is further away. All transport to the catchment school should be provided as it has been for years. All the little villages have to have a school to send their children too. This would ruin the whole "dales schools" if you don't provide it and provide to the closest one with places. Upper wharfedale school would be heavily affected by these changes. I do not agree with it at all.

"Difficult to predict with any certainty" the cost saving of transporting to the nearest school. The difference in mileage from the catchment school of Settle and the nearest school of QES to Ingleton or Bentham is very small. N. Yorkshire residents pay Council Tax to N. Yorkshire for schooling. I fear a dreadful impact on Settle if this is implemented. My grandson starts there in September, with other grandchildren due to follow in (Redacted). Will the range of courses on offer diminish? Will teachers lose their jobs? If anything, the new policy should state that transport should be provided to their nearest NY school, rather than to any out of county one. Has the impact on numbers for Settle been looked at? If this policy goes ahead, as the cohorts provided with transport to Settle each year reduce over the next 6 to 8 years, will extra buses be needed to transport to QES? And if QES is full, transport will still be needed to Settle, saving no money at all? Parental choice is the deciding factor now, but in future will friends be split up just because one school is full? As a general policy I agree that transport should be to the nearest school, but in this rural area I believe most strongly that an exception should be made. I would like to know about the other side of Settle catchment. Will children now have to go to Skipton instead of coming up to Settle? How will these numbers impact the school? There is a lot that needs thinking about in this very rural part of North Yorkshire. Please think about it carefully Maybe this area needs to be an exception and have its own rules. Do you really want the impact this could have on one of your own schools, Settle, to be disastrous? I'm sure just this consultation will make parents think that they should opt for QES for 2025, even if they had not planned to. There will need to be a positive campaign for Settle to overcome this uncertainty. Thank you.

We live in a rural area and the difference between our schools (only 2 in our area) is 3 miles and 3 mins drive. The closest is in a different county and council remit. The further is in the same county and council remit. Our children attend the further due to having family in that area that can help out if needed. If we are forced to use the closer school we would lose that help and in turn would affect our working lives. This policy change does not take into consideration the bigger picture of people's lives and the impacts it may cause.

This policy consultation was discussed at length at a recent Mickleby Parish Council meeting. The parish council has significant concerns about the implications of the proposed changes for families in our area. The implications of this policy seem to us to discriminate against families living in rural areas and the ability they have to choose a school for their children. Families in our local town (Whitby) have a choice of 4 primary schools, 3 of which are in easy walking distance of each other. Families living in our rural parish on the other hand, which lies between two primary schools, have a choice which is already very limited. The proposed changes to this policy will limit that choice further by designating one school as the closest and therefore the only one to which free home school transport will be funded. Whilst parents with the financial capacity to do so may decide to pay for transport to their preferred school or may have the capacity to drive their children to school, lower income families and families without access to their own transport will be unfairly disadvantaged. Our parish council has similar concerns as regards the removal of support for low income families to send their children to a faith school of their choice. We would ask North Yorkshire Council to reconsider these aspects of the proposed policy changes given the adverse effect they will have on rural families and in particular on low income families in our villages. It is clear that the main driver behind the proposed changes is financial. Whilst we fully understand the constraints that local government finds itself under, we feel strongly that it should not be low income rural families who bear the brunt of the proposed cuts to the service. North Yorkshire is a largely rural county and the costs of home school transport are therefore bound to be high. The current national government is very keen to promote the importance of freedom of choice as regards schooling, it should therefore be providing funds to ensure that rural communities have at least some choice as to where they educate their young people.

I think there should be more flexibility about which school is eligible for the provision of free school transport. Giving free school transport assessed strictly by it being the nearest school is not necessarily going to be in the best interests of the children, the schools in the area or in some cases even the best financial option to save money for the council. My 2 grandchildren live in Bentham and go to Settle college. The other school in the catchment area is Q.E.S. Settle College is slightly further away than Q.E.S but it is the school of choice for most families who have lived in the area for generations. It is in North Yorkshire whilst Q.E.S is in Cumbria. From observation it appears to me that the parents who choose Q.E.S. have mainly come to Bentham from other areas and are usually more wealthy than the local families therefore they could afford to pay the bus fare. Bentham has no public bus service to Settle. The school bus would have to keep running for the children who were eligible to go there because of Special Educational Needs ETC but there would be a lot of empty seats and I don't see how that would save the council money. Settle College is an absolutely essential school for what is a largely rural area, 75% of students at the school need home to school transport. The excellent headmaster is worried that if the policy is implemented in its present form it would mean a decline in numbers for what is already a relatively small school and ultimately a question about the future of the school. In my opinion this would be a tragedy for the whole area. The school in recent years has provided excellent educational opportunities for all its pupils. It caters for all the education and care needs for its pupils by getting to know each child individually and helping them reach their full potential. My main point is that every area is different and has different needs so a policy that is not flexible enough to meet the education needs of the area could be disastrous.

My child attends a primary school in North Yorkshire, which is where we live. If your proposal was to go ahead, my child would have to attend a school in Cumbria. This school is far too big for my child who has SEND needs (which are not recognised through an EHCP) meaning he would find secondary school incredibly difficult. Living in a rural area should not mean we only have one choice of school to go to, particularly when that school is not even in our county. It is wrong that choice is being taken away. My two nearest schools, which are very similar in distance, are very different schools. My child and I should have a choice giving him the best chance at a positive education.

I have no issue with the general context of the proposed changes, however it is clear that the blanket policy highlights the complete lack of understanding NYC has of the region it proports to represent. Even on this form Question 2 assumes we live in large towns, I had to select Hawes but I live in Thwaite on the other side of the Buttertubs; this example is really at the crux of the issue. I hate to be the one to inform you, North Yorkshire is not flat terrain, it has mountain passes, which are winding, poorly maintained and untreated in winter. Our village is geographically nearer to Kirkby Stephens, however we rarely drive there. Why is that? Well is anyone in the council offices stepped outside the towns and cities you would know the B6270 is not a road to be taken lightly. Bikers choose to ride it in summer because it is challenging, yet the proposal would end with a coach travelling this road in the depths of winter. If you wandered down your corridors and discussed this route with your road maintenance teams, at the very least they would raise an eyebrow at the suggestion. It is abhorrent to me that the council would seriously suggest playing with the life and wellbeing of the Upper Dales children by bussing them along this road. Ask a farmer or game keeper how safe this route is in winter. The route goes well above the snow line, and it's not just snow but ice. When people are reluctant to take land rovers over there an "out of touch" transport department feels its fine to take a coach full of children across there. At best I can assume the council is poorly informed, at worse this is a council actively seeking ways to persecute those would chose to live in rural areas. I want to put the council on notice that should the policy proceed and the route be enforced on Upper Dales families, should there be any incident which causes harm (mental or physical) to our children, legal action will be taken. It will be easy to show that the council was fully aware of the risk, it knowingly failed to ensure the safety of the children and was thus negligent in it's duty of care.

We live in such a rural area. With only two secondary schools with are very much different one being very big with thousands of pupils and the other not as big but more country pupils. It will be a huge impact on where I send my two children too for secondary school. As the nearest isn't the right school and it will cut the numbers down on your North Yorkshire school as the other school is in Cumbria (but as you say it doesn't matter about county's) but you would rather support a Cumbria school then a North Yorkshire one!!! I think the new proposed home to school policy is not the right action to take. You need to rethink about saving money else where!! You need to support your North Yorkshire secondary school.

Ability / option for children under the 3 mile limit to be able to access transport for a fare / pay as not always suitable access specially in rural areas to walk safely home

It's important that children in rural settings are transported to school

The proposals to only provide transport support for the nearest school significantly disadvantages children living in outlying villages. It also takes away any element of school choice for families. I want to be Ble to make decisions on what is best for my child, not what we can afford to do. If you live witjin the xatchment area you should be entitled to free school transport to any catchment school if you are unable to walk there. I strongly oppose this proposal

Our child does not go to our catchment school. We were fortunate to choose the right school for our child, and to pay for the school organised bus, therefore catchment and eligibility for transport did not come into our decision making. However, having lived in the northern dales previously, this may have a detrimental impact for the rural communities many of whom may not be able to afford to pay for the transport, to enable them to have a choice in schools. Officers and councillors should look at whether the detrimental impact for these people with protected characteristics need to be revised before pushing ahead with the removal of catchment. The policy change could adversely impact on rural schools and their finances and sustainability. Therefore urge officers and councillors to minimise the adverse impact to those impacted rather than just push ahead with the policy and budget savings. As both of us parents have benefitted from eligibility to transport for our secondary schools when we were children, to go to a good school, and whose parents could not have afforded the buses if we had not been, we are keen that this should not reduce those who are less fortunate from having the choice to attend a good school.

The policy is very inaccessible and wordy. Make short crib sheets for specific populations eg children with medical needs. Make videos rather than documents. School Transport is so critical in a rural area, we absolutely rely on it but it is scary when it is unreliable or only taxis.

I think it is wildly unfair, in a rural area, to take away the choice of pupils to attend a school which they lie in catchment for, purely because they cannot get free transport. Here that is removing all choice of attending the school they want to - it will split friends up, it could destroy smaller schools.

This scheme does not work in remote areas such as North Yorkshire. Our choice of school is based on accessibility for both parents around work commitments and resources only available with the schools area, rather than geographically. We also wish for our children to receive the best education and will opt for a school based on this. By limiting school choice for parent's who cannot afford transport to the better local educational centres will simply result in pockets of reduced educational outcomes, poorer futures wages and increased reliability on government handouts. It's also possibly that remote schools will also be forced to close as they will be undersubscribed and won't receive the funding to retain staff and could result in closures. The move also doesn't support the government's move towards eco friendly choices and it will force more drivers to go on extra journeys to keep their children in the schools they desire for their best outcomes

Would Settle college survive based on the catchment area. In a rural location, it is vital that our local children are not forced to travel long distances.

If lived in a built up area with better transport such as keighley, harrogate, Lancaster transport would not be an issue however because of lack of regular public transport. Transport is needed for rural areas. Parents / child should have option to choose school within in reasonable distance to where they live.

I would like to be eligible for help for home to school travel for my three young children that all attend primary school together. We live very rural life and it's a shame that we don't get any help with transport because the school we haven't taken them too is supposed to be closer even though as the crow flies our school is nearest.

The very rural locations in the county have been ignored when making some proposals. This is exactly why we wanted to keep our own counsels.

The policy has clearly been designed with urban schools in mind and does not adequately consider or provide for rural locations where there is limited choice of schools.

I think that the wider financial implications of the proposal to make it nearest suitable school, including out of county, have not been thought out. You will lose hundreds of rural children around the borders of the county to other authorities because parents literally cannot afford the transport costs for the longer than average journeys to school in North Yorkshire. Also not to mention the then lack of funding in NY schools due to lower pupil numbers and then NY having to pay other counties school fees. It makes no sense at all. My children attend Caedmon, our catchment school for decades on free transport on a bus. How are pupil numbers affecting the operation of that bus....be it 10 or 30 children the bus would still run so how does it save money preventing them travelling for free? Also their closest suitable school would be out of county in Guisborough or Brotton....i live in North Yorkshire and want my children educated where i live in the county they are growing up in, where i pay my council tax etc. As education is compulsory i find it abhorrent to expect any parent to pay for their child's transport to the nearest catchment school. What is very difficult to ascertain here and will be for many upcoming parents is when will they find out if they can get transport to Caedmon for free....after they've applied, before? Does this now mean year 5 pupils need to be looking at Cleveland schools as well as NY schools. How do they find out where they get free transport to. Is it a lottery each year? How can they plan both for their child and financially to account for potentially paying to send their child to their local school. Already Stokesley has lost all children in Astleton and Danby as the bus is no longer free, please do not do this to Caedmon/Whitby. I wish there had been more info provided to parents BEFORE the meetings so we realised we needed to attend to have the questions answered. In short i strongly oppose the abolition of free school transport on this plan. It is unclear, makes it impossible for parents to plan and make choices and no child should have to pay for transport to their catchment school!

It needs to account more for children on farms and hard to reach areas as they miss out on so much including decent transport provision

The proposed change of eligibility for school transport to remove catchment school from the criteria will have an absolutely devastating effect on my family, and on the communities of my village and surrounding area. We are a Dales community, with close links to our catchment school (Upper Wharfedale School), with most siblings and neighbours attending this school. Our children attend very small rural primaries across the Dales and spend time each week attending Upper Wharfedale School for swimming and sports lessons and events, gradually getting them used to this school and keeping a close connection with children and teachers. We are not an urban community and we do not have any links with schools or communities in Skipton, so to give us no choice but to send our children to a secondary school in Skipton, outside of our rural Dales community has come as a great shock and disappointment, and is contrary to every expectation of both families who have lived here for generations and for families who have moved here with the specific understanding that their children will be eligible to attend UWS. Owing to our rural location, we are 30 mins away from our catchment secondary school, so transporting children ourselves or paying for transport (should this become available), is out of reach for many of us. With this lack of consideration for rural communities, this proposed new policy completely disregards our needs, and may lead to families being forced to move away, and possibility even to the closure of rural schools. I feel that we are being unfairly treated

We live in (Redacted), North Yorkshire with one child getting home to school transport to (Redacted), and one child getting home to school transport to (Redacted) - both our catchment schools. With your proposed changes, my youngest will have (Redacted) as her nearest school when she leaves Tockwith. In our opinion, this is not such a good school as our current catchment senior schools (Redacted). Wetherby is in West Yorkshire and comes under Leeds Council. Who will provide home to school transport (Redacted) to Wetherby - anyone? If we opt to send our second child to (Redacted), does that mean we will have to take her - or will you still provide transport? Will we have to pay for that transport for our eldest child who is already at (Redacted)? None of the examples you gave in the document applied to our situation so it's difficult to understand. If you are prioritising transporting SEND children, will my children be able to use that transport? Have you considered all the additional cars on the road with extra parents having to drive their children to school? The proposed changes seem to be penalising those in rural areas.

Implementation of this amended policy will seriously impact the future viability of Settle College as a functioning secondary school by penalising children who live 'just beyond' catchment area who may no longer be able to afford to attend. In addition, it will impact the social and mental well being of students in the area two fold, both in the opportunity to mix with people from a wider area and, if bullying occurs, the inability to move schools without financial cost to parents. I am angry that North Yorkshire council seems now very town/city centric, with seemingly little understanding as to how it is to live in the rural west of the county. There is currently only one school that children in the Settle area can attend, compared to a raft of choices in bigger towns and cities. If you go ahead with these changes, there may not even be one! If numbers attending Settle College reduce because parents who live 'just' out of area cannot afford to pay for transport, the funding given to the school will reduce accordingly. Due to the population density of young people in the area - perhaps because of a lack of affordable housing - the number of children within catchment area is already quite low and so schools like our local school rely on additional students on the boundaries of catchment enhancing the numbers and social diversity in the school. In the past 15 years, North Yorkshire council have closed 3 primary schools within a 5 mile radius of Settle. By implementing the proposed changes to the transport policy, you are now putting our secondary school at risk, by effectively 'shutting out' children from north Ingleton and towards Skipton (e.g. the villages near Gargrave) whose parents cannot afford to pay for transport, and clearly have not considered how our children's well being will be affected if their local school has to close. In addition, if children who effectively live just within catchment area for Kirkby Lonsdale and Skipton schools (who currently attend Settle College) had to attend their catchment schools, are there places available for them now?

We are in the catchment for two schools, the closest one is much bigger and popular. The second school is smaller and 3 miles further away. I assume thought has been put into determining valid catchment areas, and that there is a reason it was deemed reasonable for us to want to attend the smaller school. I think it is important for the travel policy to consider the alternative transport options in rural areas. There is NO suitable public transport option to school 2 therefore all families wishing to attend that school would need to drive cars individually which will significantly add to the carbon footprint load in the area. It would also increase traffic around the school. When driving past other schools at start/end times there is significant illegal stopping of cars causing driving hazards and unsafe conditions for children. This change would put pressure on an already oversubscribed school (the closest) and penalize the smaller school. I think it is shortsighted not to consider the need for parents to work. Unemployed people may be able to accompany their children to school but they don't pay council tax, so surely it is financially beneficial to support working parents?

1)The right of choice is removed for parents. This affects the democratic right of every parent from whatever background, to seek out the best education and suitability of their child and will discriminate against those on low income or from deprived or ethnic backgrounds who may not be able to afford additional transport costs to their school of choice under the revised proposals. This will clearly discriminate against this section of society and the future of the children affected where the local school may not meet the necessary needs and requirements of the pupil. In restricting school/transport choice, should parents choose to still send their children to the preferred choice, then the likelihood of alternative transport choice i.e. taking their children to school in the car will be counter to the county policy of sustainable active transport and may adversely affect the net zero targets set by the state. 2)Not supportive to the rural schools. With the removal of the Middle school in Ingleton, Settle and special school in Netherside in 2012, the negative and detrimental effect on the local community is still being felt within the local communities. To implement this policy would see an adverse effect on a number of small local schools where this policy would destroy the school and adversely affect the local community. This could also have a detrimental effect on the larger local schools like QES in Kirkby Lonsdale and Settle College. 3) These proposed measures could have a counterproductive result, but no allowance or contingency has been made for this possibility. There is no allowance for the possibility for the nearest school being oversubscribed and children having to be bused out to other schools under the transport provision which the county would have to meet under its legal obligations. This would not then meet the projected figures given in the analysis. 4) Further where there have been open consultation days, these have been at times when the people who this is most relevant to have not been able to attend as they have been during working hours therefore actively disincentivising active participation with no after working hours consultation [5-30, 6-30 is not conducive with working parents] 5)Adverse effect on local companies, employment, and economy, particularly the transport operators. Should the tendering process look for shorter runs with reduced prices, it will become economically unviable for a number of local companies which will no longer be able to run the service, this in turn will lead to reduced competition, with reduced competition naturally lead to higher prices charged and the county could very well end up paying more for the same services due to reduced companies and submitted tenders. This situation benefits no one but the transport companies. 6)Adverse impact on the community. This sort of radical change to policy has a huge and subtle effect on the local communities, which generally to the detriment of the local community in lost facilities and services. 7)Adversely affect the mental wellbeing of the child. The restriction of a child's fundamental right to a good education at their chosen school can and does have a detrimental effect on the child's wellbeing and mental health and there are many well documented cases supporting this. The effect lasts a lifetime and can lead to depression, low esteem and in extreme cases, suicide. 8)Adversely affect the education of the child by sending them to an unsuitable school with long term effects

on the adult prospects, both personally, academically, professionally and for the country employment workforce as a whole 9) The data model summary - January 2024 [analysis] is poor in its analysis with only taking on sample day and clearly states that on another sample day, the results would be different, Projections are hypothetical with no sound financial basis. "In the scenario that every child attends their nearest school" is clearly a flawed assumption

I am shocked and devastated that NYCC are planning to remove the "catchment school" criteria from the Home to School Travel Policy. I understand that the whole of NY needs to be planned for, but I believe that there is a total lack of understanding of the rural communities that have to use transport for their children to attend school, due to the number of farming communities that live in North Yorkshire and that to attend a local primary school require transport, particularly areas of the county that are close to the borders. My family live in rural Yorkshire close to the Lancashire and Cumbria border. My child currently attending the closest village primary school, but I was denied transport costs despite the travel to any of the surrounding village schools being unsafe for walking (down the A65 or outside the mileage limit for his age group) because I didn't send him to the catchment school which was nearly double the distance, so I am now very angry and confused as to why NY are now making such a fuss about their statutory requirement only being to transport to the nearest school. So based on this, I made the decision to send my child to the catchment school of Settle College this coming September. A school that my family have attended and supported for generations. My oldest child also attended, despite Settle College not being the closest school, because it was a NY school and because the alternative was Queen Elizabeth in Kirkby Lonsdale, and despite a significant number of his friends going across the border to QES. So based on transport I decided on Settle College again for my next child, to support North Yorkshire and Settle College, again despite a significant number of his friends decided on QES. Under this policy, Settle College is no longer the closest. Based on the proposed new policy, the choice to support a North Yorkshire school will now be taken away from us as parents for future children as our closest secondary school with places will now be a secondary school outside of NY. So in North Craven, this policy will effectively prevent our children who live and reside in NY from being able to attend a NY Secondary School. Why would we pay for transport to Settle when we can have a free bus to QES? I attended the meeting to hear how this was going to save NY money. In North Craven, I fail to understand how this will save you money. All our children require transport as we all live outside the mileage limit for secondary schools. NY have to pay for transport, but are going to have to pay for our children to attend a secondary school outside NY, so all funding from the government for school places will go to QES NOT Settle College to support and fund a Cumbrian school. Settle College will be affected immediately. Parents will accept the free transport to QES and chose to send their children to Cumbria instead of Settle College from the start of the intake 2025. Those parents who might consider supporting Settle College will be unlikely to put Settle College down as a choice if they think the school might be under threat of closure. DO NOT underestimate the impact of Settle College losing pupils from North Craven and the ripples it will have on future families making a decision for their children when they look at falling numbers at Settle College or a thriving QES. And should Settle College close, I believe the next closest secondary school will be in Lancashire, not even a Skipton School, so our children are still going to be transported out of NY at NY's cost with no school funding coming back into NY. I will be making a different decision if this policy is implemented and sending my child to QES because I believe this will be end of Settle College as it becomes financially unviable and I don't want my child's education disrupted. I pay council tax to North Yorkshire to include educational facilities, and will not be able to have my child educated at a NY secondary school. Appalling!

Due to the nature of catchments and the broader locality within which STAR operates, unless behavioural change means that parents/carers do not select schools on grounds of transport eligibility, I believe our STAR schools will probably see a net loss of students. This is particularly the case at secondary. This MAY have considerable impact on the quality and sufficiency (curriculum offer, SEND offer) of our educational offer. Tadcaster Grammar School is already under considerable risk from the CYC consultation. Tadcaster Grammar and Riverside are impact by the transport consultation (s) and this compounds the well known issues with housing in the town i.e. there is an aging population with little available housing and to maintain numbers on roll, we have needed some students to commute to their schools. The transport policy may jeopardise this and compound our situation. We recognise these changes are in line with changes to statutory transport and also that NYC need to mitigate costs, but at the same time, we are also concerned that in a rural county such a change has significant implications for social mobility. A student may live within the catchment of a strong school which their family wants them to attend but because of policy change may be forced to attend a closer school which doesn't meet their needs as well, due to a lack of means of transport. In this way, and especially within the High School environment, we will undoubtedly see some of those large Trusts which have the means to do so, deploy their own transport offer to compensate for the loss of one run by NYC, to the further detriment of maintained schools and smaller Trusts who cannot afford to run buses around their catchment to collect students.

It doesn't work in rural villages when distances might be comparable as the crow flies but the drive is not at all comparable

This change will have a severely detrimental effect on rural schools. If a school loses students because they are forced to go to a school slightly nearer their home rather than their own choice, the school is then at risk of falling rolls or even closure. That has a massive impact on communities. Rural communities are already struggling to survive as mixed vibrant communities due to retirees moving in, lack of jobs and housing, Airbnb's etc. Our neighbours, a precious family with young children say they would move if their children can't go to a local school. We've seen the impact of small primary schools closing and the impact would be worse for secondary schools. The council should be taking steps to keep our communities mixed age and vibrant and this would have the opposite effect. It is very short sighted and a false economy.

Settle Town Council are concerned by proposals given, having a potential impact on Settle College. As "close to boundary" will be disadvantaged by the proposal. It is not reasonable to transport North Yorkshire children out of the County for school. There is a worry that reduced student numbers will lead to reduced provision such as extra-curricular offering and pastoral support. Further concerns are there will be a knock on leading to further pupil reductions. Settle Town Council support Settle College's key role in the community. The proposals could damage this and have an impact on the whole community. Settle College is an integral part of the Settle community with pupils involved accessing a range of groups and participating in local & Council run events. A reduction in numbers and subsequently funding could have a serious impact. At worst case scenario, there is a serious concern over financial liability and closure.

I believe that the policy will split up the community in Swaledale. All children currently go to the same secondary school which provides a cohesiveness to the community which will disappear if pupils get dispersed amongst different schools. In addition, this is a highly rural area subject to wintery conditions and at the moment, the relatively low level route to Richmond is gritted while routes over the Stang and to Kirby Stephen in particular are single carriage roads which are not gritted in their entirety. Any savings in actual distance travelled will be negated by the poor roads and hilliness. I also anticipate a greater number of school days lost because of "snow days" I would also be interested to know how the need to provide a number of vehicles to travel to different locations as well as maintaining a bus to Richmond for a few years will save money? I have been unable to find sample costings for travel from various Swaledale villages. In addition, I cannot think that the policy will be in line with North Yorkshire Climate Change Policy 2025 to 2030 because it will encourage more vehicles and if parents wish to keep siblings at the same school, a need for parents to provide the travel support in private vehicles. Some of the schools will be outside of North Yorkshire and again it will result in pupils taking part in school activities out of their area which again will have an impact on the local community To conclude, I think that the policy will have a great impact on Swaledale children and while I appreciate that the school transport bill is the second largest outgoing of the council and that retaining a catchment school is not required, I am not convinced that there will be savings made because of the nature of the alternative routes.

I think you are trying to implement a procedure that serves an urban population in a rural area. Facilities at local schools have been put in place to manage a large number of students. Nearest school will NOT be able to withstand the amount of students with lack of facilities, teaches and space. This is going to massively implement there education. The system is broken with no common sense involved. I understand that travel is a large expense but subsidies with choice and facilities available at the core of the decision.

Living in a rural area, the nearest destination is often over a narrow minor road that is impassable in winter weather conditions. If the school bus has to take the safer major road that is passable through winter it would actually be closer to go to our current catchment school, there's about 2 miles difference. My concern is also that our nearest school might be available for one of my children but then not for another due to our closest being a small school, and we would end up with one child being transported and attending one school and the other not being accepted due to a larger year group intake and maybe having to get them to the catchment school with a different transport arrangement. This scenario would make life difficult for us as working parents for after school collection from after school classes ect. I strongly believe that the nearest/ catchment school needs to be looked at closer in our area due the road safety for transportation of children on buses or coaches. You need to be aware that bus transportation to our catchment school in this area would be the only sensible and much safer than to the nearest schools.

I understand that council costs are increasing and they need to save money but so is the cost of living for households with no pay increases. And considering the provision of education to children is fundamental, the proposed changes are going to have an impact for many children. Once again rural families are being penalised for living a greater distance from the current school provision. And it is ridiculous that children who live near the border of North Yorkshire be penalised and be made to go to another council school when historically they have always progressed to the catchment area in North Yorkshire. And should parents not be able to afford the cost of transport from these changes, how does the child access education as public transport through the rural villages is not regular enough to support transporting children to and from school. And how will some of these schools deal with increased traffic of potentially hundred more cars (at secondary school) dropping off and picking up as there are all ready such high traffic areas and with additional vehicles it will increase the risk of accidents to both vehicles and pedestrians . I do not support this change of to transport provision to the nearest school only no made which local authority. Surely as a County we should be encouraging people into the area not pushing them to other local authorities.

The proposed changes are going to mean that families will have children in school in more than more than one local authority. Not only would I need to be able to take children to different school, it would mean taking them to two different schools in opposite directions. Furthermore the different location authorities operate on different school holidays. It is already hard enough to cover childcare as holidays from work do not cover all holidays it would mean covering more school holidays. Of which living in rural area , there are already limited out of school/holidays clubs providing school age child care. Rural bus services are not regular enough or have many routes to facilities transport to the 'nearest' schools. Then the cost I'm assuming parents will be offered to pay for school bus service will be higher than families with multiple children can afford. Once again low/ middle class working families are penalised. This is going to impact and be detrimental to many children and their families changing it to the 'nearest' school no matter what the local authority.

I find this new idea of having to send your kids to the nearest school as the crow flies ridiculous and something that could only be thought up by a tory government which clearly thinks everyone is flying about in helicopters!! We would have to pay thousands to send our second child to the same school as her brother all in the hope of saving a few quid. This hole idea will also have a huge impact on our local schools. This idea may work within city's and suburban areas but out in the country which is where we are this idea is laughable.

The proposal is ridiculous. We live in (Redacted) which has ALWAYS fed into Richmond School, my eldest starts Richmond School in September 2024 so he is thankfully eligible for a funded bus but under the new rules my youngest who will start secondary school in 2027 would not. The new rules would mean he would be funded to go to Hummersknott which is in a different county and often has different school holidays! How are parents expected to work and cover mismatching school holidays?! Equally if you have them both wanting to be involved in after school clubs how are you expected to pick them up from different towns at the same time?! On top of that starting secondary school is a daunting time in a child's life this would be made far worse for kids who are separated from their elder siblings due to these changes. Anxiety amongst kids is at an all time high, so it does not make any sense to make this worse by splitting up siblings and primary school friends. The schools are set up to cope with the existing intake of children, for schools like Richmond School this change in transport rules could mean a drop in pupil numbers and therefore funding to the school which might limit the wonderful facilities and experiences it currently offers. There will be a bus going to Richmond from (Redacted) so why add extra expense by putting on an extra bus to Darlington?! Please, please reconsider this change to the policy with the move away from catchment areas and the impact it will have on a significant amount of families.

I feel that as I live in North Yorkshire I should be able to choose a school in this County. This proposed change will massively impact friendships as the year will be totally divided into different schools. There is no transport provision for any other school except Richmond currently for our school so this will need to be provided which would increase bus quantities in the areas. The catchment area is a far better system as you would always know which school you would be attending instead of worrying if there is enough room at the closest school. Holiday clubs and family time would be impacted as different schools have holidays at different times meaning holiday clubs may not be open when needed. Absolutely ridiculous idea that will massively impact families and the villages that we live. Some would move out of the area to ensure they are going to attend the school of their choice.

Your child should have free transport to their catchment school. A school in another LA quarter of a mile nearer is unlikely to offer them a place and will certainly not provide transport. Children have to go to school. We have a shockingly bad public transport system and families in rural areas are sick of being punished for living in rural areas.

Families who live in the North Yorkshire villages north of Richmond will, under the new criteria, only have transport to schools in County Durham and Darlington. These areas often have different school terms from North Yorkshire which makes juggling childcare immensely difficult when working in one area and children in different counties. Furthermore, children who have built relationships with peers in primary schools will no longer be able to depend on moving through school with a cohort who live in the same area. There is a vast difference between children living in a village in North Yorkshire and those living in urban Darlington. I believe children should be educated in their home county.

Education is supposed to be accessible to all and non discriminatory . What you are proposing leads me to believe the the following points: - you are still going to have to provide transport/funding to the majority of families that this impacts - you will now have to provide/fund transport to additional schools as given a large proportion of North Yorkshire is countryside there are no suitable footpaths accessible for children to safely access school and with more little primary school closing parents have to travel further and secondary school are all ready further in a central location - the council will have additional transport to arrange/fund as from our primary alone children would fall into two other local authority schools 'distance wise'. Although time wise it would be less still to access the current future secondary school in North Yorkshire. Therefore all you are trying to achieve is make yourselves the council more money, as you will charge us parents to access school transport that is currently free and that will still need to be provided. Which will be a large expense per year especially for 1+ children , discriminating against those low/middle class WORKING families, many of whom may already be struggling to afford basics such as food and uniform but who have morals and go to work rather than staying home and claiming benefits. How is this fair!! Why should parents have to pay for their children to access school. We are penalised for not living in the town of the schools, and completely discriminates against rural families.

The proposed plan makes for less choice for parents and will surely massively impact the number of children living up the dales choice – for those who may have been considering the Girls High School and/or Ermysted's in Skipton. As even thou in catchment for the school, it would then not be nearest school in most cases. It is also not clear whether there will be a guarantee of transport, whether free or paid for by parents - as there is mention of only being able to pay for spaces if there are some available. For example currently taxis are provided for rural students around us - under the new proposal it isn't clear whether that will be an option, regardless of whether paid for or free. The scheme to limit transport to closest school seems to be massively compromising the prospects of rural students, particularly those where budgets/money is a factor – thus penalising children based on family incomes not the child ability. It is making the Skipton school system elitist and unfair.

We are very concerned about the proposal to cease free transport to catchment schools. Approximately 90% of our Y6 pupils transition to Richmond School in Y7. If the new policy is implemented, no pupils from our school will receive free transport to Richmond School. Free transport will be provided to either Leyburn or Barnard Castle. Key issues with this include: 1. Safety and attendance. The main road from Reeth goes to Richmond. All other routes from Reeth (to Leyburn and Barnard Castle) go over high moorland tops (420m and 515m above sea level, respectively) that are often closed during winter due to snow and ice. These are minor roads, with associated safety implications. Pupil attendance will decrease if pupils attend these schools. 2. Community cohesion. We work closely with Richmond School to support pupils as they transition from our very small schools to their catchment secondary school. Our cohort size is usually less than 10 pupils, and these children benefit from going to secondary school together. Rural communities can become isolated, and this policy would exacerbate that problem. This policy seems to be at odds with the government's drive to support rural communities: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/government-launches-new-drive-to-support-rural-communities> 3. Financial implications for families. If parents decide to pay for transport to Richmond School (to attend their catchment school, to maximise safety and attendance, and to maintain links with peers), this would have significant cost implications for them. The financial impact of this policy is working against the drive to support rural communities: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/government-launches-new-drive-to-support-rural-communities> We think that the proposed policy would have a detrimental impact on families in our community. At the very least, special consideration and provision is needed for schools like ours, where attending the secondary catchment school makes the most sense.

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Impact on education establishments that maybe over subscribed now finding more people feeling forced to apply to them because they are the nearest school. What happens when no space at nearest school? Ours is closer than the one in catchment. In a different county. My children love the school they are at. And it suits them. Skills, talents and interest. Which is why we chose it. We would not have got into the closer school as already a highly oversubscribed school by those in their catchment. Are you telling me that I would have no choice and then have to pay. The DfE policy re transport may work in an urban environment where schools can be very local including secondary. But in a county like North Yorkshire predominantly rural. It will put additional burden on: * Finances of parents that are already struggling if they want to send their child to their choice of school * May remove the choice of school for many in an attempt not to have the impact above * Low roll numbers on extremely good schools as parents choose based on cost rather than what is best for their child - this goes against policy of choice surely. This will lead to them being able to offer less due to less resources and impacts on children's education and opportunities. Not what education is about * Impact on other education teams - allocation team, school allocation appeals, school attendance teams, local transport businesses, senior management teams within school trying to manage budgets too let alone budgets in other council areas that will be impacted on. * Local communities and house prices. If those nearer school will yet again increase potentially beyond the means of many. Overall it will add additional stress when choosing a school for parents, impact on schools budget and the predictability of roll numbers. It also seems to contradict the DfE's policies. The impact on being able to get children into the school they are best suited for is being taken away. How does this set them up to succeed in school.? Along with potential impact on attendance as parents who would have relied on the free transport struggle to get their children to school. Feels like savings in one area that will impact long term on costs and increase them in another.

The proposed amendments to only provide transport to nearest rather than catchment places rural families at a significant financial disadvantage compared to their peers in towns. Families may be priced out of sending their children to their local, catchment schools as they will face a "tax" on living in a rural area in order to do so. I understand these are the statutory guidelines, but for an authority like North Yorkshire, with such a large number of rural communities, purely following the statutory guidelines does not best serve the residents. I understand the financial reasons the council has put forward for these proposed changes but it is concerning that the gap will have to be funded by rural families. The cost of an annual bus pass is significant and may be a barrier for some families who will be left with no option than to send their child to a different catchment school that doesn't best meet their needs or to a school out of the authority that they live in. Whichever decision a parent makes (whether to pay for the annual pass or send their child to a different school based solely on this policy) the resulting outcomes will negatively impact children.

I live in Ingleton and the proposed changes mean I will not get free transport to my child's preferred choice of secondary school which would be Settle college. It means that free transport will not be provided for a North Yorkshire resident to a North Yorkshire secondary school but instead an Academy school based in Cumbria. This just seems unfair and could cost parents £1000's in bus fees when we are North Yorkshire residents. For more rural areas there definitely needs to be a stipulation in the policy that children could have free transport to a North Yorkshire secondary school.

Children in Swaledale have historically and traditionally attended Richmond School for generations (and for good transport reasons) . The geography of the dale follows the flow of the river to Richmond at the bottom of the dale and interaction with communities 'over the tops' is limited. The hills that surround us contribute to these boundaries. The community cohesion of the "2 Dales" is currently very strong. The council's proposal to split the community is ill thought through to say the least. Practical issues such as transport in bad weather, when schools such as Leyburn, Kirkby Stephen and Banard Castle may remain open, vehicular access to them may not. There does not appear to be a policy for these circumstances i.e. who will monitor the road conditions and make a decision to cancel school transport or arrange emergency transport or alternative routes in conditions when the 'tops' are inaccessible but the schools are still open? Is there any data on the occasions that this happens? If so could we have access to this. If not then surely this should have been researched before the proposal was put together? For example It may be possible to get children from Hawes to Leyburn in challenging weather conditions but impossible for school buses to negotiate the higher roads across into Swaledale. Has an official alternative route been identified? If so could concerned parties please have details. If not could the ITP please recommend and publish these routes. Looking through various documents and proposed policies several sections stand out, too numerous to mention here but I feel further representation need to be made through channels such as the Parish Council. Is there enough time during the length of this consultation to facilitate this?

If the proposed change 'Amendment to the main eligibility criterion to be 'nearest school (with places available)' to match the statutory requirement' results in significant losses of pupils to any one school then what plan has North Yorkshire Council put in place that responds to:

- 1 Impact on school finances - at almost £6000 per secondary student then the loss of 20 students equates to a reduction in capitation to the school of £120,000. The salary of four teaching staff, 2 Impact on school staffing - a reduction in capitation restricts the ability of a school to retain its teaching staff. If redundancies are announced then this upsets many of the people working in the school and especially those directly affected by a redundancy situation. If this loss of students (as in 1 above) occurs year on year then after a five year cycle £600,000 is wiped off the school's budget - the equivalent of 20 teaching posts. If scenarios like this are predicted and the projections are correct then staff will decide to leave before they are asked to go. Some of the best staff will see little future in that establishment. The scope for promotion could be very limited and points awarded for responsibility may have to be reduced and that may have a further knock on effect re retention and responsibilities.
- 3 Impact on curriculum breadth - less staff, less pupils and the curriculum has to shrink. Less options are available to students in terms of GCSEs and the possibility could arise of schools losing their 6th Forms. Ofsted's desire for a broad and balanced curriculum would become an impossible aim for schools with declining numbers.
- 4 Impact on families - in particular: Dales Families who by tradition and desire send their children to Richmond School - parents already concerned about alternative transport routes. Some considering leaving their jobs and their homes to move to Richmond so that their children can attend the school of their choice. To survive, the Dales villages need young people. We cannot afford to lose them. The eligibility criterion to be nearest school would in effect put many children at increased risk as some of the higher dales roads that are often impassable in winter and even more so by bus would be used under the new proposal. Two examples to illustrate this point of view:
 - a) Children in upper Arkengarthdale attend Richmond School or Wensleydale School. The amendment would have them travel to Barnard Castle. The Stang road would be the direct route and with its hairpin bends and 1 in 4 hills it's a non starter for a normal school bus. In winter it can be impassable. (NB: This route is one mile shorter than the route to Richmond School). The only safe route would be via Richmond passing a few hundred yards from the school that most of those students would have gone to under the existing scheme.
 - b) Reeth to Wensleydale School - the direct route and shortest route is over Grinton Moor but this has a steep hairpin and narrow sections including a bridge with a weight limit that would be difficult for a school bus to negotiate and it would be out of bounds in snow and ice. The alternative would be a drive around Wathgill Camp. This road is narrow in places with difficult 'T' junctions and blind summits (NB: This slightly safer but less direct route is two miles shorter than the safer route to Richmond School).

In summary: looking at the increased risks of travelling on high routes that are narrower and unsuitable for normal school buses and perilous in winter allied with the very short distances saved by the proposed changes - one mile and two miles - then it seems incredible that this proposal has come this far and has caused so much upset in the community that lives and works in Swaledale and in the main sends its children to Richmond.

I would strongly suggest you look at Ingleton and their relationship with Settle College. The proposals would mean no child in Ingleton (which is in Settle's catchment) could go to Settle College and they would all have to go to QES in Cumbria. This is quite ridiculous for children who live in North Yorkshire, who have gone to primary school in North Yorkshire (and are in catchment for a North Yorkshire School) and then be clearly most unwelcome in North Yorkshire. Forcing children to attend a different authority's school is disturbing: clearly this proposal is designed to limit intake to Settle College in a desire to close or force academisation. There are enough of us around that know of struggling local authorities and the thought of forcing children away from a local school is scandalous. North Yorkshire should be supporting its schools, not trying to close them. I have experience to question the motives of North Yorkshire in regards to schools and catchment areas - giving all of Clapham's catchment to Bentham, and making Thornton in Lonsdale a Bentham catchment area is just beyond any logic, apart from money grabbing from NY to support their flagship school in Bentham. I don't know if this will create issues in other areas, but we will be fighting this with everything we have for the children and families of Ingleton and the Settle College community. It is awful to see how their own local authority has so little respect for the school that they wish to force them to close - and this cannot stand.

Although it may be measured as the crow flies nearest school the roads and valleys make this a longer route (main roads tend to run east to west, west of the A1 and north to south east of the A1) also the quality of roads travelled minor roads for example are not passable in winter /or safe due to curbs in gritting roads in a timely manner to meet the school bus at designated stop. So for example if you live in a rural area with minor roads you have to set off earlier to get to the main road which may not have been gritted early enough to get to the designated school bus stop. All needs to weigh up as has knock on effect on school choice, practically.

Damage to local community/local Secondary school/parents would choose an out of catchment school (QES in Cumbria) as transport would be provided there and not Settle College, due to cost, this would seriously affect Settle College as QES is the nearest school to students in High Bentham, Burton and Ingleton. Due to cost of transport, students from these areas would not pay the additional cost, as it is an extra financial commitment for families during the cost of living crisis, and this cost would escalate if you had more than one child. The rurality of this area and the lack of effective transport links already affect this area and if this proposal goes ahead, this reduces the opportunities of our young people. I feel that there is a sense that NYC is forgetting about the communities on the borders of the country, but they are happy to ensure that they take these communities Council Tax, but offer less and less in terms of service. You should be supporting your local Schools not penalising them. They are the heart beat of the community. If this proposal goes ahead I fear for the future viability of Settle College as this will be compromised, and this would lead to more students from other smaller communities who use this secondary school having to travel further to seek secondary education. I strongly oppose this change as I feel that it will damage to opportunities for our Young people.

To introduce a policy which does not take into account local conditions is going to cause harm to poorer families who can no longer be involved with choosing a school for their children and also will have younger children sent to a different school from their older siblings. In this rural area over 70% of children rely on transport to school and in future these families will not have any choice of school. This policy can only reduce the level of involvement by parents in the school activities which is very damaging. The vast majority won't be able to choose the school their children go to and some will have children sent to different schools making really important after school activities impractical in many cases. In the specific case of Bentham, Ingleton and the surrounding area the result would be to move around 30 children per year from Settle College to QES Kirkby Lonsdale which over the next 5 year transition period would reduce the school roll at Settle by 150. Kirkby Lonsdale (a Cumbrian school) is already close to capacity (1172 pupils 1228 capacity). The effect on Settle College (a North Yorkshire school) would be devastating. It could lose over 25% of its pupils by the end of the 5 year transition period. This would need significant restructuring leading to redundancies over the transition period at significant cost. The Settle College 6th form would also be in jeopardy as the reduced pupil numbers will make it difficult to offer a full curriculum and to attract enough pupils to study A levels. If Settle loses its 6th form then the pupils will need transport to another school probably in Skipton which would increase costs rather than reduce them. Is there really a net cost saving by imposing this policy in rural areas like Settle? For the next 5 years buses will still need to go from Bentham to both Kirby Lonsdale and Settle and the number of buses required may increase initially as the existing buses to QES could be full before the first Settle bus is empty. After 5 years it may be possible to reduce the number of buses by one but if QES is unable to accept all the students from this area (as the numbers indicate) then the remainder will still need to go to Settle by bus so no saving. This questionable saving from year 6 onwards needs to be measured against the costs of restructuring Settle College and probably requiring more buses for 6th form pupils. I feel very strongly that before imposing a system, probably devised for the more urban areas of North Yorkshire, on rural areas like Settle a full analysis should be made of the realistic cost savings and also the cost of the damage to Settle College and the detrimental effect on our families. One solution may be to use the criterion of the nearest school in North Yorkshire in areas where there would be a detrimental effect on schools and families by using a school in a different county. (Incidentally Bentham to Settle College is 10.7 miles and Bentham to QES is 10.0 miles.)

I think the policy, in stating that you are now to be sent to your closest school is absolutely ridiculous!! I already have a child currently attending a school in NYCC with another one joining this year, I then have another 2 children to start 2 years later, in which this one would be in the policy!! How is this going to sensible in splitting up children and sending potentially 3 buses to our remote house as I will have a child at primary, secondary and another secondary (out of area as it's the closest!!) The road in which is in question is a very dangerous road for transport in which would be taking our children to school!! It sits at a height of 1740ft and does not get gritted!! I also heard that if no buses take for tender you would then give parents the funding?! Please can I ask how this is going to work when I work full time at the opposite direction of the school you would be proposing if this goes ahead?! The father of the children is a full time farmer so will not be able to commit to taking children to school! This policy seriously needs thinking about as it is going to have such a detrimental effect on our children in the future!

We live in north yorkshire and should be able to attend a school in north yorkshire in coming years. I currently have 2 children in primary school and this would negatively impact were my children attend in secondary school. I went to settle secondary school and believe that is the best for my children. Under new proposals it would have an impact to send them to a different county in Cumbria which is utterly desirable. This I strongly disagree with cross county school travel. Children on low income/send and other should still be eligible to free transport. All children deserve free transport to school. I am shocked that this policy is even up for debate and change. Upsetting parents and children alike. If you live in north yorkshire you should go to school in north yorkshire. Traditions of families go to the same school as their parents and beyond. This would also break that tradition because of cost. Disagree whole heartedly

I think reductions in funded travel is inappropriate. Comparisons with other local authority districts is not acceptable and exposes our children to the possibility of inequality in service provision when compared to children living in other areas. A larger local authority area is always going to need to fund travel for more pupils but to reduce that service so that it may affect their chosen school is not acceptable and increases the level of disparity between North Yorkshire and smaller local authorities/the south. This is just the type of service that something like the so called levelling up fund should be contributing to.

The consultation does not provide any impact assessment other than on financial savings to the council budget. Whilst this is important, I'd also like to see an assessment on traffic and pollution levels, as well as the knock-on impact on households negatively affected by these changes - particularly low-income and SEND households

(Redacted) a local woman myself lived her all my life. I want my children to attend richmond school . It is the obvious choice, it may not be the very closest school but it has the safest road to it. - leyburn school is already "over subscribed" and it does not provide the facilities that richmond can , this is a major factor for us. Kirkby Stephen has been mentioned, it's in a different county , over a horrendous road to get there . And changing counties will bring more and more changes to children. These small village schools have small year groups of children who stick together throughout , splitting them up and sending th to schools where they don't know anyone will benefit no one especially children who have been through enough already.

the policy should include that it wont create new routes, so where a route goes past an entitled property it will go to the most convenient school which may not always be the nearest.

While the council seems extremely focused on making financial savings, it seems to me that encouraging children to travel to school on free bus transport would be a benefit to the environment and deal with issues of traffic issues around schools, for example with parking. While I'm sure savings need making I fo wonder if the task of getting children to school should be as cheap and easy as possible for parents.

Sustainable Travel - Must include ensuring that all bus or taxi operators contracted for Home to School Travel are not travelling excessive miles from their home/business address to complete the home to school journey. Lowest financial bid must not be the only consideration. The air pollution of villages and towns and the environmental impact must be considered too. This would have a positive impact on the climate. For example:- At present many taxi operators from West Yorkshire are travelling over 52 miles a day to complete the Home to School journey as they were the lowest bid for schools within the Harrogate Area. No other factors are taken into account, such as air quality of the villages and towns that West Yorkshire taxis have to travel through to reach their first pick up and the impact on the climate these extra miles are having on the environment. There is no other reason why West Yorkshire taxis would be operating in the Harrogate Area other than for Home to School journeys as no one from the Harrogate Area would call a West Yorkshire taxi to take them to Harrogate Train Station, hospital appointment or the local supermarket. The council's current expenditure on travel could be reduced considerably simply by reviewing the current routes and cutting down on the number of taxi operators in a small area. At present there are 3 taxis picking 4 pupils up that all live on a 2 mile stretch of road that all attend the same school. 1 taxi operator could do this and save the council money which in turn would save certain services. The very recent review of transport arrangements of the Harrogate Area will have rectified this waste of tax payers money and reduced the carbon emissions for this area.

We live near a primary and secondary school where I know families go on different taxis to schools next door to each other! This is where money is being spent so ridiculous. In our rural area why not have one taxi/minibus come from the small villages and take to the different school rather than 2, 3, 4 taxis all picking up in the same village.

The change to the travel policy has been poorly communicated. We received an email prior to the consultation stating advising that we would likely lose the opportunity to pay for a place on the school bus. This is a mid year impact with no thought to the impact on us as working parents. Taking away the option to pay for a place on a school bus is disgraceful. The negative impact on the environment of pushing parents into using cars each day is significant. Again, as mentioned above how are parents expected to work when they have to take their children to school and back each day.

My sons bus route from (Redacted) to Skipton is about to be cancelled after 8th April. My eldest son is in year 10 and youngest son is only in year 8. That means for the next 5 years we will have to be driving him backwards and forwards 10 journeys a week. There is no option of a public bus in the mornings, it starts at 9am. In the rain, with heavy kit bags, expecting a young boy to walk along a 60 mph road is unreasonable. This is a significant problem in (Redacted). There are enough children who live in the village who attend the three Skipton schools who would access a school bus if it were available to fill a coach or more each day. Instead they are removing the existing small bus. If you put up the prices so the route could cover its cost, people would pay it. The whole system is fraught with inefficiencies as it is. There was never a date released about when to apply for the annual bus pass. It relied on people "just checking" the website daily. Again, there was no date given when you could get confirmation of a place or not. The entire system is not fit for purpose and makes family life more difficult than it needs to be. The environmental impact of stopping the school buses is shocking and with climate change issues so topical the council should make this a priority. The social impact also is important-it will affect my possible working hours as I now have to transport my children to school daily. It is hard to see how this is a good idea. I hope the members of the council who have power in this situation can reflect long and hard on the sense of these proposals. It feels like the removal of the bus services is anti-family, anti-child policy.

My child's nearest school wouldn't take our child because of their disability. That was our catchment school and the nearest. So we couldn't get the catchment free bus and now have to pay to go further away just because they are disabled. If you are planning on making this policy then schools need to accept all pupils in catchment regardless of ability or disability.

If you cannot access your nearest school you should not be forced to pay for transport to another.

I think it is completely wrong not to provide funded transport to the catchment school. This destabilises the school application system and makes it hugely stressful for families. Catchment areas aren't a family or community choice - they are set by councils. They enable links to be created between catchment secondary and local primary schools. Having most children from a village going to one secondary school makes it more efficient for transport provision - rather than the likely fragmentation if this policy comes into effect. For our village of Kirk Hammerton our catchment secondary is Boroughbridge High School. But this is the 5th nearest - 3 York schools and King James being nearer. It would make school choice hugely stressful for parents unless willing/able to pay. Our view is that school catchments MUST be reviewed alongside this policy. And/or agreements cross-LA boundaries. It can't be one without the others.

The provision of schools in this area is so woeful we don't have any choices. The examples in the appendix are clear but irrelevant and have clearly been copied from another council's website or written by someone who has little idea of the schooling provision in parts of North Yorkshire.

I think it is a positive step forward to all home to school transport to the nearest schools as it will help smaller schools rather than parents picking which school their children go to. Our main concern is the provision of post 16 home to school transport as our nearest school (Wensleydale School) has no provision so the nearest school is Richmond which is going to be difficult to get to with current transport provision

Routes with no streetlights should be deemed not acceptable access routes for children to walk

Children will be forced to attend a school which may not be in their best interests purely because parents cannot afford to send them to a more appropriate school. The nearest school is not always the best option for the child. School transport whether free or paid for is better for the environment. So many parents have to use their own cars to transport children as they have been refused even paid for transport. This is impacting the environment and creating traffic chaos at school pick up/drop off.

I feel it's a disgrace to assess SEN children for their transport - are our children not dealing with enough assessments and disadvantage without the possibility of fear of losing their transportation. Please take into consideration the ongoing stress and effects of being a parent/carer of SEN and the ongoing fight for provisions let alone transport for our children

This could be a serious issue for parents who have older siblings at secondary school as well as primary school and could result in fragmentation of families to different schools. This is clearly detrimental to families and children. Any child who would be eligible to attend a school due to an older sibling being in attendance should not be affected to reduce psychological and financial burden on children and families respectively

No

I hope that savings can also be shown to be made in the administration of this service. This would help remove the view that frontline services are being hit by budgetary constraints.

To go to Scarborough further education would cost hundreds whereas Redcar is a fiver a term and better choices very sad for North Yorkshire education x

At present 3 taxis pass our house with four kids in! If this is an example of the council's idea of sustainable travel something needs to change. The taxi which picks our daughter up is one of a considerable number of cars which have been hired from West Yorkshire, he is travelling around fifty five miles from his base to pick up two kids then takes them to school then travels all the way back to West Yorkshire again and he is one of several doing the same thing because apparently they are cheaper! Surely one local taxi or mini bus paid properly would be more environmentally friendly and have less impact on the air quality than half a dozen taxi drivers doing 150 miles plus a day to ferry a very small number of children to school. To add to that problem quite a few kids are not happy travelling with these drivers. Reasons given driving at high speeds whilst on phones pulling up at shops with kids in asking if they want to stop for sweets, West Yorkshire taxi drivers asking pupils for their phone numbers so they can let them know weather or not they'll be able to make pick up all seems very wrong to me! All this whilst undercutting local well known safe taxi drivers from right on our doorstep who pay their taxi license fees to NYCC, Then NYCC spend their license money hiring dangerous unreliable taxis from West Yorkshire. Please tell me where the common sense in that arrangement is

Clearer definition of training requirements. Transport staff should complete training on SEN and awareness around autism. Currently no transport my child has been on has completed any training and is a barrier to their understanding of my child's needs.

At the moment all the Swaledale children go to Richmond. I think the policy change could mean some go to Leyburn and some to Richmond, splitting them up for almost no gain as the difference in distance is very small.

I don't agree with the post 16 charges. Children have to access education until they are 18 so I don't see why we should have to pay for the last 2 years and the cost from our village (East Harlsey) to the school (a 10 minute journey) is astronomical. This is pushing 17 year olds onto the roads too soon and will cause accidents which could be avoided.

Commitments to work are made by parents on existing travel arrangements. Our child would not be able to attend school with these changes as proposed.

Please consider increasing the routes for paid transport to capture more children in outlying areas. Appreciate this may increase certain fees but I believe parents will consider paying and the council may get economies of scale, benefit SEND and other groups to use the paid bus services in conjunction; effectively a hybrid model.

As a parent whose child attended their catchment secondary school which was further away than their nearest school by quite some margin, I would like to have clarified as to what mileage calculation to the nearest school is used. A short note saying whether it is quickest road route or as the crow flies calculation would be useful.

Documentation is poor, with no guidance setting out comparison text, i.e. high lighted paragraphs that have changed between the two documents

Not all schools would be considered suitable by parents/carers if they are closer to home and have places available. The change to policy could deter and prevent some schools particularly in rural areas having an impact on accessibility to them. Also, it is not clear if the 2 miles walking distance criteria applies even if there are no suitable walking routes to the school from homes within the 2 miles criteria (e.g. no footway on the rural roads with limited visibility due to stone walls).

If a family wants to select a school based on religious belief, they should fund transportation. The duty is to provide education. In Ripon, places at Ripon Grammar School are fought for and we hear of people purchasing flats so that they have a Ripon address. The school should be primarily for Riponians and that is not assisted by free transport.

All schools should offer transport. Currently some use public buses. This means that school enrichment sessions are not inclusive which is really unfair. If my child were to attend enrichment they would not get home until after 6pm. They would set off for school at 7.15am this is far too long a day. School should offer a later school bus on enrichment days to transport from school. Currently pupils are expected to walk from school to Pickering then wait for a bus from the town. very very unhappy about this

If these changes will reduce the cost of free transport to school then I think they are a good idea. I am not happy to pay more tax to provide free transport for children because all my bills are increasing at the moment and I cannot afford to subsidise other people by paying more tax. It is not fair!

The document is difficult to read, and many people, will not be able to access the information. The document should be summarised and be able to be used easily and efficiently. This should be sent out to stakeholders such as parents, from the schools. This is a typical council document which is not easy to read.

Agree that the Council needs to look at this policy to save money

It would be beneficial to NYCC employees if consideration could be given to transport arrangements where their child needs to attend the school where they work at even if it is not the "nearest" school.

Savings should be made by making the bus service more smart and adaptable rather than making more people pay for it. Eg looking to combine bus routes for multiple schools, reducing vehicle size, extending routes, etc. Is there any monitoring system in place to see how many pupils get which buses to and from schools? Some days our children are the only ones on a large coach coming home, and if the patterns of use were analysed then these services could be scaled down accordingly.

The current funding for free school transport is unfair. We are over 9 miles from Richmond and yet have to pay in full for transport to SFX which is literally one minute from Richmond School, yet parents in our village receive free transport to Richmond School. When a child misses the Richmond School bus they catch a lift on the SFX bus which parents have to pay for but a Richmond School pupil can travel on for free! This is unfair to paying parents. If budgets are really tight, free bus places should only be offered to those with SEND disabilities and the rest should be means tested for parents who are really struggling. It is though difficult for parents who have to work and live in rural areas who face the most cost.

Whilst this does not affect us going forward as I understand those awarded before September 2024 are honored, this would affect many families. Our catchment school is Boroughbridge High, but our nearest school is King James. Had we applied for KJS there was a big risk we wouldn't get a place due to numbers, so we opted for BHS as our catchment school. You are asking families to choose between schools and transport. What is the most important factor? A family might not want their child to go to the nearest school for whatever reason, but if they cannot afford to pay for transport (ie aren't eligible for Pupil Premium etc), then they may be forced to send a child to their second or third choice school. You are potentially increasing the risk of children therefore not attending school, or being unhappy with the school they are in. You have completely removed the word 'catchment' from your new policy.

I don't think it is clear how it will impact a pupil attending a secondary education with normal needs who may be attending a closest school that falls outside the catchment area. They already attend the school of choice. Would they have a choice between paying for school transport or swapping schools? Or would they still be entitled to free transport? Or would the provision of buses be cancelled and only provided to the catchment school. Also, what happens after age 16.

They should let all pupils of same household on the transport instead of just one child even if it isn't the nearest catchment school

We pay for our school transport in our village like a number of other families but this service is now being taken away meaning all parents now have to travel into Skipton from Embsay having a detrimental effect on the environment and congestion in Skipton (already a significant problem). Had we decided to send our child to upper wharfedale or settle the bus would still be available but we are being discriminated against for choosing a school in our local catchment. The road is unsafe, no safe crossing places and it is not well lit so I would not feel comfortable with my child walking to and from school. A very disappointing decision that has penalised those parents that have chosen a school within their local catchment and we were paying for the bus anyway!!!!

These policies are not written for parents to understand, they are full of jargon. It also doesn't factor in children that have had no option but to travel elsewhere due to bullying. (Redacted) was bullied, reacted and left with no option but to have a managed move. We live in Northallerton and she goes to (Redacted) which by the way is an incredible school. Maybe fix the bullying at Northallerton school and children wouldn't have to attend other schools away from the catchment area.

The whole idea that you are looking at cancelling transport for a number of people is shocking. I know many parents of SEND children who don't need the service but use it as it is free. I strongly suggest asking parents if the transport is first essential to them. If not remove that cost. Schools are suffering (high schools especially) as the cost of public transport has increased leaving parents no option with schools and do not send their children on the bus as it is. If anything the council should be offering solutions to all people involving transport for school aged children and getting to school.

Transport can be a big factor for families when choosing schools and it shouldn't become a barrier to the most appropriate education for a child which it could be going forward with the proposed changes

Children need to be in education till they are 18 so I feel transport should be provided till they finish the academy year of their 18th birthday

It is vital that the home to school transport remains.

Thank you for considering this. I appreciate the financial constraints the LA has and the enormous physical distances the LA covers for transport. I think ensuring pupils whatever their age, physical, educational or emotional needs are put first is vital and ensuring that they can have access to the school Place that offers them the best educational outcome is a priority, so providing a clear, inclusive transport policy is essential. We want our young people to have the best education possible and ensuring they have the right transportation to get them there is key. In particular the number of children with additional needs is growing and we need safe, robust and sympathetic transport systems to deliver this. I'm hoping the Authority is also liaising with healthcare professionals about their understanding of what is best for pupils transportation to ensure more vulnerable students are properly considered in terms of safeguarding and promoting good mental health outcomes.

I think all school transport should be free whilst all children are in education up until age 18 years. I also feel that you should have a right to choose which school to attend or your child attends even if it is out of your catchment area. I also think the bus service provided for children is sometimes not great not always on time which is not good when a child has to wait in the dark at 7.30 am to get the school bus. I feel more buses should be available to cater for the amount of children using them.

If more children have walk home (often in groups) on unlit roads without footpaths there WILL be accidents. Safety MUST be the number one priority at all times during this review.

We currently have no school bus and have to spend hours each day driving children to school. This is silly, given the number of parents making the same journey. I think you/the government have a responsibility to get children to school (or make it optional). This affects our work. I expect many more children to be absent from school after you make it even harder.

I believe if a child/ren attend the nearest school and have a high income they should be charged for transport.

I really cannot comprehend what NYCC are trying to propose. Communication skills are very poor and your advice is as clear as mud! That is coming from an individual with a one Doctorate and 2 degrees, including one medical. Further simplified communication is required for all, rather than trying to disguise the changes, buried in the NYCC website. Amanda Newbold must clarify and communicate in simple terms so that it is fair to everyone and can be understood in its entirety.

This consultation is not accessible or engaging for many parents. The detail and key points buried in amongst excessive policy statements. The key changes should be articulated as individual statements with bullet points outlining what the changes are. Very poor stakeholder engagement and communication of proposed changes that will have a detrimental impact on many parents and children.

It doesn't really address the issues facing parents today. Very little has changed since I went to secondary school in 1987. We live in (Redacted) and my child attends St Aidans - there is no bus provided but there is a bus to Rossett and the grammar school which very few children in our area attend. We are not even in the catchment for the Grammar school, To calculate the distance via a route which is not a driving route is just ludicrous - would you send your child on potentially muddy and unsafe route to school. I am sure traffic congestion from Bilton along the Skipton Road would be greatly reduced from individual parents taking individual children to the same school if a bus was provided- Let's embrace the 21st century and modernise the home to school travel policy - Why should people in villages who have chosen to live there have the benefit of free travel when people who have chosen to live in (Redacted) do not have the same benefit. Public transport just doesn't work with school timings.

We live in Helmsley and attend Ryedale, it is our nearest school. However it is less than 3 miles from our home. What is not clear from your document is whether our school transport provision will be removed. There is no pavement, the road is extremely dangerous and there is no regular bus route. Could you confirm what your new policy would mean for residents of Helmsley. If transport is removed we would have to home educate our Y9 child

Change the catchment area or just get rid altogether its not fair that children that live in villages have to pay for a bus to get to school, those in an area with the one option of school that may not be suitable for the child to attend should. I feel no one should have to pay bus fare to get the education for their child

My son spends an hour and 10 minutes travelling on a bus, then a train, then another bus just to get to school on a morning (the school is a 15 minute drive in a car). Surely paying a bus to do the whole journey would be far more cost effective than this stupid roundabout way. The train is continuously late, or cancelled, resulting in the children and parents not knowing if they're coming or going. If you're wondering where to save money, start by this. Instead of someone in an office hours away deciding on a route, go on a field trip and figure out yourselves.

It is a key service and need to remain free of charge and should cover young people down a levels also

The lack of provision for SEND children on differing timetables seems extremely disadvantageous to those children and their families. I feel this should be an option for these children as they require a differentiated timetable to others therefore transport should match this.

Transport to school should be a basic right for all children in compulsory education regardless of any other factors

The policies are worded badly and don't make a lot of sense. Unsure what this means for my 3 children

The travel policy should not be considered in isolation but alongside a general transport plan for the county. In removing a dedicated bus service for some communities, there is no safe or realistic alternative but the car. General bus services for the public are often inadequate too. I also note that this consultation has gone public almost 3 weeks after we have received a letter that the dedicated bus service in our area will be removed. It is not really a consultation if decisions have already been made.

The proposal is awful to read, It takes a heck of a lot of effort to figure out who and how you are affected

This will hugely affect working class families who cannot claim financial assistance but also cannot afford to send their second child to the same catchment school as their older sibling because of annual travel costs. I understand why this has been proposed however I do believe this will cause a lot of stress and anxiety to families who won't want to move their oldest child out of their catchment school half way through secondary because they can't afford the travel costs for the youngest, and having 2 children at 2 different secondary schools is not practical. Our closest secondary schools are with a different local authority so I already know under this proposed policy my second child will not qualify for free transport to their catchment school when the time comes.

Reducing the number of out of area taxis transporting children would be better for the environment.

The format of the documentation is difficult to understand so many people will not be able to access or have the will to read on. This could result in people feeling disenfranchised with the consultation process. There should be some FAQs

We pay a much higher council tax compared to the 1990s when school travel was free! Why do you waste our money on vanity projects no one wants compared to spending on getting kids to school!

I believe that the travel policy should align with catchment areas. It would be unfair if transport is provided to a school that a pupil is not in catchment area for even if it is closer.

We live in a world where we expect everything for free. Parents have a duty to provide for their child not the taxpayers. Free school, free pre school, free school meals, free transportation. No, not good value for the taxpayer.

I think the walking distances need to be urgently reviewed. The very fact that a child of primary school age should be expected to walk 2 miles to school in this day and age is ridiculous and clearly unsafe. This distance is then increased to 3 miles at the age of 8!! Really 3 miles an 8 year old. Careful consideration needs to be made as to the actual County you are implementing these rules in. North Yorkshire is a very rural area and these 2 or 3 miles can vary from well lit and maintained footpaths to unlit county roads with no pavement or as your documentation states public rights of way.!?! If a child were to go missing walking these distances at these young ages, people would immediately question why their parents were allowing them to do so, but here we have a government organisation giving a clear expectation for them to do so. Even Thirsk School and 6th Form have publicly commented that the walking distance from Carlton Miniott to their premises is too far and unsafe. Why is there not public transport available at school times for children to use? There used to be, for both the morning and end of school day. I know from speaking to many parents that they would be utilised and therefore a scheduled service should pay for itself, rather than the usual timetable that ferries a handful of people about.

Where is the logic in taking away catchment from the transport criteria when you can have priority to a school based on admissions. So you can have priority to a school but not have priority for transport if there is another school closer, doesn't make sense. My house is over 3 miles from any secondary school so the council would have to provide some form of transport regardless of where they went so that's no saving. In fact are you not going to have to provide more transport to lots of different schools rather than just to the catchment school. Surely this is going to have a negative impact on the environment. Some parents will continue to send their children to a school further away and just get in the car. More cars more buses more emissions and more confusion. Totally illogical. I'd be happy to pay for transport to the catchment school as it's not the nearest school to where we live. Why can't you do that?

As long as the policy supports the large number of forces families in the area who have little choice in school availability and where they live

I strongly feel that changing the criteria to the closest school for free transport rather than catchment area would be extremely detrimental, not only to children and their families, but also schools especially in rural areas like my own. I strongly urge you to think again.

Schools are already clogged up with cars, fumes, parking issues. It's just an accident waiting to happen without pulling school buses away. One bus of kids is making a huge difference to the environment. Transport for children in care taken to schools miles away should definitely be stopped.

Why now we have no 'council borders' is this still impacting school transport, also i feel children on free school meals should get free school travel(outside of catchment)and post 16 should be definitely free on free school meals

we are a family where we have children that live 50/50 with parents one parent over 3 miles from school and one parent where not safe to walk to school . as transport passes bot address currently why can the children not use the transport from both addresses , or this yet another thing where fathers get unfair treatment

I don't think was helpful to announce these proposed changes after school admissions have closed for primary and secondary pupils. The consultation should have taken place in Michaelmas term. It still not particularly clear what constitutes a safe walking route and an unsafe walking route. Is it the lack of pavements, the volume of traffic, the road classification? It's not clear about the nearest school and catchment school. In some catchments, parts of the catchment are nearer to a non catchment school. The policy needs to clearly state if you would get transport to the catchment school or not.

When Dallowgill School closed there was a clause included for all children to be eligible for transport to Kirkby Malzeard for all time.

My children attend an out of catchment school and I pay full price for both and happy to do so . I do not get help for payments my children are in year 10 and 8 so as long as they can get the bus to school I'm am in affected

My daughter suffers with epilepsy , anxiety and depression her taxi is specially trained to deal with her needs reoving it will cause a massive issue for her , my eldest is studying at 6th form where even tho being the only college to offer the course shes on i have to pay 700 for her to travel being aas it is a requiremnt for her to stay in education untill shes 18.

If it is determined to refuse a child, on the basis of a place being available, at a nearer school, what is the council suggesting parents do? Example: I stay in (Redacted), but when my child started secondary, the only place available to them, was in Pately Bridge, some (Redacted) from home. My other child, has since begun at the same school, as it made sense to send them to the same location and we are happy with the school. I have driven them up to now, however, my employment will soon be changing from working at home, to working on site, therefore I will need transportation for them. If I applied for transportation and there was a place for my children, at a nearer school, the policy states that they would not be eligible for that transportation. Further, what if there was a place for one child and not the other? What is the policy suggesting I do? Continue to drive my children, although this might impact my work obligations? Drive one child, whilst the other is eligible for bus travel or move my child/children to a different school, when they are already established at their current one? This is a real issue and one that I am sure is not isolated.

I am an intelligent human and yet I have no idea what you are trying to communicate or ask me to do with this information and questionnaire.

While the definition of the 'nearest suitable school' is clear, there is no mention of how a new policy would be operationalised in a practical way: 1. for children already attending a school that is further away (in our case because admission to the school was based on passing an entrance exam) 2. taking into account changes in high school 'catchment' areas over the years (in our case while our home address has not changed, the school catchment areas have. Our nearest 'suitable' school was Boroughbridge high school but when our daughter was applying for a year 7 place we were not in the catchment for it, instead we were in the catchment for Ripon Outwood Academy.) School admission policies and home-to-school transport policies must therefore align and be consistent with each other (and evolve over time together in an admission policy changes) or the transport policy will not be fair and inclusive. 3. As a parent I would be happy to consider an option to consider 'cost sharing' on the home-to-school transport as I really value the service, (as does my child) and we have to-date never been asked to contribute towards it. I would prefer the council to consider this and other transition options as part of implementing any new policy, rather than going for an 'all or nothing' approach vs the current arrangement. 4. There is no information to suggest what will happen for those families currently using the service who will suddenly become ineligible when the policy changes and their child is mid-way through their education attending a school that is a bit further away than their nearest suitable school. I would not expect children to be changing school as a result of this policy change.

We live in a village > 5 miles from any school, and not with a safe walking / cycle route. Our closest school is not our catchment school. We are a two parent household, both parents working and needing to be at work for 0800hr. We rely on school transport to take our children to school. If transport is only now to be provided to the closest school, not the catchment school, our children risk not being offered a place at the closest school, getting in to the catchment school yet not being able to actually get transport to the catchment school. We would either have to stop working (with significant financial consequences, and consequences to an understaffed NHS for whom we work), or the children would have to not go to school if they cannot be transported. I cannot see either option being acceptable. To me, this proposal would have to result in a change to the catchment schools so that they align with the closest school. Alternatively, and, in my opinion a far preferable solution, free transport is provided to only one school of either the catchment school or the closest school. This would not be of extra cost as it would not cover free transport to an optional school many miles away.

Selling places is a bad idea. If there is a place and a child goes to the school it should be allocated. After all it is compulsory education so the body demanding this should be liable for the costs of all compulsory related items.. Uniform books etc including travel.

For children with EHCP schools that agree they can meet need don't take in all factors and parents may disagree. Unfortunately changing the travel guidance is only going to affect the already under funded SEN care. If more schools had more or better SEN education and care attached to schools, to get advise more locally with shorter wait times. More schools would actually be suitable. Therefore reducing the need for travel! By taking away the rights for travel to a school that the parents feel is the best school for their children you are only putting that child in a setting that is not up to their needs. It's discriminating against children with SEN by removing choice for schooling. North Yorkshire is unfortunately seriously lacking when it comes to SEN needs. I would like to add I don't get free transport for my children.

My sen child was not offered travel. Ive had to sort ot all. And as i cant afford the cost of coach to school ive resorted to taking him.

As a mother of an SEN child, i feel the same taxi should be used so not to upset the childs routine. My son has adapted to the taxi service provided by NYCC. It also helps me, as i have to go to work

It's basically more cuts to save money. I bet the budget for your expenses and subsidies for councillors aren't being cut .

Unfair to remove the provision for catchment schools especially where decisions have been made taking this into account.

Fuel allowance needs looking at for parents who drive their children to and from school placements Due to the increase in fuel costs.

If children cant get to school, they soon wont be going at all.....people cant agford to pay for transport that what weve paid taxes for to cover the whole education system

My current oldest attends BraytonAcademy as we live in (Redacted)and this is the only option for transport in our area. Fortunately this is our preferred school around the surrounding areas. Although some of the closer schools to us do not offer transport I do feel this maybe beneficial for those who do want to attend theses schools. We are happy with the bus service provided from (Redacted) to Brayton.

There is no public transportation from Whitley to any high school which makes working families unable to collect their children, this will have a negative effect on the community as a whole.

Blanket policy which doesn't look at individual needs of pupils Has no concern for protecting the county in which we live- small village schools will be simply lost- ones like we currently attend that are amalgamated over two sites will loose one setting We have had countless emails regarding parking at schools from North Yorkshire police and yet there is no adequate car parking provided and yet there will be an influx of more people expected now to commute?

Having to pay for bus travel as attending a school in a different council area, when that is the nearest school. The costing for this puts strain on finances as a family

I think it's a good idea to go to the nearest school even our of the local catchment area rather than the closest in the local authority. Current travel arrangements are a worry for our household & providing clarity together with possible funding would be very welcome.

I think it makes sense , pupils that get taxi's to out of area education is madness,

I do not think many people will read and understand the considerable volume of information provided, and then make meaningful responses to this questionnaire.

I think careful consideration needs to be made on if the closest school can meet the child's needs. If they cannot surly this puts them at a disadvantage to their peers. Also some children at secondary are unable to walk the 3 miles as it crosse's dangerous roads and rivers. I think instead of the mileage rule consideration needs to be made on the dangers on those routes.

I am a parent to a child who will be moving to secondary school in 2025. I live in Whitley where you have already taken our public bus service from us and now propse to take our school bus. With NO buses at all you are forcing many parents in this village and surrounding villages to send their children to a school they do not want to attend, totally against their wishes. You are taking away my rights to choose the best school for my child as there will be no way to get there. This is TOTALLY UNACCEPTABLE. I am paying an extortionate amount of council tax and not receiving even basic services. There is a large amount of children that will be attening the same school, in our catchment area, 1 bus that will be full, 2 miles difference, but for the saving of 4 miles a day you now want to have a massive decision about their childrens education forced on them. This is disgusting.

Concerns over transport to 'suitable school' for SEND for those who run EHCP as it should just be the school named in the plan which is deemed as suitable.

I think putting on more paid for travel for out of catchment could subside the councils expenses. For example in Pickering lots of children travel to Ryedale but there's a shortage of bus places. Parents would happily pay for a bus service and the price could be profit making.

Your current policy is not inclusive enough never mind reducing the service levels within the proposed document, NYC are only paying lip service to this consultation you have already decided you will not support families in need for the sake pandering to the bean counters. If monies need to be saved to balance the books then cut the executive management salaries to no more than the UKs Prime Minister instead of the obscene amount you are paying Flinton and his cronies

If the bus service from (Redacted) to Middleton Tyas primary school is to cease, my (Redacted) may be greatly impacted. I moved (Redacted) from (Redacted) primary school to Middleton Tyas because I rely on her Granparents to get her to school as I and her father work full-time. Her granparents live in (Redacted)so it is easy for them to get her on the bus and means they don't have to travel anywhere. If the bus service is to stop, I will have to move her again so that it is easier for everybody involved. My daughter will be very upset as this would mean she would be moved from her friends and peers and could really unsetlle her emotionally and academically.

You spend an extraordinary amount of money on this. 90% could be saved if you simply used the normal bus company routes with a "minder". Using taxis etc is an extravagant and lazy provision that cannot have come from a sentient adult.

my eldest son who's on the send register has been accessed and been honest I'm sick and tired of chasing them too see what's happening ? and my youngest has health issues asthma from birth and we cannot travel in bad weather or if he or I get a cold or flue or virus it's impossible for me too take him due too been a single parent I'm also looking into getting my youngest assess for ADHD and autistic I have been diagnosed with the same and I am 1 of 12 children so back then it didn't exist and I didn't understand why ? now he's 6 I can get him assessed so yes I would love extra help specially with transport it would help massively due too my son's needs and mine also attendance wise it makes me sleepless and anxious worrying . so I would really appreciate it if I could get any help out there sometimes it's just Nowing were too turn IV tried with my eldest I do get there's a massive back log since COVID and I do appreciate it's hard to get more workers etc it's been too long with no help so yes I'm asking kindly again .

Having to pay for the last 2 years so my second child can continue to attend the same school as our eldest child did, where travel was provided at no cost is disgraceful and not being informed in a timely manner placed financial hardship on our household income.

What would be the provision for children currently entitled to free school transport, that will not be if this change to 'nearest school' happens? I think it's is unreasonable to expect the child to move schools or have a parent available to drive them 13 miles there and back twice a day whilst working (this is to a catchment school). Will a bus still be provided but paid for will these costs be kept as low as possible? There is no public transport available to the school currently and the distress at moving school would be immense, without a parent being available to drive them there and back whilst working full time.

It needs to stay with nearest Suitable school as nearest school with places will not work for pupils with SEN especially in the craven area as there is only one SEN school so it will not be the nearest school for most pupils. Also those that can mange mainstream schools need to be at a school that is right for them and manage their needs which may not be the nearest school to their house as not all schools are the same or specialise in the same areas.

If we had local schools that were able to meet the needs of local children then they wouldn't need to travel so far. It is essential that my child has access to transport so that they can access their school.

Some students could be disadvantaged and may end up not going to a catchment school of choice due to bus costs. For example the nearest school might be a poorly performing school so they prefer a different catchment school, but parents on lower income may have to choose the nearest school if they can't afford the transport costs. Not all schools are equal and there are schools in the N.Yorkshire area that require improvement. Is it fair that lower income families might be forced to send their child to a poor performing school just because they don't have as much disposable income? This may also mean children go to different schools than their friends. The best solution is to means test free school transport eligibility. Some families with large household incomes could easily afford the school transport for their catchments schools, if families were asked to pay something towards school transport then N.Yorkshire Council could generate income that could help cover the school transport costs.

I note that your consultation document, section d - "removal of eligibility based on 50/50 second address" states that there are currently no children being transported on this basis. I believe this to be untrue as I have had one child being being transported on this basis for the last 3 years and am expecting to add a second child this September.

By changing to nearest school, this is likely to negatively impact a parents right to chose which school to send their child to, and will have a significant impact on families on lower incomes, who may not be able to live nearby to their chosen school, and will be forced to send their child to the nearest school, regardless of the performance of that school, or the suitability to the child

We lived in West Yorkshire and do not qualify for school travel even though it is only a few miles away from school

I think North Yorkshire needs to look at building or repurposing existing facilities to expand special education facilities so that more children can attend a school closer to their home rather than travelling long distances. This could save North Yorkshire money in the future. Special Education needs completely overhauling and being made fit for purpose meaning more money long term would be available for other areas of education services.

Children who have special needs should have priority does anyone ever look at all the private taxis and assess if more than 1 child can go in it as I see loads of transport going to School and dropping off when they come from the same area

We live in (Redacted) and my youngest goes to st Mary's in Askham Richard (York council). The route to primary has been assessed as unsafe many times....no pavements etc, but each time somebody new moves to the village, it has to be argued again! Surely once reviewed parents shouldn't have to go through this again! Also, I have an older child who is in year (Redacted). He gets free transport from the village....it is 5 miles away and this is our catchment school. What will happen when my youngest goes there? It is the only school for which a bus goes through our village! Also, how would I know whether other schools that are closer (but only just) will be full or will have places?! This is unfair on younger siblings as they won't know what school they will end up at or whether they can go to the same school as their sibling! The policy also doesn't mention whether a sibling that potentially won't qualify for free transport after the changes can still get a pass for the same bus as their older sibling that does qualify for free transport assuming that the parents can afford to pay for it! As noted above, the only school bus that comes through our village is the one for Tadcaster (which is a catchment school), but there are potentially two closer schools that I didn't think we were in catchment for....York High and Manor. Both over 3 miles away, but no bus from our village! Manor also has faith criteria. This new policy all just sounds very unfair on the second sibling! It also sounds like parents will end up driving children....how will this help the environment?! Finally, the policy also doesn't give an indication of the price of a bus pass, should people end up needing to buy one.

(Redacted) at Brayton. There is no public transport there. (Redacted) and would also go there. Will massively affect me, a single working mum with cost if private transport or them on moving schools.

There's no transport at all for villages surrounding despite high numbers that would use the provision

I strongly believe that the buses which children travel to and from school should have seatbelts, for all ages. My child travels to secondary school on a bus without seatbelts, and I am very unhappy about this. I also know that some buses are oversubscribed and some children have to stand to and from school which is unacceptable. Both of these are a risk to children's safety and lives, should there be an accident.

Try thinking about kids mental health in all this granted you have a budget but there mental health should come first over everything. Some kids have a hard home life as it is and need the stability of the school they are at. All the councils bothered about is money cut wages to them at the top of the scale or get rid of some that would free up a fortune and put kids first instead of the fat necks with there massive wage packets.

I think that proposed changes will impact the county negatively. While savings need to be made I do not believe the travel of children to or from school should be a sector to detract from to do it. The extra cost of maintaining roads, policing increased traffic outside schools and so on cannot be cheap. New traffic regulation orders may be needed which cost a significant amount of money. Increased fuel costs to parents and as a result increased emissions is clearly a large drawback to consider. At a time when emissions need to be lowered, removing grouped transport is an awful, awful idea.

If transport cannot be provide some type of subsidy or reduction in council fees should be given to those who have to transport children themselves as this comes at a great expense

We viewed many schools in the area for our children. The nearest had a particularly poor ofsted report- we decided that we wanted better for our children, as I'm sure many parents would. We found an 'outstanding' school in Brayton Academy. The school is reasonably close and we were informed that there was a strong likelihood that due to the number of children wishing to attend this school from Riccall that transportation would be put on. This enhanced our decision to send our children to this school. The transportation has not materialised, a group of parents have been liaising with school and have been met with either false hope that it is in hand, or have been told it's not going to happen. We again viewed Brayton Academy for our next child to attend in September this year and the prospectus stated that transport from Riccall would be put on- we assumed this is because the expect more numbers from Riccall to attend. Talks with the school have indicated that this is unlikely to happen. We would have had to consider our options if there is no school transport as the option would be to send our kids to an 'inadequate' but closer school, or try to do the best for our children and enrol in an 'outstanding' school possibly with transport but possibly not. If the only appropriate transport is for the closest, possibly inadequate, school this should be made crystal clear to parents rather than keep dangling false hope that transport 'hopefully' will be provided in the not too distant future. If our children must go to the closest school it needs to be at least to your OFSTEAD standards. Otherwise people do not have any choice.

None

I had no choice but to mive further away from my childrens school due to needing a bigger house, but I definitely would not be able to afford to pay for the travel for 2 children. The cost of bus fare is disgusting even at half fare prices. It would cost over £30 a week/ £120 a month. But transferring my childrens school is not an option now they are in their GCSE years. Also the school most lical to us has the worst ofsted in the area. My son who will be dues to start high school in sep 2025 has SEN needs and I am extremely worried about having to send him yo the nearest school as they cant offer him the support he will need.

The documentation is vast and convoluted and not easy to follow, therefore I doubt that this consultation's results will indeed be relevant. While we are not expecting free home school travel, the fact that the council allows the operators to practice outrageous prices for this service on the principle that they have a "trapped audience" is unacceptable. A more affordable home school transportation provision would take a lot of cars of the road, reduce congestions and gas emissions near schools. At more than £6/child/day cost for an unreliable school bus service, North Yorkshire County Council and Abbots (the school bus operator) has pushed us to drive our children to school every day. This is impacting on their independence, our work and not least the environment.

You have not included where there aren't footpaths. For example my child's school is less than three miles but there are only footpaths for maybe half of the journey which isn't safe to walk?

I feel it is unfair to withdraw free transport for children who have already committed to attend a school on the basis that transport would be provided only to then have that provision removed. This is especially unfair as the closest school is only marginally closer (a mile or so) than the school chosen, and in a different authority to where we live. The change seems overly punitive to some with relatively little benefit in real terms as buses are still going to be required and will have to continue to come very close anyway. The change in this case would realistically change our decision about where to send our children which is going to affect the school ultimately.

You have not stated in the new policy how it will work when children have two homes, you have removed the 50/50 part of the policy but not replaced it with anything to explain how it effects children who go between two home's half of their lives. I have two children, one in primary and one in secondary. My secondary child has to get the bus from his dads 50% of the time but pays for it because he lives 2.9 miles away. If you were to add in about separate parents it would help as i don't know where i stand with the new policy. I am on low income but his dad is employed, but his dad lives 2.9 miles away so on mileage he would qualify on the new policy. Please consider split parent houses. My primary age child (year 5) is a SEN child who will be getting the bus when he goes to secondary school but again i need it clear on what he qualifies for when its at his second house. Thank you

We live in catchment for Tadcaster grammar school - changing funding so we have to pay for transport to our catchment school would have a significant adverse impact upon our family.

It is a disgrace that NYCC are looking at introducing a policy that could potentially cost parents £60+ per month in bus fares. Are NYCC going to facilitate moves to all of the children affected so that they can attend the nearest suitable school to save the families £720 a year per child. I highly doubt it. Council tax is to increase by 5% in April 2024... so yet more outgoings for families that are already struggling. In addition the the above my son would have to walk about a mile and a half from the bus station... to get to school... he would have to set off to school before 0700 for a 0830 start to facilitate his arrival on time. Dark nights... foul weather... where is the duty of care... disgrace... hang your heads in shame.

People cannot afford / have the time to pay for their own transportation, while trying to work , to pay their bills such as COUNCIL TAX !

If these proposals go ahead already over crowded streets surriunding schools at drop off and pick up time will become even worse. This will have a detrimental affect on local residents and even possibly house prices of properties in the vicinity of schools. Lots of parents and carers will not be able to afford the school bus charge so will be forced to send their children to a school that may nit be the best fit for those children. The environmental impact of extra vehicles on the road is also a big concern if these proposals were to go ahead

We live in (Redacted)and originally sent our daughter to (Redacted)but the standard of education that she received was poor. We made the decision to move her to our catchment school, Brayton, and have noticed a dramatic difference in the quality of her education. By implementing travel changes going forward, some families will be forced to send their children to poorer performing schools which will not help drive up educational standards as it will effectively remove choice. Furthermore, has the environmental impact been considered of potentially forcing more cars on the road.

Some families will be forced to choose the nearest school, as opposed to the school with the highest educational standards, and by removing choice, educational standards will be impacted negatively across the board. Undoubtedly more parents will choose to drive children to school which will have a negative impact on the environment. It seems unreasonable for families paying council tax in North Yorkshire to be forced to send their children to school in a different county. A tier system of payment seems fairer as opposed to a blanket yes/no where a contribution is made to transport costs depending on where you live and household income.

I live in Whitley, the transport option of sending the children to snaithe has been taken away and now you are proposing taking the option of Brayton away. The majority of children in the village attend Brayton which is an outstanding school. Taking the free transport option away will have an extremely detrimental affect on the children that wish to attend this school (whose parents can not afford the fare) we already pay very high council tax in this village- I was under the impression that by combining the council this would reduce costs, this is not happening! I am very concerned that this is even being contemplated- why on earth are children being penalised because their parents would struggle to pay the fare. Given the distance involved I doubt there would be vast savings as the majority of children go to the same school.

We live in a village 2.5 miles from Skipton, where our local schools are. There is no available public transport to our village before 9am or after 3pm. Although I am aware this is within the 3 mile boundary, the walk is along a country road which is mostly unlit. Surely the provision of public transport, at cost to the users, should be provided as a public service. We currently pay for bus passes. I don't know why we can't still do this, if we are covering costs.

It is grossly unfair that children living within 2 miles of school have to pay to travel by bus to their nearest school, whilst pupils who live many miles away and choose not to attend their nearest school get free transport. I welcome the change.

Please keep the free bus my daughter uses to go to school in Brayton from Whitley. It is a good school and she is happy there.

Strongly believe that travel options should be available for any school within the catchment area, even if these are chargeable. Without such provision, parents may struggle to get their child to school, but schools will also experience an increase in traffic and more cars on the road if parents are forced to take their children to school. Which in itself has many impacts. Getting a bus to school builds confidence and independence in children which is a key part in their own social development at school.

Our daughter attends a special school within North Yorkshire that matches her needs, as a low income family there is no way we could transport ourselves as we have 2 other children who attend local secondary and primary school. Why is everything such a battle with North Yorkshire? Our daughter has another number of years at her special school and this wont be changing so therefore north yorkshire can foot the bill and continue with transport sadly many children dont ask for there issues but mainstream school doesnt suit everyone.

3 miles is far too long to expect an 11 year old to walk to and from school. I would be happy as many others in the village to pay for a public bus service into skipton or pay for the school bus as I do now. If there was a paid service which provided places I know many parents that would use this service. By removing the school bus from Embsay to skipton you are encouraging circ 50 individual cars into gargrave road at a very busy time and dangerous for all the children leaving schools - this does not make any sense at all.

Many pupils are some considerable distance to the catchment school but close to a nearer school in another authority. The effect of the new policy will be to disadvantage families and schools geographically located close to North Yorkshire Council boundaries and in particular those close to Leeds and York. The effect of this is unfair.

I think the environmental impact considerations are great. My child has access to a train station close to home and her school over 30 miles away. Unfortunately the frequency and times of the trains mean that even though it is desirable environmentally and from my child's point of view mentally, it is not feasible. Public transport needs to be more integrated. Access to schools closer to home that have proper facilities and support for children with autism would mean that fewer children would need to travel.

The congestion down Gale Lane, with coaches and cars, for Ryedale school 'drop off' and 'collection' is already appalling. For local children walking down that road, it is an 'accident waiting to happen'. If more parents/carers are forced to take/collect their children, this will only get worse.

Sensible changes that bring in standardisation and common sense for cases when parents don't choose the closest school - That should not be a cost for the taxpayer so agree with this proposal.

The school should be the right fit for the child, not just the nearest school for financial reasons. Could encourage children to be absent, suffering with their mental health

Children should be encouraged to use free transport rather than the eligibility being too strict and creating further traffic delays and pollution from thousands of parents driving their children individually to school.

The buses to Sherburn High School should drop pupils off at the bottom of New Lane, on the Sherburn High Street road, instead of going up New Lane and turning round. The other day there were 30 cars and four buses waiting to get out of the Lane onto the main road, but the junction makes it very hard. Also Mytum and Selby lorries come down there sometimes at school times. There is no other way of getting to our houses. I have asked North Yorkshire Highways if the Lane can be extended to meet the Church Hill road, but no response. This is a big safety issue. If there was an emergency, like last year when there was an accident, we can't get home by car, and some of us aren't that mobile.

At least there has been some communications regarding the proposed changes unlike 2019 transport changes that were hidden in a Sends meeting in 2014 and implemented in 2019 with no notification to the parents. This only became apparent in the week before high school choices were to be submitted. This reeked havoc in our primary school and village. The high schools were no even notified and were unprepared. Parent had to pay for taxis and private transport until the schools made arrangements and secured a bus. While I appreciate you need to save money, we dont have any alternative public transport in the outlying villages in our area. Whitley & Eggborough. This will lead to hardship and children not attending school. (not all parents that are struggling are on benefits) On the other side, our roads, are going to be full of extra cars doing the school runs, affecting the environment and even putting children in danger around school drop off zones. It is not clear on the virtual schools website on whats the closes school either. As it shows my postcode in Goole 20 miles away from my address!!! and in a different county!

The only elements I disagree with are where the council is proposing to remove eligibility. Whilst my family may or may not be impacted, these changes are likely to adversely affect the poorest families where cost of getting to school will be a key part of decision making. This in turn may limit their children's choices of which school to attend and perpetuate existing discrepancies in society between rich and poor

Wasted money on HS2 but you cannot provide travel to school. Dreadful.

My youngest daughter is currently in year 10 and was the first year which transport was affected. We had already made our choice of school and was not made aware we had to pay for our school transport until the very last minute before she started in year one. The school had to rush in making arrangements in paying for a private bus company for the first year as no provision or option given via the North Yorkshire Council. A last minute option was given to go to Brayton Academy instead. Although marginally nearer by a tenth or so of a mile, it would have took considerably longer to get there due to A19 road closure. We had already made our decision after visiting schools and didn't want both my daughters to go to different schools dues to term time differences for childcare arrangements. We both worked full time. My elder daughter continued to use the free bus. That double decker bus over time became very empty as each year left whilst my younger daughter was on a very often busy overcrowded single decker bus. We are not on benefits and not considered as on low income but do not have surplus money to pay for school transport. With the rising costs we sometimes struggled to pay this. (Redacted) now goes to Selby College and pays far less for bus transport which is further down the road then my (Redacted) whichbis ludicrous. I truly believe no child should pay for secondary education 16 and under. We should be at very least subsidised.

More council runs spaces for paid passengers are needed. We aren't wanting to take a free place on transport, but the council could provide more access for paying passengers specifically on school transport, not public transport. The cost of busses provided by the school for transport are extortionate, absolutely unacceptable prices for any family to have to pay for a child to get to school. Never mind if there's more than one child to get to school!! Absolutely disgusting. Whereby a paid passenger on a council run transport option is much more affordable, so please offer more!

Our village has 2 catchment secondary schools. One is 1.5 miles further away than the other. About 2/3 pupils attend one school, and 1/3 attend the other. As there is so little difference in terms of distance, this decision feels arbitrary and pointless. Both buses will still be paid for by the council, as the other villages served by the slightly further away school will still need and be entitle to transport, so you will be taking away choice for our young people for no cost saving. The element of choice is absolutely critical for the mental health and educational attainment of the young people, as the schools have different approaches, strengths, environments and communities. This decision will have a huge and detrimental impact on the lives of young people in our village and on the school communities affected, with long-standing historical connections and communities torn apart. It will affect vulnerable children and those with SEND more acutely, as the element of informed choice is so important for children who have specific needs in order to thrive at school.

the current situation and the way transport is arranged and awarded is working well..... it is obviously expensive, but this expense has been created by NYC, in part caused due to the lack of adequate school places available to SEN children who are often required to travel singularly, over great distances to schools out of area.

I think that the criteria for living 2 or 3 miles away needs to be updated. Our current 2/3 miles is described as the crow flies. We all know children don't fly and in fact use the roads. Given there are no pavements to walk as the crow flies either it is a pointless and ridiculous policy. If you want more children to walk or cycle to school, more should be done to make this accessible and safe. All this will achieve is costing hard working parents more.

I feel it unfair to constantly keep changing the criteria for which school a child is eligible to go to. A bus will still be provided for children currently attending the school of their choice so why not allow others if there are spaces get on the bus to their preferred school. It will mean children will be separated from their friends that they have spent the last 7 years making. Eggborough village is growing rapidly so therefore an option of which school you wish your child to attend should be allowed and not dictated. You should have the option to send your child to the best school in the area that will meet their academic needs. Snaith has already been removed as an option without paying for a bus from Eggborough now it seems the council are removing another option in Brayton and forcing you to send your child to the De Lacy. It is unfair on the children.

I do not think the changes to eligible school by removing the catchment school should go ahead. This policy should remain as it currently is. The current policy is fair and reasonable and provides a balance in allowing parents/children to have some degree of choice, whilst limiting council expense to a reasonable distance of travel.

Our family finances are already stretched but I will not be bullied into applying for school which I believe is inadequate for my child I am extremely angry about this !! The 'local' school being quoted as De Lacey in Knottingley, unfortunately I cannot calculate accurately as local roads are currently closed until July 2024 to a suitable school which I believe would be the best choice for my child. Both of these schools happen to be in a different county (West & East Yorkshire)

We live at the edge of North Yorkshire. Both our children currently attend the local Primary in year 6. The secondary school (school A) we are in catchment for is 13 miles by road and is OFSTED Outstanding rated, and is where we want to send our children. There is a school bus from our village to the secondary school, currently funded by the council as all the children are going to the school they are in catchment for. The nearest school to our house (school B) is 2.5 miles by road, but in a different local authority, and we are not in catchment. That school has a lower OFSTED rating, and we have no desire to send our children there. We applied last September (to school A only), and are expecting to find out in 4 days where both our children are going in September. The provision of fully funded transport was a consideration in our choice of school, even though we are only in catchment for one school. If the proposed policy is implemented, it appears that we will have to pay for two passes of £747.50 for our two children. It will be cheaper to drive our children to school every day, thus increasing traffic, carbon emissions and road wear. I fully understand that the current government is reducing council budgets below what is necessary, and spending cuts are needed. If this policy is implemented however, it will most likely lead to a reduction in children using bus transport to school, and an increase in emissions and traffic. For the avoidance of doubt I strongly object to the proposal to only offer transport funding to the nearest school, even if the nearest school is in a different local authority and out of catchment. The council has a duty to provide education and the physical access to education to the children physically living in that council's area, with parents paying council tax to that council.

Strongly disagree as we want our children to attend their catchment school not the nearest school. We moved last year to be in catchment (away from the designated nearest school) for this school for our eldest and do not want this impacting our youngest children. There are no transport links other than the included school transport to our catchment school. This would massively burden us, from a time, cost and environmental impact. From our village alone this could be an additional 10+ families all driving to the catchment school. All impacted in the same way - time cost and environmental

I think that the current scheme regarding the change to catchment area needs to be left alone. We have already put forward our choice of secondary school as my daughter is in year 6.

The nearest school to us is out of catchment area 1.6 miles away with no public transport and vulnerable children would have to walk down a 60 mph road with no pavements and no lights. I think it's unreasonable and puts children at risk of serious injury or abdication due too low visibility with large hedges and no street lights, and winding roads.

The school identified as my nearest would not be ideal for us as a family.

Transport to a schools in my catchment area is essential and should not be removed. If no transport is offered then as a family would need to provide this which is not feasible in our current places of employment. Not offering school transport would greatly impact the environment as multiple vehicles instead of one would need to drive to the school.

Making decisions without consideration of siblings when 'nearest' school is in another county. Will have more over subscribed schools

I have particular concerns regarding travel for special needs children. With specific and specialised needs, and insufficient places to meet demand, many almost certainly need to travel, and not because they are being picky, but strive to have their needs met, in order that they achieve the best outcomes possible, thus ensuring that they require less services from the council in adulthood. Cuts to what is already an underfunded and inadequate service is short sighted. That said, measures should ensure that use of it is not abused, and if parents covered transport themselves, or contributed on a means tested basis, would the money saved go instead to the school to top up the under funded EHCP, and better meet individual needs of children? As a parent of a SEND child, I feel my child is going to be failed by North Yorkshire on the transition to secondary education in September 2024, and part of the decision made by the LA has everything to do with transport costs, and nothing to do with individual needs, and provision available, because this would be some distance away.

This change is forcing parents to send their children to schools that they don't want them to attend, in my example living in Whitley, the catchment school is Brayton Academy and with the proposed change, the school will be Campsmount or DeLacey. These schools would not be suitable for my daughter.

I find it unfair that I pay for two in my children to catch the school bus , I earn £15000 a year , yet another parent living five minutes further than me gets it free for her child becasue of where they live despite her having pay of £40000 . I don't think the free pass should be given to everyone on location , I think finances should be investigated too . A lot of the children getting free passes live at farms and larger properties further away from the school and affordability for the bus wouldn't be an issue

The closest school only gives parents and children little choice over who provides their education. Especially with older children already in a school that is in 'catchment' rather than 'closest' school. Paying for the bus is not the issue, but finding provider who will cover all the small villages in our area is.

What if the nearest suitable school is different to the catchment area school?

I changed schools for my daughter to attend where there was a school bus due to both parents working. I even went down the route that I live too far out as my daughter had growing pains in her legs proven by a doctor's letter and they still said she can walk 2.8 miles to school. It has really affected our family as a whole. No transport. It's awful. I live in (Redacted)

North Yorkshire's remit (as well as other LAs) is becoming increasingly difficult due to the demands of children with mobility or additional needs. I dread to think what the percentage spend of that budget is on transport with 2 people or less in the car, that may be a useful stat to share. I do also think (even though as an operator we benefit) that due to parents' choice to move to a home in the country, it should not be mandatory that free transport is received. A parent should be responsible to get their child (children) to the nearest fixed route. That would also save a fortune.

I would be concerned that my children wouldn't be going to the same school as friends from primary school as the nearest secondary school may not be the catchment area. This could have an impact on my less confident child if having to start a new school not knowing anyone.

The current policy works well for our personal circumstances but I am keen to see changes in the post-16 travel policy for students in full-time education.

As an operator who has specific vehicles that are only used for SEND and Social Services transport but those vehicles have to be licensed as a taxi with all the relevant fees and costs associated along with a licensed driver. At quotation stage we could significantly lower the costs if these vehicles that are solely used for school and Social care transport didn't have to be fully plated up as a taxi/PH. As an example we have a saloon car that is only used to take one child to their school in Brompton from Selby and return. The vehicle is not used for any other purpose other than social service AdHoc transport. We could reduce the quote by 1300 if the vehicle wasn't plated. Both driver and PA would still have an enhanced DBS and the vehicle would still be walk round checked daily as well as the 12-week mechanical checks and twice yearly MOTs. As an operator that eventually aims to step away from standard Private taxi Hire work and solely concentrate on social care and home 2 school work it would allow us and other operators to offer reduced costs to the NYCCV IPT.

The proposed policy does not make clear what the position is regarding the transition to the new policy - will children not entitled to transport under the new policy be allowed to continue travelling or would they have to move schools? Also what are the options when a child is not entitled to school transport? Will there be an option to pay for travel? The policy appears to be silent on this. Will N Yorks operate school services which can be paid for as if services are withdrawn it may have a negative environmental impact as it will increase the likelihood of parents taking children in cars. Perhaps those entitled currently with no entitlement under the new policy should be required to make a stepped contribution to mitigate the current spend as they progress through school. A gradual approach may help embed the new policy. Main thing is to ensure when parents choose schools for children they are fully aware of the new policy and whether they have entitlement - also parents need to appreciate the cost of providing transport - often they have no idea of the value.

The proposal (in line with DfE (Department for Education) guidance, that transport will only be assessed and, if eligible, provided from one home address.) is mistaken. The incomes and discretionary spend of parents who are separated or divorced is usually lower than those who live together so only funding transport from one home would hit such financially stretched families and might promote conflict about which parent would have to pay for the unsupported transport - hardly something which is good for the wellbeing of children. Parents separate for many reasons including escaping violence, threats, abuse, and unacceptable behaviour - compounding their problems is hardly helpful! The number of journeys between home and school is independent of the number of homes which the child lives in. Surely it's not beyond the wit of those who manage transport contracts and the operators to accommodate this!

As has always been the case the most affordable way of transporting children to school is by effectively using large passenger carrying vehicles- these vehicles reduce congestion , have had many years investment in reducing emmissions but do need an organised integrated approach to route planning . I believe based on 30 years as a transport provider that not enough time and energy is being invested in this planning . Families feel happy to let their children travel By bus and coach if those providing the service deliver the high standards that are needed . I am greatly concerned on a daily basis by standards I see from both coach and bus operators and non compliant taxi operators . Although my heart sank at the proposal for a specific training module I do feel that it is needed. Please can this training be properly registered so that it counts as a module of PSV driver CPC training. I am sure it will be much more relevant than some of the training that's on offer to us . I think the 2 mile rule for walking to school for children from low income families is unfair and discriminates against children from all other families - a 3 mile walk expected for those. I have recently raised this issue with my MP . A realistic walking distance is required if congestion around schools is ever going to be addressed .

I live at (Redacted), our catchment school is Sessay. In the same federation is Husthwaite, where (Redacted) attend. It is quicker for me to get to Husthwaite and a 0.25 of a mile in the equation of catchment. A school bus goes from Kilburn, 1.5 miles away, with less than half the seats filled daily. There are four or five other families in the vicinity that would use a school bus to access education at Husthwaite. There wouldn't be a school bus covering our area if the children went to the catchment school of Sessay?? Where is the thought around the environment in this thinking?

None

no

I would like to see more transport options. There is no way for our son to get to school without us driving him.

My high school child lives out of catchment for transport so we have to drive each day. Would be happy to pay for a bus scheme though if this were to be provided.

Transport should be made easier not harder. Children should be able to have a choice of schools & not be told they can only attend the closest school because that's all transport can provide. School transport is nearly non existent already from Eggborough.

The proposed policy will force many parents/cadets/guardians to send their child/children to a school that may not be their first choice or the best choice for their child due to transport implications created by this change in policy. Many families are already struggling especially with the continued hefty increases by North Yorkshire Council on Council Tax yet seem to be looking in the wrong areas to make cuts and penalising the average working family by reducing services and taking away something as basic as choice of school for our children by proposing these changes to transport. As a resident of Beal we should not be left with one choice of school out of county as first choice due to transport costs as a village we get little for our money paid to your council the least we can have is a choice to send our children to our choice of school in county with transport provided even if subsidised by the council instead of fully paid for depending on income.

We are in North Yorkshire, I don't want my child going to Wetherby High School. It's West Yorkshire and makes no sense. My child's fellow pupils will not be going there either and I think the free transportation should be for a school that is one majority of the children from my child's school go to. Where we live I hear of no children going to Wetherby High School.

I am not happy with the proposal as under the proposed new policy they will only provide free transport to the nearest school. Meaning as long as the 'nearest' school have spaces you won't provide transport to any of the remaining catchment schools. Parents would have to cover this cost and at present a yearly school bus pass is around £750! When you have multiple children this is a significant expense. A school choice for parents is not just based on nearest location but about the needs of the child and what environment would work best for them (academically and sporting considerations). The proposal appears to only take into consideration 'cost' as opposed to a child's need(s). This needs revising!

Instead of making working families lives harder and adding more and more costs to them, why does the council not create policies that affect demographics of people that can afford extra costs in their lives? Introduce a car congestion charge based on the value of the car, rather than emissions (since wealth people can afford electric, those less affluent will be punished by a pollution/car age charge) Increase business rates on non-independent shops and businesses. Means test school transport so that only those families that are six+ figure salaries pay. Reduce the overheads of running the councillors (move to a cheaper property etc) Increase council tax for those on the highest tax band only.

My son attends Settle College. A significant proportion of the students are from out of catchment - are attending when it is not the nearest school. They pay for the bus service into the school. My worry is for the future of the school. Settle's NOR is fairly low and this may dissuade families from trying to attend the school and ensuring it is viable for Settle to retain a secondary school.

Currently in Spofforth as we are more than 3 miles from any secondary school, the council will provide free transport to Wetherby High (this is the nearest school) as well as Harrogate Grammar, Rosset and Harrogate High (these are our catchment schools). But under the proposed new policy they will only provide free transport to the nearest school. Meaning as long as Wetherby High have spaces they won't provide transport to the catchment schools. Parents would have to cover the cost for the child to get to Grammar, Rosset or Harrogate High - A yearly school bus pass is around £750 at the moment. To not provide transport to catchment schools is discriminatory and prohibitive to parents on low/middle-low incomes. I do not agree with this new policy.

The proposals are going to put a lot of pressure on parents

My child attends George Pindar School in Eastfield, Scarborough. We live in crossgates. It is a 2 mile walk along a busy road with inadequate street lighting. I would be willing to pay for a school bus but currently there is no service available. I feel this needs investigating further.

The council should stop haemorrhaging money in other departments before looking at this. The lack of control over spending is ludicrous.

I live at Whitley, which was not on the list. We are a North Yorkshire LA. My (Redacted) at Brayton Academy and (Redacted). The proposed changes would remove the school transport service for my children (I thought it was for September 25 intake, but on reading the materials it is for September 24 so we are affected). This transport is essential as I work full time and I am unable to take the children myself, the disruption would have a very negative affect on our situation and place unnecessary pressures on me as a parent and my children.

You need to define how nearest is measured; is it straight line or shortest route via road? For children already attending their 'nearest' school that is not their catchment school, will the policy entitle them to free transport in the remaining years at school (i.e. it doesn't ONLY apply to new admissions)

I was pleased to read a pragmatic, sensible and caring approach to a complex and potentially immotive situation. Well done.

We have moved into the area and our children will be attending the grammar schools from September. A large factor which we took into account when we bought our house was whether there were good connections to get to school and we budgeted on the fact that they would get free school transport. The issue would be that as a parent choosing which school children will go to in Year 7, it is made far more difficult for parents to assess which school to choose based upon the current proposed policy. For example, a parent may choose a school which is closest, but not in catchment, per the suggested changes to comply with the travel situation. They can then be turned down due to being out of catchment/no availability and then the school option goes to the second school selected on the list. The child may then miss out on this school too, as everyone who put that school down as their first choice was able to take those places. Then, they are on their third option.... It means that it is difficult for parents to plan their lives, work options etc and the school choice will be increasingly uncertain. Furthermore, when secondary schools are within 1 mile of one another, I think any of those schools should still qualify for free school travel. The final issue is that these changes may affect people who have just selected their secondary school, based upon the existing travel arrangements and it seems highly unfair that the rules are changed after children have already been allocated their secondary school places.

I feel that it is unnecessary to provide free transport for primary aged pupils but good to provide for secondary pupils

This policy will force many parents in my catchment area to send their child to an undesirable or poorly performing school out of the local catchment area. This policy for some parents diminishes the right to choose a suitable school for their child.

If this goes ahead catchment areas should be scrapped. Either use distance or catchment area, not both, to influence school choice. Children's mental health is likely to be affected if they do not move to high school with their friend group, which will happen if some choose the catchment school and some choose the nearest school to get the free transport.

Mainstream costs have increased 50% since 2015/6. Special provision 350%. What analysis has been done to find out why? Disagree with removal of eligibility on primary phase of denominational grounds for low income - it seems a small group to single out. Who will assess 'safe routes' - do you have the staff to check out 'safe walking routes' when you are under financial pressure? (Beyond looking at a map online, which doesn't show pavements, or lack of them.) The requirement for parents to walk to school with children could have unintended consequences - the time taken might lead to them losing their job. This might then push them into lower income brackets, and the children would qualify for free transport. We appreciate councils are stretched financially, but are these suggestions going to enhance the educational experience of the children of NY? How much is this in reality going to save?

Thank you for putting this together, the proposals (while I don't agree with them on every account) are easy to understand and presented clearly. Well done to the team at NYC who put this together - it's not easy and I appreciate the work put in to it.

We are lucky to have 2 very different school within in a very similar distance where currently we have transport provided to both of this were to change it would mean having to pick 1 school over distance rather than which school would fit best for our child which would be a really sad situation and I'm sure would be the same for a lot of local families

Why not encourage cycling? Some sensibly planned, and traffic free cycle, would be amazing and encourage many more pupils to cycle. At my school only two pupils ever cycle to school and both of those only really in summer when the roads are safer.

I think it makes sense to keep it on a county basis in terms of school holidays for one thing, working parents could potentially have children of different ages in school in different counties subsequently on separate holidays at times. If this happened in our area settle college would be gravely affected and kirkby Lonsdale inundated with pupils

I'm concerned that if free school transport was restricted to closest school that pupils in Ingleton and Bentham would be forced to choose QES over Settle College which would have a negative effect on Settle College. Surely as this is the county school for this area (whereas QES is in Cumbria) that free school transport should be extended into this area. These changes would have a negative effect on both my children.

This proposal will result in the removal the right of families and children to make a choice about which very good schools in our area their child attends. In today's society and with everyone trying to make ends meet this is completely wrong. It will reduce numbers at your own North Yorkshire schools in our location and boost numbers in another council's school, surely not what you set out to do!

An outrageous proposal!

Transport provided to nearest school is welcome. However, I appreciate that savings need to be made. Having worked with such families, I think priority needs to go to those families with children with additional needs who have a school place a long way from home - these families should certainly be provided transport and the systems for applying / arranging this should be as simple and supported as possible. I certainly think money could be saved with regard to Reception Children as it could be argued they are far too young to be expected to travel to school without parents anyway and parents should arrange this when looking into reception places? Thank you for the consultation

It needs to remain the same as it is now

It discriminates pupils living on the boarder of catchment areas. The reason for living in North Yorkshire was to enable my child to access some of the best schools in the country with transport availability. There is discrimination against working parents whose shift patterns do not allow transporting children to school, this could encourage parents not to work and rely on state benefits. Cost of transport will put extreme pressure on family finance. Noted only one mention of religion within document, religious belief is extremely important and has not been considered unless on benefits.

The nearest school should not include selective schools. This new policy will mean more pupils travelling by car rather than by bus

It would be detrimental to our children's wellbeing to move schools. Whilst I do not agree with the changes at least avoid affecting existing school children so they are not moved once they have started. A further consideration is the sustainability of the changes as it would mean more parents driving children to school when there are likely to be empty seats on the bus going the same way. There are five schools in Richmond next to each other...more cars will mean even more congestion on Darlington road and affect parent's ability to get to work on time.

With reference to providing transport to the nearest secondary school, you have not made it clear if this is the nearest secondary in North Yorkshire or the nearest secondary school outside of North Yorkshire. I and many others live very close the the borders of Lancashire and Cumbria. Whilst we live in North Yorkshire, our closest secondary school is out of the County in Cumbria, QES. Please could you make this point clear. If you mean the closest secondary school outside of the County of North Yorkshire, this could have serious consequences for our local North Yorks secondary school, Settle College, and children wanting to attend this North Yorkshire secondary school in the future who live in North Yorkshire, but near the border of Cumbria and Lancashire. Thank you

My little sister will go to high school and if my mum has to pay for her to get there i think this will be a struggle. My mum works hard and does her best. Why would you affect a childs education its unfair if you removed free transport for us kids. I do well at school and so will my little sister but i know my mum will struggle to pay transport or get her there if she cant afford it. This could affect her work i dont think you are thinking about the bigger picture this could put ppl on benefits due to not been able to afford school bus fees so they have to take them and work around that this is impossible. Please take all this into consideration.

I think its very worrying for parents of children in Benthams/Ingleton that they wont get transport to their nearest North Yorkshire school (Settle College) This would leave no choice but to go to a school in a neighbouring county. It would have a hugely detrimental impact on numbers at Settle College which would surely leave its future in doubt. Its also a terrible idea to only provide transport for children after their 5th birthday. These children are expected and hugely benefit from attending their whole Reception year. It seems ludicrous to penalise spring or summer born children in this way.

This proposal is unbelievable and will certainly impact children's learning and well being. This proposal shouldn't go ahead. What are we paying our increased council tax for when you are offering less of a service? You should be ashamed!

I think it's crazy that the travel policy is going to be changed. It takes the option of secondary school out of the parents hands who do not have the money to be able to pay for a pass to their chosen school. It is discriminating against families who cannot afford to pay it. It's disgusting.

My child's nearest secondary school transport route would not be the most suitable in the winter time and our next nearest secondary school is only 2 miles further in distance but would be the quickest and more appropriate route.

the measurement of distance by using public rights of way these are not always safe from an environmental and social danger, and not always passable (flooding)

Our 'closest' secondary school would fall into a different county and over a road in which doesn't get treated in winter which would make it not safe for my children to travel!! I would be full against this is it was a matter on distance as this is not safe!!

You have made no mention of improving the opportunity for some to cycle/walk to school. Certainly for the older children , if provision were made for safe active travel the number of bus spaces could be reduced , certainly in the drier months and families allowed a choice. Your high spend reflects the very low spend on active travel. So much could be done at relatively low cost to improve this. Whitby TC has supported a 20mph default speed ' where people are' which would make home to school a safer and cheaper option for many but you have failed to address this.

I don't think the policy should be changed so that only the local school choice is given free transport as my catchment school is easier to get to. The local school is harder to get to in winter. It would require the council to grit more roads than currently do

I don't believe that school choice , a school in which a pupil would be most happy , most appropriate for them as individuals should be dictated of affected by the removal of costs being covered by the council got free school transport - and the cost therefore being passed onto parents who may already be in financially difficult situations, but perhaps not eligible for support. I think overall the proposal to just provide free transport to pupils to their 'nearest' school is not appropriate or in the best interests of the pupils or schools.

It seems a nonsense to send children to their catchment school but not provide transport, the two systems need to work together.

Where the distance of some of the schools are within a similar distance from a child's home, children should be eligible for free transport to all, especially when the schools with a better teaching record are slightly further away.

I think instead of nearest school it should be catchment school This worked very well for many years

If this stops children who have passed for Skipton Girls & Ermysteds from getting free travel because Skipton Academy is closer to their home, but on the same bus route it would make no sense. Families might have to make the decision if their child gets a grammar school education based on if they can pay for a bus pass - this would be a very disappointing move. I hope that this has been taken into account, considering the three schools are on the same bus route.

The proposed changes are not made clear for those reading this consultation document and associated policies - there is, as always, too much waffle and not enough clarity. A simple bullet-pointed list outlining 'these are the changes' and FAQs to answer 'what will the changes mean for me / my child(ren)?' would be much more helpful, enabling for residents and helpful to yourselves in terms of resulting in meaningful, accurate responses from those likely to be affected. Consultations like this only serve to prevent people from responding appropriately and therefore are not consultations, they are purely 'box ticking' exercises to use to metaphorically 'whip' people with - when they say they didn't know about the changes, you can say 'well a consultation document was issued'. Disappointing but, sadly, unsurprising.

It is still not clear from your excessive pages of documents if children travelling to the grammar schools I. Skipton will have free transport despite having a closer suitable school.

I applaud the fact that the council don't try to disguise that this is about financial savings and will not provide benefit pupils. However that very notion is shocking and amoral. It appears to be another instance of those most vulnerable in society being penalised in favour of money. I'm not at all surprised that NYCC is targeting SEND pupils once again, it is an easy win for their pockets. Some of the minor changes are, in fairness, logical but the key is in the wording to the more substantial charges. Regardless of this process, i have no doubt the proposed chnages will be implemented as money is the master.

If transport is only provided free of charge to the nearest school, I think this will have a detrimental effect on the future of Settle College. We live in Ingleton, one of our children currently attends Settle College, however, our daughter has chosen to attend QES. The cost of travel would have effected our decision making with regard to which school they chose to attend.

I can see this policy being critical to those That have to use it. I'm lucky enough not to need to, but feel those that do need it need a fair amount of access to this support when balanced against the cost to the council. The change seem to be a fair middle ground to me.

This proposal will have a massive negative impact on many families as well as many schools in the county. The money 'saved' by the changes will be negated by families transporting their children to the school that was previously in their catchment area and of their choice rather than the one nearest to where they live - this in turn will have a huge effect on the transport infrastructure, state of the roads and the environment. I really don't think the Council have thought this through. I am totally opposed to these changes.

The policy seems clearer and considers the difficult financial context. However, it would seem sensible to offer 'paid for' school transport in areas where public transport is not available for pupils who don't meet the eligibility criteria for free transport. This would be more environmentally sustainable than forcing people into cars, and if organised properly should more than pay for itself. It would also allow parents more choice on school applications.

So unfair to remove catchment schools

Why remove catchment schools. Totally disgraceful.

Need to make the public aware of how distance is measured from home to school. There currently is no clarity here.

I am strongly against these changes, our current route to school (Keld to Richmond) is a B Road that is gritted and safe in bad weather. If these changes go ahead we and alot of other family's in our area will be forced to either send our children on dangerous / potentially life threatening ungritted routes to school (kirkby stephen or leyburn) or pay an extortionate amount of money to organise and pay for our own transport.

In my opinion, children should be educated in the nearest suitable school. Thereby sustaining village schools.. Please note that in the. scenarios of child P and Q. the word visual impaired should be used as opposed to blind.

It is very wordy and long. Some people may struggle with understanding it/bothering to read it

Has any thought been put into place about how many different services would be required to get children to these different schools based on mileage. Also how children would get to these schools if the roads are unsuitable for buses and taxis in the winter months as they may not be priority gritting routes and alternative route may be vastly longer to get to the so called nearest school

(I have sent a separate email to H2Stransportreview@northyorks.gov.uk)

No free school travel should be provided. It is a complete waste of public funds School children taking service buses (very short distances) are disruptive and rude to paying passengers and drivers. I have no idea why they are not encouraged to walk distances of 3-4 miles.

I am aware that travel to school is constantly under threat from either rising prices or an introduction of a fee. Unfortunately I do not understand the consultation papers enough to agree with them or not. My main concern is that travel to school remains free from where I am, or at least maintains the same price. It massively impacts on my decision as to where to send my children. I am in (Redacted) and sent my (Redacted) to skipton on the basis that it is free, unlike wharfedale or settle.

It will make access to the grammar schools for children in rural areas more difficult and only available to weathlier children and not be based on academic achievement.

The majority of parents and children in this area choose their school on the basis of the best educational fit for the child (ultimately in the best interests of our country as much as the individual child as successful children contribute more to society and require less local authority support in the long run), so they will not choose a school further away unless there is a very good reason to do so. All the local schools are quite different and which children will benefit most from which school in our local town has nothing to do with which school is closer to the child's home so it is not in the children's best interests to have transport available only to the closest school. Almost all parents choose a school in the local town, in fact those not doing so have not been eligible for local authority transport for years in any case so these are irrelevant to this consultation. So essentially the change to supporting travel for closest school only means that a child attending a school (in most cases) less than one mile further from home is no longer eligible for local authority transport which seems grossly unfair. Removing the travel option to children attending a school marginally further away will also definitely increase local traffic and pollution as parents drive their children to school instead. This is not in the children's interests, the interests of local residents, other road users or the interests of the environment. The council should be increasing pupils' use of school buses, not reducing it. It is naive not to expect the majority of parents to drive their children to school instead as this is the normal behaviour of parents in this area. In this day and age most families cannot afford for a parent to stay at home so those few children who walk instead will do so without parental support as most parents will have to rush off to work at this time in the morning (they might have time to drive their child to school but not to hang around for the half an hour extra it would take the child to walk). If something goes wrong on the child's way to school there is likely to be no one at home available to come and help them. Also, many parents have children of different ages at multiple schools and they rely heavily on one or more of their children going to school on the bus as they might be walking another child to school elsewhere at the same time. I feel the change in policy to closest school only is grossly irresponsible on so many levels that I am alarmed it is even being considered. If the policy is not about saving money on transport as it first seems but instead aims to take school choice away from local parents and children forcing children to attend their closest school this will also have adverse effects on these children in the long term. Parents don't choose schools further from home if the closer school offers the best education and support for their child. Ultimately any funding local authorities have for education and associated transport is there to help give each child the best education possible. Removing children's choice of local school is NOT in their best interests. If the council wishes to save money it might consider charging a supplement for the additional mile to those children attending a school further from home. If this fee is reasonable it will still be cheaper for parents than paying to drive their cars to school and back twice a day, not to mention their own loss of productivity for those two

hours of the day. Whilst this would still be harsh on parents already taking on additional costs from all directions, it would at least keep school children on buses and out of cars.

With the proposed changes, our 'nearest school' is not even in the same local authority or county. I should be able to send my children to a school within the authority I live and transportation should not be a factor in this decision. There are a number of reasons as to why a school may not be suitable for a child and such important decisions about their futures should not be based on mileage between home and school.

as a North Yorkshire resident and council taxpayer I should have the right to send my child to your nearest North Yorkshire school and receive free transport if that is my choice.

I think free school transport needs to be given to those who need it (affected by distance and/or disability) and should only be offered to those in the aforementioned sectors where they live in the catchment area for that school. Those outside the catchment who want their child to attend that school should sort transportation costs out themselves. I am entitled to it for my child (in catchment but live outside of walking distance) yet I choose not to use it, as we don't need to, so our funding for that is better spent elsewhere.

The school bus service is essential in getting my children to school. There aren't footpaths for the main roads and it would be incredibly dangerous for me to walk this with a 5 and 6 year old child. It also wouldn't allow me time to then get to work as I would be walking almost 12 miles a day

Where there is only one school in the catchment area this feels unfair as parents are left with no choice. In our car the sole catchment secondary school has been underperforming for years, has changed to an academy and back again and is notorious for bullying. It is not an attractive prospect for an education. Economic pressures mean that families will suffer in order to support a better education. It makes sense that there needs to be stricter control but there ought to be a choice of at least two schools with transport to best support childrens' education.

My (Redacted) have all attended Reeth school followed by Richmond school as I have always understood that children from Reeth and gunnerside school have always had a right to go to Richmond school which is also in sealedale your proposal is going to split up friendships forged at primary school. Friendships that in many cases have lasted a lifetime. Finally taking North Yorkshire children into Cumbria to school is just the most ridiculous thing I have ever heard of

School travel cost is so high that I genuinely do not know how I will afford to send my children to secondary school. My husband is classed as a higher income earner and we do not have the money for the bus pass in September. We have chosen the secondary school for very sensible reasons. I cannot believe as a two graduate household who have always worked hard, paid our taxes and been careful with money that we are in this position. You should be doing more to help people, not less. If you had SEND units in every school you would not have this problem. It would be better for families using them and your transport bill would be far lower. Seems a no-brainer to me in a very rural authority. Sadly you have neglected SEND provision and it's impacting your transport budget. Some joined up thinking is needed rather than slashing things even more.

Removal of catchment area for closest I don't agree with. People have bought homes because of catchment area and therefore it should still be taken into account. Our village school closed in 1989 and our parents got the choice of catchment area out of 5 schools by the Local Authority. It has been the same ever since. Generations going to the same school.

All parents should be asked to contribute to school transport if they don't transport their own children. Allow parents to pay for places on the free buses if they live on free transport routes. Stop using private hire taxis.

Eligibility criteria should NOT go beyond that set out by central government. The level of tax payers money (~£42m) being spent on these free travel services is unacceptable! Children should, other than those children with additional needs, be either taken to school by their parents or should use public transport. If parents wish the tax payer to fund such transport schemes for their children then NYC should introduce an additions element (£x/year) to Council Tax bills that is only applicable to those households containing school age children . Households and couples without children should not see their taxes going towards services from which they will never benefit!

The condition and suitability of roads for school transport must be considered, especially for the winter months. Many children do not attend the nearest school due to unsuitable and unsafe roads particularly in the upper dales. I also think serious consideration needs to be made to the effect this would have on rural schools. Again with particular regard to the upper dsles you may end of providing more transport not less to get children to the nearest school rather than providing one route to one school.

I feel Free Home to school transport should only be provided to in county schools, schools out of county but in catchment should not receive free transport. Free transport for primary children that are less than 1 mile from school is unnecessary

Instead of cutting back on services for children the council should enforce a cap on the price paid to transport providers. It is a standing joke that transport companies make huge profits from overcharging councils for this service. It would actually make more financial sense for the council to employ its own drivers, purchase its own fleet and stop penalising children for the transport companies' greed. The policy about removing free transport for catchment schools is ill-thought through, threatens some village schools close to the boundary and potentially places children at risk, particularly where the road to the nearest school (Kirby Stephen) is too dangerous for gritters during the worst winter months.

It is totally unacceptable to expect peers to attend one school and me another after attending primary school together. Education needs to be the whole experience not just in class

There are 2 practical secondary school options locally, this currently allow families to select the most appropriate for their child, based on size, distance and performance, you are in many case removing that parental choice of what is best for their child

Trying to change the criteria if you have changed schools is yet another disruptive of children's schooling. They have had 4 years of constant disruption and really I'd destroying their education

Distance alone should not be the main criterion. The road travelled should be taken into consideration especially in winter conditions. Will it be gritted or snow ploughed ? Is it suitable for a bus ? Have the people compiling these documents travelled these routes ? Will Reeth children be expected to go to Leyburn or Richmond ? Reeth has always been in the Richmond catchment.

There isn't an option for Whitley as part of this survey. I agree with the nearest school change but it should be within the North Yorkshire catchment. I'm aware that my children's nearest school is Campsamount therefore under the proposed suggestion they would get free travel to this school. However, as I pay (significant) council tax to North Yorkshire, I expect free travel to our nearest North Yorkshire school.

It is a shame that as a payer of council tax to North Yorkshire we would be forced to choose a school outside of our local area in order to meet the free transport criteria. It would be to the detriment to the community to force children in Ingleton, Bentham areas to be forced to choose QES. The distance is negligible and benefits would therefore be minimal in terms of cost reduction for the council. In an area where choice is hugely restricted due to school availability you're effectively removing any preference on basis of financial exclusion.

The document is very confusing to try and read. I'm used to reading these sorts of documents because of my work however I can imagine many parents will struggle and give up.

We live and are part of North Yorkshire council. I think it is disgusting that our children may have to enter a different county to go to school when they don't wish to. Also taking children away from our county schools!!

The proposals to be applied to children in Upper Swaledale (and Arkengarthdale), would put the children in danger when travelling to school in winter, or any times of icy or snowy weather. The routes to the schools they would have to attend with free travel are over the tops at high altitude and such roads are impassable and dangerous to travel on at certain times each year. The Stang road is not gritted all along the route. The road from Grinton to Wensleydale is over the tops on a narrow steep road. Similarly the road to Kirkby Stephen. Apart from the genuine travel risk, children would lose attendance days thus affecting their educational progress. The road to Richmond where most children travel to is kept gritted and at a relatively low level, ensuring safety in travel.

You won't get a school bus over Grinton Moor, The Stang or out to Kirkby!!!! You cannot split these children, they have all grown up together and now you want to split them into new schools midway through their secondary education. Do not do this!

I live near a 'special school' where pupils are brought and taken home in a taxi. It would appear that each taxi carries only one child. This is probably a safety issue, but is the cost of these separate taxis taken into account in the figures shown in the financial tables? If not, why not? The people, in this part of Craven, with bus passes have had many of the bus services that they have relied on in the past removed. Are you going to remove transport from the young as well? Not all parents have access to a car, 3 miles is a long way for an eight year old to walk to and from school. There may be younger children within a household - pity the poor parent who has to feed, dress and then take a young child and younger siblings on a journey that may well take an hour to walk, and then another to get home. AND then do it all again at the close of the school day. ABSOLUTELY RIDICULOUS. I am appalled at the lack of forethought from all concerned in preparing these proposals. If a car is available, it's not a very 'green' way of transporting pupils to and from school.

I am worried I am not going to be able to afford transport for my child to go to school

No consideration given in the new plan that the nearest school geographically does not mean the most accessible due to road and weather conditions.

Under your new proposal you are putting many children into very dangerous situations. The roads you expect them to travel on are often untreated in winter and are exposed to the elements which makes them impassable! Our children will so much school in the winter which is totally unacceptable! Not only that, my child would be sent to a school in a different local authority than ours and would have to cross the A66 road twice a day to get to school, that is totally unacceptable and I will NOT allow that for my child. Her safety is my number 1 priority. Your proposal is sickening, you haven't taken local rural roads and conditions into account. You should be ashamed!!

I feel communication with families is poor and some of the documentation is hard to understand. We've had some good and some very bad experiences with school transport due to the lack of communication and the many staff changes which our children do not cope well with

I support the proposed changes to nearest school. I wrote, via our governors many years ago saying how wasteful the present system is with free transport to catchment area and to nearest school which are often different. Transition will be tricky and I can see there are places in our rural area where nearest school may be a trickier journey than another one. The policy very definitely needs updating. Closure of schools over the years hasn't taken into consideration transport costs.

Parents and carers should have a choice of schools for all ages and transport to the nearest two or three schools at secondary stage should be provided free of charge. Presumably NYCC are receiving more money from council tax etc due to the massive rise in new homes, therefore it isn't sensible to be seen as penny pinching from parents.

I think it is disgraceful that children may not be able to access or afford transport to the nearest school in their local authority in the future. This will have an overwhelming negative impact on children and families that already have children going to a school in North Yorkshire eg: settle college, who then have to use a different school with transport in another county. School holidays will be different. It's clear the proposed changes have been made without taking into consideration families who may have children in two different schools in two different counties. Children may even not have any choice in which secondary school they want to attend, which will have a detrimental impact upon mental health and wellbeing which is already in crisis.

We live in North Yorkshire, my daughter goes to a school in North Yorkshire but with this latest proposal she wouldn't be entitled to free transport and would only get the free transport if she went across the border into Cumbria because that is 7 miles away as opposed to the one in County that is 12. How does that make sense ?

If the proposed changes to the main eligibility criterion to be nearest school (with places available) were to go ahead, I think that many children will be disadvantaged by being forced into going to a school which may not meet their educational and social needs. Council tax payers should not have to send their children out of their community to go to a school in another county because it is closer. Council tax payers pay a large amount of money every year and expect the services of their own council at schools in their home county. The council should look at contract pricing and efficiencies before implementing policy changes which will affect such a large demographic of North Yorkshire residents.

Closest secondary school is 6.7 miles away from us but 2 counties away being in Cumbria. Settle College is 9 miles away yet in the same county. This should be available for us. Our eldest is at Settle College now so why should we have to send his (Redacted) to a different secondary school, which is over-subscribed and in a different county and not to the under-subscribed school in the same county? This then looks bad on the hard-working families that can not afford the extra expenses. For generations Settle has been the school after both middle schools. It should still be the school for the same primary schools the middle schools were then to send pupils too.

It's an absolute disgrace

We moved to (Redacted) last year. We could not get a place for our children in our nearest school (QES in Cumbria) therefore our nearest choice was Settle College. North Yorkshire have failed to take account of the fact that QES is the most over-subscribed school in the area and children are not automatically guaranteed a place there. Now that my older children attend Settle and are happy, I intend to send their younger siblings to the same school. Especially since the school holidays in the different counties do not match up. I think the council is trying to simplify an issue which is not simple at all. I live in North Yorkshire and therefore should be guaranteed transport to a school in North Yorkshire. What's the point in having a county area otherwise? I would implore the council to reconsider their action in this matter, specifically in our area, so close to the council border.

Settle is the nearest school on OUR COUNTY the county in which we pay council tax for. QES is a massive school already and not suited to a lot of children. I know my children would not have been happy there going from a small primary school (especially as you closed the middle schools which would have made the transition easier) I would not be able to afford the bus fare. It is an absolutely disgusting proposal. We have already had so many services taken away from us. And now this.

Absolutely disgusting! What happened to school being a personal choice a choice for each individual with free transport to transport the student to and from school! Living in Low Bentham 2 children been through Settle College 1 currently attending & 1 to attend - yet your telling me my nearest school and ONLY choice for free transport will be Settle! How am I to fund it also round work if I am to transport myself! The distance between the 2 schools is so close - bring back freedom of choice for these students & give them a safe free travel to and from - who's going to take the punishment when a parent can't afford to pay the travel expenses??

I feel that transport should be provided to the nearest school within the county in which the child lives

I think it is absolutely disgusting that this is even being discussed, children should not be suffering all for cutting costs. If you want to save money reduce the amount of money paid to all the pen-pushers at North Yorkshire who make these stupid decisions. Settle College has always been the first choice for families in the Ingleton and Bentham area going through the Middle School system but yet again another crazy decision made by the council closing the middle schools. QES is already at capacity so how do you expect it to take any more children? We pay our council tax to North Yorkshire and get absolutely nothing in return, pay for police and there is no police in Ingleton or Bentham and now you are depriving our children of a free choice choosing a school that they wish to attend and affecting their education as well. QES is a massive school and some kids just can not cope with such an overwhelming environment and shouldn't have to. The world's gone mad, it's an absolute joke you should be ashamed.

The proposed changes would mean my children's nearest secondary school would be in a different county. To get there they would have to travel over a moor road which in winter doesn't tend to get gritted and often is blocked with snow. This would have a major impact on their school attendance as it just wouldn't be safe to travel there. The children in the area currently attending secondary school travel down the dale, staying on well gritted roads which is much safer. This has been the case for many decades. I also think it's unfair sending them into a different county when they have built up friendship groups within the primary school and other schools in the area that they are clustered with. I myself struggled with the changes from primary to secondary and having the support of my friends going with me definitely helped. I understand you are having to try to cut costs but surely our children's safety has to come first. I hope you reconsider and look at some situations individually rather than looking at North Yorkshire as a whole. Many thanks

I think it's disgusting that we live in North Yorkshire but you are expecting our children to go to a school in Cumbria because it's the nearest and is going to save you money. If I wanted to live in Cumbria then I would.

I have significant concerns in respect of the policy whereby transport will only be provided to the nearest school. Large parts of NYC operate a selective school system, undertaken via the Eleven-Plus test. This system already benefits wealthier parents, who have the resources to support additional exam coaching. The travel amendments will make the 'wealth = advantage' position far worse, with substantial socio-economic consequences. A student can currently obtain free transport to one of the NYC Grammar Schools, even if they have a closer non-selective school. By removing this free transport, those on lower incomes will not be able to attend the Grammar School, due to the significant financial burden of additional transport costs. This change will further advance the opportunities given to wealthier households, who can afford the transport costs to access the Grammar School. Those on lower incomes will be excluded. We would suggest some form of free transport is maintained for those on lower incomes, or the transport cost to be means tested, to ensure lower income families have access to the Grammar Schools. We would encourage you to review the potentially unintended consequences of this proposal, as they may well be more severe than expected.

Transport costs will go up over time because things cost more over time..in the same way we pay more council tax each year, the council needs to pay more for transport. This proposal will have an incredibly negative impact on our local secondary schools to such an extent that I genuinely believe Settle College will close or be taken over by an academy chain. Whilst this absolves the LA of any responsibility for the school (yay for the local authority!) it is not a good thing for the community, staff or pupils. This is very clearly an attack on these schools that will lose out due to the border and new rule of closest school only for transport. Why North Yorkshire wants to destroy these schools and give the pupils to other local authorities or academy chains is beyond me. We will do everything we can to save these schools and that certainly means keeping transport going to their local North Yorkshire, catchment school, not one across borders just so North Yorkshire can wipe the hands clean.

This would mean my child would be going out of their catchment area. Along with the fact the road to this school is too treacherous for the gritters to even go over. Therefore so much education would be missed. I know this is due to budget but It would cost more money having numerous buses all going in different directions rather than having the one going the same way. Surely?

I understand the rationale for this new policy- looking for ways to save money is of course important. However, the specific circumstances of Selby High School and Brayton, being schools that are very close together, mean that this policy could have a profound impact, without saving any money in this particular case. This is because almost all the students who currently get free transport for Selby, would also require free transport for Brayton if that was their closest school. Therefore, the only impact would be making those students less likely to choose Selby High School. We know from our Open Evenings that many families have a difficult decision, as they see both Brayton and Selby as excellent schools. At the moment they often choose Selby. I do believe that if there was a financial sacrifice in making this choice, especially at the current time, that it would be a strong factor in school choice. It is impossible to judge the precise impact of this policy without having information about students currently attending Brayton whose closest school is Selby. However, for Selby, nearly half of the students who currently get free transport to Selby, live closer to Brayton. That is over a 100 students. Once again, I need to point out that almost all of these students would still require free transport if they chose Brayton, meaning a negligible saving (if any). In my view, any policy needs to consider the specific case of having two schools that are so close together, and if necessary have a local policy agreement. I would ask that Governors are provided with detailed, accurate data about potential impact, including about Brayton.

We live slightly closer to Wetherby (West Yorkshire so out of catchment) than our nearest catchment school. To have a policy to be eligible for travel that the school has to be the nearest one even though my child can't go to that school as it's out of catchment is preposterous. I'm frankly astonished it could even be considered. It very clearly should be a policy that it's the nearest catchment school / one allocated at admissions. You are removing any choice to be eligible for free transport.

Unclear what proposed changes entail

Disgraceful as usual from North Yorkshire council you should be ashamed of yourselves

We pay council taxes for what??? We had awful road conditions, bin and continuously missed on collection days ... the list goes on. Maybe address the numerous taxis travelling from Burnley and further a field daily that come to collect local children to then travel a couple of miles to drop them off to then make the long journey back to Burnley and similar places. Total waste of petrol!! We are once again being stung by the system! We only had two local schools to choose from as is was and now the choice is being taken away. People CANNOT afford to pay travel expenses especially when most will have more than one child to pay for!! It is outrageous, unfair and criminal to propose this change!! To arrange a meeting on a Thursday day time is also a sly move made by the council! Everything is corrupt!!!

This takes away from a pupil having a choice of where they would feel comfortable to progress their future. Some suffer from displacement, anxiety and many other not seen forms of mental health problems that will not be taken into consideration if they are forced to take the nearest school that could completely ruin their futures. Some schools are too big for the quieter more timid pupils, where as others may prosper from that, but it should be a choice not just a general blanket of one fits all!

Settle college has always been the secondary school for the area. Previously parents from the area had to make special arrangements for children to apply and attend QES it was not an automatic choice. Even though it is a closer school be 2 miles it is not a local school as you have to pass 2 county borders to attend. Our younger children should be able to access their secondary school in their home county as freely as their siblings.

The nearest secondary school with places available to our village of Ingleton would be Queen Elizabeth School (Cumbria) The nearest secondary school with places available to our village of Ingleton in North Yorkshire is Settle High School. I believe the proposed amendment would force the majority of pupils from Ingleton Primary, Bentham Primary, and other smaller schools located in North Yorkshire to travel out of County, and it would be a huge loss to Settle High school, which accepts a large amount of pupils from these Primary schools (including (Redacted) over 20 years ago!)

We can walk to school at the moment which is great. I am worried when my children are secondary school age if they get into a Skipton grammar school. Would they get free bus places even though their nearest school is Upper Wharfedale? We may not be able to afford the bus fares and therefore this could have a negative impact on their education if a grammar school is the best option for them.

The proposed travel policy is taking away choice from a number of children in the future. The change would impact greatly on the area which i live and also the currwnt high school my children attend. Thia proposal could potentially effect ongoing numbers at Settle college and then impact on the schools funding and the overall local community

Due to the close proximity of Selby High School and Brayton Academy this new policy will take away the choice of secondary school for many students. It may also affect the pupil numbers attending both schools and in turn affect budgets. This will have a knock on effect to staffing structures as less budget would mean redundancies. We see huge invoices for SEN taxis requiring sign off here at the school, surely there is a more cost effective way of offering this service. One taxi owner actually puts on his invoice not to show the driver the costs which tells us that he is charging extortionate amounts. A lot of the transport companies see a school tender as a blank cheque. During the teacher strikes taxis were were still paid as the reason given by NYC was they were contracted, however I believe a taxi firm could have got other business at this time. If we compare to school staff are not paid during school holidays and they cannot get other work during this time, it seems we have no control over their charges or conditions and perhaps why costs are spiraling out of control. What considerations for cost have been made when students have managed moves to neighboring schools, will NYC then foot the bill of taxi's if the student is out of area. Lots to think about, I think it would be a huge error in taking this service away. Perhaps look at a concessionary rate for travel (free for FSM). We have spend a lot of time educating students of sustainable travel to school and this may drive the students on out with villages to be driven in by car, undoing all our good work and also increasing traffic to an already congested town.

If my child has to go to a lower rated school that is not good Bring them up to the standard of Ripon Grammar School

My children live in (Redacted). Under the new proposals their nearest secondary school is Leyburn and therefore that is where their free transport would be to (under the new policy). However, historically, children from this area attend Richmond school, and that is where I would like my children to attend. I am concerned about Winter weather and road conditions associated with higher level routes to schools beyond Swaledale, and the potential impact on school attendance. Under the proposal it could mean that children currently attending one primary school, would attend 3 different secondary schools. This would have a negative effect as there are benefits to the children of attending the same secondary school as peers, especially during transition from KS2 to KS3. There would be less community cohesion (both for families and friends) through attending different schools. Therefore there would be considerable cost implications incurred by my children attending a non catchment school. I also may have to look to move out of the area so that they could obtain free transport to Richmond school which would be our school of choice.

If these changes goes a head my child will then be given transport to a school in Cumbria where they will not know anyone instead of going to the same school as others in his class and older siblings, I think the move to secondary school is hard enough for children without not having friends around them, also the road I over the tops are unsafe over winter and can be blocked for weeks with snow. As mine would've only child from up dale to go to Kirkby Stephen this transport would surly cost more then sending him to same school as which siblings and neighbours go to there is also add school uniform cost as wouldn't be able to use siblings school jumpers and stuff I think all this is a very unfair on the children please leave as is

Nothing further to add

I feel that you are playing with children's education. I currently have one of my children in Brayton Academy, my other two children have now left that school. I have had to pay for transport for all three of children and it has cost me a fortune. The reason for this was due to me choosing a better education for my children.

Problems for children who live 'up dale' as Richmond School won't be there nearest school.

Does not deal adequately with cross Council border issues

Like many others in this area we have lived in Craven district our entire lives. Paid the council tax at the highest rates for the area, paid the extortionate house prices to live in this area mainly to keep my child in a North Yorkshire school now to be told that I have to pay extra to get my children who lives in North Yorkshire to a school in North Yorkshire! I object!

Free places on buses inside North Yorkshire vs £800 a year for those even slightly out of it is disproportionate

It's disgusting that children won't be able to get free transport to a school in the same county that you live in

The proposal hasn't been thought through thoroughly and in the area that we live the vast majority will be very strongly opposed to it being implemented. Whilst appreciating money needs to be saved in the current climate, this proposal, if approved, will create more problems than it would resolve and ultimately, avoidable, additional expense. We live in Yorkshire but are very close to the Lancashire and Cumbrian borders. If in future children from our local area will only receive transport assistance for their nearest Secondary school it is likely NYC will be paying to send these pupils to a different county, (Cumbria). A completely ridiculous scenario which would make no sense whatsoever when the difference in travelling mileages between an ideal school in North Yorkshire, the school in Cumbria and the students residing in our area, are virtually the same.

Think SEND proposals should remain as is ie after referral done as the new proposal duplicates the process causing extra resource cost

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Our school, community, staff, and pupils would be massively effected by this and it could mean the closure of the school. Many pupils who need a smaller and secure environment to work in will not be able to make that choice in the future and will suffer in consequence. Settle College offers young people a broad and balanced curriculum, alongside excellent pastoral support. The proposed transport change would cause a significant reduction in student numbers and therefore a potential impact on this offer. The savings would not be realised in this area as the students would still require transport to their nearest secondary school, with little change to actual distances travelled. There is serious concern in the community about the potential impact on Settle College caused by such a severe drop in pupil numbers both immediately and in years to come, and the after-effects of this decline on the local area.

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As a parent of a child approaching the need for post 16 education there needs to be travel provisions put in place as our nearest establishment for this are not within walking distance it's either a 20 mins bus ride if they provide the courses my child needs or 1 hour on the bus this will cost us approx £1000 per school year. Transport distance needs to be considered in terms of areas and safety of the children currently they walk 2 miles to school along a main poorly lit road in all weathers. Often soaked to the bone by the time they reach the school.

I live in (Redacted) and both (Redacted) go to Settle College. Under the new proposals they wouldn't have been eligible for free transport to Settle College because QES in Kirkby Lonsdale, Cumbria is nearer. I am very concerned for the future of Settle College if this goes ahead and for the potential impact on other parents. The difference in distance from Ingleton to Settle or Ingleton to Kirkby Lonsdale is not actually much and would have virtually no impact on your transport costs because the bus that currently goes to Settle would still have to be paid for but to Kirkby Lonsdale instead. In addition QES is a much larger school than Settle College and probably doesn't have room for extra students. I chose Settle College partly because of its more caring smaller environment and Settle College offers young people a broad and balanced curriculum, alongside excellent pastoral support. The proposed transport change would cause a significant reduction in student numbers and therefore a potential impact on this offer. The savings would not be realised in this area as the students would still require transport to their nearest secondary school, with little change to actual distances travelled. There is serious concern in the community about the potential impact on Settle College caused by such a severe drop in pupil numbers both immediately and in years to come, and the after-effects of this decline on the local area. I also have concerns for children in Settle if Settle College were to decline because of this, then you would need to provide more transport to get them to Skipton to the nearest Secondary School. I observe that your costs have probably gone up because of the large number of smaller taxis that are operating for small numbers of students and this is where you should look to change things.

I understand and, indeed, applaud the rationale for this new policy; looking for ways to save money is important. However, the specific circumstances of Selby High School and Brayton [and perhaps other geographically close schools], mean that this policy could have a serious adverse impact, without actually saving any money in this particular case. This is due to the fact that almost all the students who currently get free transport for Selby, would also require free transport for Brayton if that was their closest school. Therefore, the only impact would be making those students less likely to choose Selby High School. We know from our Open Evenings that many families have a difficult decision, as they see both Brayton and Selby as excellent schools. At the moment they often choose Selby. I do believe that if there was a financial sacrifice in making this choice, especially at the current time, that it would be a strong factor in school choice. It is impossible to judge the precise impact of this policy without having information about students currently attending Brayton whose closest school is Selby. However, for Selby, nearly half of the students who currently get free transport to Selby, live closer to Brayton. That is over a 100 students. Once again, I need to point out that almost all of these students would still require free transport if they chose Brayton, meaning a negligible saving (if any). While agreeing with the objective in principle, any policy needs to consider the specific case of having two schools that are so close together, and if necessary have a local policy agreement. This could be achieved by including a clause excluding schools that are, for example, less than one mile apart. Thank you.

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I fully believe in and support Settle College. 'Settle College offers young people a broad and balanced curriculum, alongside excellent pastoral support. The proposed transport change would cause a significant reduction in student numbers and therefore a potential impact on this offer. The savings would not be realised in this area as the students would still require transport to their nearest secondary school, with little change to actual distances travelled. There is serious concern in the community about the potential impact on Settle College caused by such a severe drop in pupil numbers both immediately and in years to come, and the after-effects of this decline on the local area'

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I understand that currently a huge 75% of students at Settle College rely on transport to school. Settle College offers young people a broad and balanced curriculum, alongside excellent pastoral support. The proposed transport change would cause a significant reduction in student numbers, potentially having a severe impact on the college's ability to continue delivering this offer. The proposed savings for NYCC would not be realised in this area as the students would still require transport to their nearest secondary school, with little change to actual distances travelled. There is serious concern in the community about the negative consequences for Settle College caused by such a severe drop in pupil numbers both immediately and in years to come, and the after-effects of this decline on the local area.

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The proposed changes are naive and ill-considered. We love in (Redacted). When we moved here our children were in (Redacted). Our nearest secondary school is Queen Elizabeth School Kirkby Lonsdale. However they did not have space for both our children. We therefore chose Settle College. Under your proposals we would now have to pay for our children to attend the only secondary school in the area that had space for our two boys. We have (Redacted) who are due to go to secondary school in a couple of years too, and given to the proposed policy, we might have to send them to Queen Elizabeth School, even though their (Redacted) go to Settle. The proposed policy is ill-considered and will penalise and make life harder for ordinary families like ourselves who have not had any realistic choice where to send our children to school. Our nearest school did not have space for (Redacted), only one, and, (Redacted), we could hardly send them to school in different directions. I really can't believe that the council is proposing this - is life not hard enough for working parents to these days with the cost of living crisis?

It is ridiculous that North Yorkshire county council would fund transport to a secondary school out of the county but not fund transport to a secondary school only 3 extra miles within the county, the provision of education that settle college provides the children of Ingleton and the proposed effected area is outstanding and it seems the children living in North Yorkshire are being denied the right to be educated within their county. A county that has different holiday periods which will effect siblings and therefore the income capacity and ability to work of the parents. As a council tax payer I expect my council tax to be used for the best interest of all the residents in North Yorkshire, however paying to transport our children to a school in another county to save absolutely nothing is of no benefit to anyone in North Yorkshire.

As a parent with children currently attending Settle College, I am writing to express my urgent concerns regarding the proposed change to North Yorkshire Council's home-to-school transport policy. The current policy, which provides funding for the transport of students living within the catchment area of Settle College, has been instrumental in ensuring access to education for our children. However, the proposed change to restrict funding only to students for whom Settle College is their nearest school will have significant implications for families like mine. Settle College is not just a place of education for our children; it is a supportive community where they receive a high-quality education alongside invaluable pastoral support. As a parent, I have witnessed firsthand the positive impact that Settle College has had on my children's academic progress and overall well-being. However, the proposed change threatens to disrupt this supportive environment and limit the opportunities available to our children. For families already facing financial challenges, the prospect of having to arrange and fund transportation to a different school could pose a significant burden, potentially depriving our children of the educational experience they deserve. Furthermore, the proposed decline in pupil numbers could have adverse effects on the resources and quality of education offered at Settle College, further impacting the well-being and academic success of all students. I urge you to reconsider this proposed change and to take into account the concerns of parents like myself who value the educational opportunities and supportive community provided by Settle College. Preserving access to Settle College for all eligible students, regardless of proximity, is essential for ensuring that every child has the chance to thrive and succeed. Thank you for considering my concerns, and I hope for a positive resolution that prioritizes the best interests of our children and our community.

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this proposal will significantly impact smaller secondary school's like Settle College which if numbers drop the varied curriculum which is now on offer won't be impacting all pupils attending the school

I think the proposed policy will mean that children whose parents cannot afford to pay for school transport will be very adversely affected by the change to only allowing free transport to the nearest "suitable" school. This is because it does not allow the parent to decide which is a suitable school for their child and surely the parent is the one who knows best what is suitable for their child. It unfairly gives an added advantage to the already advantaged children of well off parents. In the area where I live, Bentham, there are 2 senior schools in the catchment area one in Kirkby Lonsdale and one in Settle. Settle College is slightly further away but is the one that traditionally most families have chosen to send their children to. Bentham is a very close knit community and many of the families have lived in the area for generations. Settle is a relatively small school in North Yorkshire where the staff get to know all the children individually QES is a large school in Cumbria not suitable for many of the Bentham children. It is possible that the policy may reduce the number of children who can attend Settle College so much that it would send the wonderful School into decline. QES would I think become oversubscribed. I therefore think Bentham school transport should be considered as a special case and transport to both the schools should remain free. I think the added cost to keep the busing children the slightly longer distance to Settle would be negligible. It should also be considered that the school bus is the the only bus from Bentham to Settle and it will need to be kept running for the children from Bentham still eligible to get free transport to the school. Please save this free service it is very important for the children in the Bentham Area and for the future of Settle College.

Not all schools can fairly accommodate send children and that means going away from the nearest suitable school for the benefit of the child and their needs. This restricts the ability of families to work if there is only one car in the home because it must be available for school runs. With transport both parents would be able to take employment. Something beneficial for all. Something that cannot happen if only one parent can drive and undertake the car journey. Surely it would make economic sense to be able to offer transport in these circumstances as it would allow families with children with SEND who are better placed in a particular setting a better opportunity for education and also a better home life as both parents can work and contribute to society and the economy.

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The proposed changes to the travel policy will have a devastating impact on the choices for parents at Ingleton Primary School. The current challenges around the cost of living will give them no choice but to send their child to an out of authority school. Settle College provides an amazing offer as a school with a wide diverse curriculum⁸⁸ and strong pastoral care. The changes to the travel policy will result in a drop of student numbers having a devastating impact long term on the quality of education and existence of the school with a negative impact on the town of Settle itself. Reconsider this proposal and maintain choice for our parents. Settle is a school to be proud of.

I have two children who will need transport to secondary school in the future. Currently we are a 3 minute walk from their primary school so transport is not an issue. A change in the policy would mean that our children might have to attend a school that would not be the best fit for them socially and academically. There is no way with the current cost of living crisis that we could afford to transport our children ourselves due to our jobs (we both work shifts, including nights) and we couldn't afford a transportation service for them. We urge the council to please reconsider this policy for the sake of all the children living in rural villages who dont have a massive choice of schools and the ability to get to school easily.

The planned changes to school transport only being free to the nearest school will be extremely detrimental not only to children & families but also to schools within North Yorkshire. I live and pay my council tax to North Yorkshire I expect to be able to send my child to a school in North Yorkshire, not be forced to send them out of the area due to the cost of school transport.

This may need investigating further as from what I can understand using simple common sense it will cost NYCC more over the next 4 years. EXAMPLE A local family in Burton in Lonsdale, have just secured a place for their 3rd child, of 4, at QES. They however are struggling for the transport. This is because the school busses for that route are currently at their maximum capacity and will continue to be into the next school year. In turn this is going to mean a further type of transport is needed, when the current year 5's then are to attend a second school bus for that route will then be required. In the meantime the current capacity for Settle College transport is also at full capacity, with some children at either school, having to take the service bus. This has to be paid for by NYCC. This means that the next 5 years it is likely, with only a few children leaving school each year from each bus route. A bus will still need to be provided to Settle College at least full size for the next 3 years before reducing to a smaller after that yet another bus/ mini bus will need to be provided on each route to QES as the service bus can not guarantee places for the high amount of student's. Service busses in the area are that far apart in timing if a child misses the first service bus they will then not arrive at school until around 11am. So this is going to mean at least another 3 vehicles need to be provided by the council yet only reducing the size of other vehicles for a number of years. This will cost more for transport until the service is no longer needed to be provided for the current year 6 students when they finish school at Settle. I hope you find this interesting to look into and can see that financially it is not viable to keep children from attending their preferred school in the county they live.

I live in an area where only Settle College currently offers free transport from home to school (currently I'd have to take my children 6/7 miles to Ingleton to access free bus for QES) With the change QES would have to offer free transport from home to school for all the children in our area, which would be up to eight miles out of the area they currently transport from. I think it makes sense to look after your own county school as it would have a negative effect on Settle College if this proposal was to go ahead. I understand we should only be offered free transportation to our school. Why are we not looking after our own county school?

If the amendment to 'nearest school' criterion is adopted, the schools in question for many families in our area would result in placing QES under significant additional pressure when it is already over-subscribed due to a large catchment area, and Settle College, a good secondary establishment, would be likely to lose applications through no fault of their own. We would be sad to see this happen and it would make our own choice very difficult as we are a low-income family and would struggle to pay for transport, but would want our son to attend Settle College. Due to its much smaller size it will suit him far better as he has ASD and finds large groups and busy places overwhelming. Thank you for taking our thoughts into consideration.

It is concerning that the number of students able to attend Settle College will be impacted significantly and if as a result of falling numbers there is no local secondary school new families will not move here and those children living here face a long bus journey or their parents will have to meet the cost of private education at Giggleswick School.

Providing transport to the nearest suitable school, regardless of county is going to have a significant negative impact on pupils and of schools in the local area. Why are NY providing transport to a Cumbria school and not a local NY school. This is going to have a detrimental impact on Settle College, one of your own schools!

I think that children should go to the nearest school, what's the point of them spending hours of their own time per week travelling further to school than necessary, all the extra haulage of children to far away schools impacts on the environment, road conditions, traffic pollution and our children's health. The sooner this is implemented the better.

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There needs to be clearer guidance on what would happen for schools which are very close to each other. If a student is choosing between two good schools and there's only a few hundred metres between them, it means that travel eligibility would suddenly become a much bigger factor than before. Especially as if someone needed free transport to school 1, then they would also need it for school 2, therefore no money overall would be saved while decreasing the amount of students who would be able to go to school 1. I believe there needs to be a local policy agreement put in place for situations such as these, and more detailed data needs to be supplied about the ramifications of this policy on such schools.

I am seriously concerned about the financial impact such a strategy will have on Settle College: there will undoubtedly be a fall in pupils, as many families would not be able to fund school travel and so would be forced to enrol their children in schools which are unlikely to be as excellent as Settle College: fewer pupils = less money to fund teaching and pastoral budgets, so ultimately all the pupils will be impacted negatively.

We run a farm and work incredibly long hours, we do not have flexibility or finances to transport our children to secondary school. There is also no bus service at all where we live so if your proposals were to go ahead unless we paid we would be solely responsible for transport to a school generations of our family have attended transported from our addresses. We live on the side of a dangerous road (Redacted), there is no way it would be safe to walk along to get to a bus stop even if such service existed. The fact that our children would have to pay to be transported to upper Wharfedale a school within catchment is an utter disgrace. The council should be ashamed of themselves that they are even considering this as yet again children and families in rural areas are being negatively impacted by council cuts.

Another massive rise in council tax and your wanting to remove more services, absolute joke. We are struggling to make ends meet while your mismanagement of budgets just puts more pressure on us.

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I think the consultation period needs to be extended to allow NYC to ensure that their facts and figures are correct. Based on information provided to both my own and neighbouring schools, we believe the information on potential impact on our school(s) to be incorrect. We believe this because we can make accurate projections based on the families that we work with day in, day out. The potential changes have the potential to reduce our NOR - the catchment area essentially becomes irrelevant. The potential changes would remove the ability for some parents to make a choice of secondary school for their child based on need, instead determined by potential cost. The potential changes could signal the end of our only secondary school in North Craven, this would have wide ranging consequences. As a Headteacher I am aware of the transport arrangements for our children, past and present. The transport arrangements are costing significant amounts on unnecessary money. I believe this should be looked at first to see what savings could be made.

Not suitable

This feels like blackmail, my high achieving child be will in secondary school within 18 months & the whole new system stinks. Why should I need to apply to an appalling school out of my district & hope it's over subscribed to receive a free bus pass for my child to my much preferred school which would be far more suitable ?! We have several school in different directions in different authorities which currently have different forms of school transport. There is no direct bus route to some of these school, therefore if no school bus if provided parents will drive their children to school - which I am sure is against everything that this council stands for, meaning many more cars making trips & clogging the roads & atmosphere with fumes! Unfortunately Eggborough doesn't have a high school within a few miles & there is no path out of the village in any direction, we are stuck without transport of any kind. Local bus services are inadequate so a car is essential & the council seemingly encouraging this in a revamped school transport policy. This change is also a disappointment because it prevents emerging independence of school children which a school bus brings, a certified driver for safety but managing their own time & movement into school. Surely a school bus is a human right, especially since we live in a large & growing village, putting children to a disadvantage in this economic climate & limiting school choices is an utter disgrace & I no longer feel proud to be living within the district of North Yorkshire!

If these changes are carried out then better public transport needs to be in place, buses in Embsay don't start until 9am which doesn't cover schools or work times. This is a vital necessity. Walking is possible but also dangerous along the 60mph road!

Should charge for all school transport within N Yorkshire but also provide (on a charging basis) for children who live outside N Yorkshire but attend a school in N Yorkshire. It is scandalous how poor and unfit for purpose some of the private companies who provide such services are.

If the proposal for the 'local' school transport goes ahead, it is not safe for my grandchildren to travel over Tailbrigg to Kirkby Stephen and they will miss many days of school. We live at (Redacted) When children started being encouraged to leave their Primary schools to attend a Secondary School in the 60s, not long before I was due to start, parents were promised that transport would be provided to Richmond Schools. The catchment went down the dale due to a common sense route. This common sense approach should not be changed and transport to Richmond School, should be maintained. The route to Wensleydale School includes a high route or lower priority gritting routes. Travelling 25 miles to Richmond is much safer than travelling 15 miles to Kirkby Stephen. Please can an exemption be made for this area and the current catchment area remain.

Our nearest secondary school would be in a different local authority. This would mean that our children would not go to the same secondary school as their peers. This would have a negative effect on friendships formed over their time at primary school. Furthermore the road over to our nearest secondary school is not gritted in bad weather condition and this would mean our children would miss many days of school as it wouldnt be safe to travel. I strongly believe that free transport should be in place for children to their catchment school.

I feel the routes need looking at for the child's nearest school because our nearest school is in a different county and would not be fit to travel in winter months!. The child should be able to go with there peers when they move to secondary school rather than unsettling them and having to make new friends in a school where they will probably know nobody.

I am concerned about the winter weather and road conditions associated with higher level routes to secondary schools beyond Swaledale, and the potential impact on school attendance. I would like to highlight the benefits of attending the same secondary school as peers, especially during transition from KS2 to KS3 I also highlight the community cohesion (both for families and friends) through attending the same school Finally the cost implications incurred by attending a catchment school need to be taken into consideration.

The travel to school policy is ridiculous, all these children will have to go to schools outside of our county taking our choice away. If we loose settle college it would have such a negative effect on our community. There's 100's of children in settle and surrounding that need our school and I for one would not be putting my children on a bus to send them to Skipton if that ended up being our nearest school.

Of course, as a governor I am very conscious of the need for the local authority to take finances into account. However, the proposed changes fail to make sensible and reasonable consideration for all schools in the selby area....and particularly my school. In the selby area we have three secondary schools very close to each other and parents/carers make decisions on the appropriate school based on what each school offers. Certainly, that does differ - SHS offers a broader curriculum than either of the other schools. The seemingly arbitrary measurement of distance (they can be so negligible as to fail to make any worthwhile savings for the authority) could have a detrimental effect on parental choice and, pertinently, on numbers of students attending SHS, with the attendant loss of revenue for a school that strives to offer an excellent and broad curriculum.

This survey is prohibitive it is directed at parents only. Impacts go beyond that family friends who may be involved in a variety of ways supporting parents. To limit responses is controlling by NYC. This is a ridiculous proposal. Upper Swaledale is unique your blanket approach is totally unsuitable here. All three routes to the new schools are unsafe and dangerous during Winter, the diversions on gritted road are excessive and will impact on children's Education. Why are you changing something that has worked well for 70 years. I myself travelled to school in Richmond in the sixties. Travel to Kirkby Stephen is unthinkable in Winter. Unless you are prepared to make significant investment in the road to Kirkby Stephen and for Cumbria to do the same without it you are placing children in danger. All 3 routes are over high ungritted routes. Driving the roads in Summer is not straight forward. I implore you to make Upper Swaledale an exception.

The policy change could see the LA providing transport to academy schools out of county. This would have a negative effect, ie falling rolls on nearby LA maintained schools. The LA would be providing resources, school transport, to support an academy in a neighbouring county at the expense of it's own Maintained school. My concern, as a parent, is the strategic impact this will have on my local school. Has any consideration been given to the viability of 6th form provision if you provide transport to move children out of county? Surely NYC's first priority should be maintaining your own maintained schools?

I think that group transport rather than individual journeys should be considered to save costs. I do not think it is appropriate that children can attend schools that are not their closest and have their transport funded. This is a choice factor and if the closest schools are rejected by their care givers, they alone should be responsible for providing transport.

Settle College offers young people a broad and balanced curriculum, alongside excellent pastoral support. The proposed transport change would cause a significant reduction in student numbers and therefore a potential impact on this offer. The savings would not be realised in this area as the students would still require transport to their nearest secondary school, with little change to actual distances travelled. There is serious concern in the community about the potential impact on Settle College caused by such a severe drop in pupil numbers both immediately and in years to come, and the after-effects of this decline on the local area.

Our current catchment school is not our closest school. This change in policy makes no sense why would you have catchment schools and then only pay to closest which is not catchment.

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Where on earth are you going to find all the additional transport providers. We struggle atm

Our parents have enough to pay for now and now this. So unfair

Laying on transport from a single location to multiple suitable schools instead of the nearest suitable school is costly due to the need of providing multiple buses or taxis, and so inefficient. If parents want to send their child to a school that is not their nearest then it is fine that they should bare the cost of doing so.

My daughter is in effect being forced away from her catchment school, where she has transition days, links and primary school has a relationship, to a school, closer by a couple of miles that we have never even heard of, no relationship to her primary, rated worse by OFSTED and not even in North Yorkshire, to who i pay a massive amount of council tax. There is no public transport from our village of Whitley so no other way of getting her to the school of our choice. The school budgets have been decimated as much as council's so cant expect them to pick up the slack. Dreadful decision caused by the cuts forced by the government that my council tax is already paying for as it goes up up up and the services provided go down down to nothing. Now our children have to pay too.

Clearly savings must be made if this is the 3rd largest cost area. I don't think the policy is hard enough, the SEND proportion of the budget is out of control mushrooming from £6m to £20m, this is way in excess of inflation. I have experience of pupils at Ryedale school getting £800 discretionary awards for travel despite them living well outside this school's catchment area. This is not a specialist SEND school & the pupils have no physical difficulties in using the chargeable private school buses which they used happily and without issue for more than 2 years, before the profligate council gave them an award. This basically enabled the child concerned to get a private chauffeur service from door to school, primarily so that the parent concerned didn't have to leave her house and transport her own child to the local bus stop, which is a mere 5 minutes away. This award has been misused as a privilege rather than a necessity, due to the council's far too all-encompassing SEND policy. The child is dyslexic, and has been absolutely capable of getting on a school bus if her mother can be bothered to drop her off at the normal bus stop. For context I pay £700+ PA Per child for a bus to get to Ryedale as we live outside catchment - I feel others who choose to send their child to a non catchment area school should make their own travel arrangements unless they attend a specialist school or have clear physical barriers to travel (wheelchair users, blind etc).

If this proposal goes ahead I will have one child forced to attend a school they may not choose to as we wouldn't be able to afford transport to a North Yorkshire school even though we reside in North Yorkshire. My eldest attends settle college so I would then have a split of secondary schools to content with too. This will have a huge negative impact on settle college with children from Bentham primary school and our children will not have any say in where they would like to continue their education

The proposal has not taken into account specific situations that can affect certain schools. This is true for Settle College. The fundamentals in this one approach will question the viability of having a secondary school in north Craven. Reducing the numbers will have a significant impact on the students, parents and teachers and other stakeholders, short term, medium term and long term. The negatives have not been clearly communicated to all people, facts and figures are incorrect and the process has not actually effectively asked the students what they want therefore this process and proposal is misleading. Settle College offers young people a broad and balanced curriculum, alongside excellent pastoral support. The proposed transport change would cause a significant reduction in student numbers and therefore a potential impact on this offer. The savings would not be realised in this area as the students would still require transport to their nearest secondary school, with little change to actual distances travelled. There is serious concern in the community about the potential impact on Settle College caused by such a severe drop in pupil numbers both immediately and in years to come, and the after-effects of this decline on the local area.'

We wouldn't be able to choose a North Yorkshire school even though we reside in North Yorkshire our nearest school would be Cumbria.

There certainly is. Schools in North Yorkshire have been systematically shut down or, the latest, mothballed to such a great extent that the Council bear sole responsibility for transporting children so affected to far away educational establishments. The Council chose short term savings for the lesser cost of transport and are now reaping what they have sown. Parents, I believe, are required by the Council to select their preferred school, not just one but six with a requirement of at least three and a preference of five, the so called "Parental preferred choice!" It is in my view that parents have lost all confidence in the Councils educational policies and are seeking out their own genuine preferred choice. It is quite reasonable for parents to expect the Council to provide school transport to and from all of the 6 parental preferred choice educational establishments listed on the Councils form.

I already pay for a second bus pass for my older daughter from her fathers house if the proposal goes ahead i shall be paying for my younger daughters transport also from both houses, if i wish to avoid costs i would have to send her to our nearest school which is in Lancashire and would have children in different schools and different holidays for Easter and October half term, as a single working mum childcare would be extremely difficult. I live on North Yorkshire, I pay my council tax to North Yorkshire I should be able to get free transport for a North Yorkshire school.

Why should my child have to attend a secondary school in Cumbria to be entitled to funding for the transport. Ludicrous. We reside in North Yorkshire and would prefer to send our children to a secondary school in North Yorkshire, not Cumbria.

The closest school as the crow flies is not our catchment school and, the shortest route to this school is high level narrow and in winter weather the roads are not treated. Having driven the route suitable for bus transport, to both the closest and catchment schools, the catchment school is actually 0.2 miles closer. There is also the potential impact on school attendance in bad weather. Richmond School has always been the secondary school for children in Swaledale, children who have established relationships with their peers over 8 years which would be damaged, especially during transition from KS2 to KS3. To maintain these relationships by sending children to the catchment school in Richmond would incur significant costs due to the distance and limited public transport.

Existing friendship groups will be lost. It's daunting enough moving to High school. Seems ridiculous that the council to whom we pay council tax can't/won't provide school transport and my grandson would travel out of area. What about freedom of choice for Ofsted ratings?

Not having the options for sending our children to the best available school. In life it is essential to have an option in all aspects, to take away school travel deprives young friendships from flourishing

Having lived in Swaledale and attended Richmond school I was (Redacted) so I understand how important school transport is to families in this area, I also have first hand traumatic experiences of getting stuck on Tailbridge Hill in the snow. The nearest school does not mean it's the most suitable school, it is not suitable to expect children to travel in an unsafe manner. Sending them up or down Tailbridge 547 metres high during bad weather is totally irresponsible and unsafe, which will mean if they then can't get to school they will be prevented from accessing the education they are entitled and expected to attend. Parents will be forced to keep their children out of school. The new home to school travel policy has to be amended, the education and ultimately the safety of our children has to be of paramount importance to us all.

The Home to School Travel Policy should retain eligibility based on catchment areas. If a family lives in North Yorkshire and pays council tax to NYC, they should be eligible for free transport to a North Yorkshire catchment school. In all of this, there is too much emphasis on parental choice. Many have to accept that their children cannot attend a denominational or Grammar school simply because there isn't one nearby. Issues relating to traffic, parking issues, under and oversubscription and resulting transport costs would be better addressed if the emphasis was on children attending their catchment school. (NYC should not be paying transport costs year after year for children who transfer in year and can't access places in their catchment school because these are taken by children from out of catchment.) A national review of School admission policies could therefore have a positive impact on the drive to reduce transport costs. With reference to the 4. Special Educational Needs, and/or Disability, the paragraph 'To qualify for eligibility' should be above the paragraph 'A child is eligible for free travel if:...' This would make it clearer that individual assessment of the child would be necessary unless the child lives within the statutory walking distance and they can not reasonably be expected to walk there.

Changing the criterion to nearest school will dramatically alter the lives of families living in Bentham and Ingleton, most of whom have strong links to Settle having attended the school themselves. Not to mention the detrimental impact it will have on the intake of children at Settle College.

I am concerned that Settle College will be severely impacted by the proposed changes. Currently many of its students travel longer distances than average as we are in a sparsely populated area. I would like to note that the changes will not affect my family but we believe that Settle College is a great school that provides a good education for children from a wide variety of backgrounds, which becomes even more important once it is noted that 50% of the "nearest school" for many will be a selective single sex grammar school. Settle archives good results for its students regardless of testing at age 10/11 and deserves to be given every opportunity to continue this excellent work.

The difference between walking distance, as the crow flies or a bus transport route can be the defining factor as to which school is deemed as the nearest - especially where schools are say less than a mile apart. This is arbitrary decision making with little benefit and should not apply to schools in close proximity to each other. In respect however the decision making is sensible where schools are say 10 miles apart and a child attends a school 8 miles away and obtains free transport when they could attend a school 2 miles away with no free transport provided. Common sense needs to be applied where schools are close together.

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The children of Bentham once they reach high school age will no longer be able to attend a school in North Yorkshire where they live. They will have no choice due to NYC transport policy have to attend a school in Cumbria. Council tax is paid to North Yorkshire so I presume it would be fairer for NYC find a school in Cumbria. This also takes away all choice for parents and children unless they can afford to pay for transport. I can not think in anyway this policy puts a child first in anyway. It puts the transport policy first and even now we have become a devolved council ie no more Craven district council the services are now poorer than ever. There is a lot of good work that can be done however there is little evidence. Please help the children of Bentham.

I completely disagree with the home to school travel policy now becoming the nearest school without taking in to account the type of road that is to be traveled on. Whether it is a priority 1 gritting route should be taken in to account.

We, Melbecks Parish Council, would like to object to the proposed changes to home school transport policy in North Yorkshire. The proposed changes would have a significant effect on the lives of local school pupils and the whole community. Swaledale is a long dale, running over several miles. The current transport policy means that for their secondary education, children travel down the dale towards Richmond School, which although not the nearest school, this is the catchment school and the most practical route to travel, as it is low-lying and well-used and gritted throughout any inclement weather. The changes to the policy would mean that children from upper Swaledale would travel to Kirkby Stephen, those in Arkengarthdale to Barnard Castle, and those towards Reeth would travel to Leyburn for their secondary education. All three of these routes are impractical as they are often impassable in bad weather. Increased winter maintenance would be needed, an additional cost for North Yorkshire Council. This plan is not a sensible solution, as it could put children at risk in terms of road safety, by sending them to school over high roads in the winter and it could also have a detrimental effect on their attendance. It was also separate the children of the local community by sending them to three different secondary schools. Melbecks Parish Council strongly oppose the proposed changes, and request that the option to continue with existing arrangements is given serious consideration. Melbecks Parish Council melbecksparishclerk@gmail.com

The nearest school is not always the most practical for where we live in Reeth. No one has taken into account the roads in bad weather conditions and also the reliability of transport providers. If we have to pay for our children to attend the same secondary school it will affect our living income wage and out quality of life

If the policy is put in place all children of secondary school age from Hawes will be sent to Settlebeck School in Sedbergh which is in Cumbria. My understanding is that both Settlebeck and Wensleydale school in Leyburn are both full as far as the 2024 intake is concerned. A large number of new houses are being built in Sedbergh. What happens to Hawes children in future if both Schools are full. Where does the County council stand legally when they remove any parental choice and send a whole towns children to another county for schooling. Has this policy been discussed with the Education department? The money for those children will leave North Yorkshire.

I am really concerned that the changes to this policy are going to close Settle College in a few years time when the numbers drop due to their not being free transport from the surrounding local areas. The change to the policy meaning catchment is removed means less children from surrounding villages can get free transport and this will have a huge knock on effect to Settle College's numbers. We live in Settle and I don't want to have to send my child to Skipton to a secondary school if Settle closes.

Settle College offers young people a broad and balanced curriculum, alongside excellent pastoral support. I have a son in Year 7 who is given fantastic support at Settle and I feel sure that this level of care and tailored provision would not have been provided by QES. I have 2 daughters and I would like them to attend Settle in the future, however I would not be able to pay the cost of transport and I think this would be the case for most families. Parents would be swayed to make a choice based on money rather than what is right for the children. The proposed transport change would cause a significant reduction in student numbers and therefore a potential impact on this offer. The savings would not be realised in this area as the students would still require transport to their nearest secondary school, with little change to actual distances travelled. Where we live the two schools available are QES and Settle. We live almost directly in between the two schools, so the cost of transport would be the same to either, so it seems ludicrous that pupils should be denied the opportunity to attend the school which is actually in their own county and has a reputation of caring and working closely with feeder primary schools to ensure the best transition and the best continuation through their school journey. There is serious concern in the community about the potential impact on Settle College caused by such a severe drop in pupil numbers both immediately and in years to come, and the after-effects of this decline on the local area. I think it is appalling that NYC are not supporting their own school! Also there seems to be some disagreement about how the distance is calculated to determine which is the closest school. At the consultation meeting your representative seemed to be saying that it is the school in closest walking distance - which is also ridiculous because the cost of transport is obviously dependent on the length of the journey by road and I believe that by road the journey from Bentham to Settle is shorter than Bentham to QES. A representative from a local coach company who has provided transport to both schools from Ingleton said that the cost would be exactly the same to either school. I understand that as a rural community close to the county line we are in a different situation, but I do not see why there needs to be a blanket policy. Reasonable adjustments must be made to ensure that people have equal opportunities - having a different policy for this area with its unique circumstances would be a reasonable adjustment and not doing so would be denying people the right to have a choice of schools based on what is right for their child. This is a SCHOOL transport policy yet there is no mention of the rights of children to THRIVE and achieve their POTENTIAL in education. The ability to thrive and achieve potential is directly linked to whether the school is the right placement for the child. My understanding is that attendance is high on the agenda at the moment. Removing the opportunity to choose a school that is right for the individual child will have a negative impact on attendance and will result in more cases of EBSA. Also, it seems to me that QES will not actually have the capacity to take the extra pupils - which will result in some pupils not getting their first choice of school and then they will end up at Settle - but it will then just be a matter of luck - some will choose QES only because of the provision of free transport and some will get a place at QES. Some will choose QES because they feel it is the most suitable school for them and some will not get a place, because the places will be taken by the pupils who actually would have gone to Settle if they could have chosen. The admissions process will not distinguish between the 2 groups so inevitably some pupils who preferred Settle will end up at QES and vice versa - which is again utterly ridiculous!

This policy will have disastrous effects on all the children within the North Yorkshire area, both primary and secondary and will be directly responsible for the negative effect of the children's educational needs and general health and mental well being throughout their lives. Stop now and rethink before you destroy the future lives of our children.

I object to the proposal to withdraw transport eligibility to the catchment school. The consultation does not provide enough detail for parents to understand the full impact of this proposal. There is currently no way for parents to check where their “nearest suitable school” is. The consultation could at least have provided a list of communities and schools potentially affected. Some younger children will become no longer eligible for transport to the same school as their older siblings or the children of their neighbours. Are councillors ready for years of complaints and appeals about this? The savings from this proposal have not been clearly demonstrated and could cost the council more. No account seems to have been taken of the cost of commissioning new services to transport children to their nearest school, rather than to the catchment school. Transport costs are “sticky” - having one or two fewer pupils eligible for a single route does not necessarily mean that you can run a smaller bus or taxi. The cost of providing the transport is not always reduced, because transport is still needed for the remaining children who are still eligible. The proposal will encourage parents to use their own cars (where they have the time and money to do so) to take children to school. This will result in more congestion, parking problems and safety issues around school sites. There is no proper assessment of this in the current proposals. The council has declared a climate emergency and this proposal runs contrary to this by encouraging actions that will generate more vehicle emissions. It will also mean more expense for parents during a cost of living crisis. There will be a mismatch between school admissions, giving priority to children living within the catchment, and school transport, only providing transport to the nearest school. If a parent chooses the nearest school on the grounds of transport, they will not necessarily get a place if it is not the catchment school and the school is oversubscribed. But if a parent chooses the catchment school, they will not necessarily get transport if it is not their nearest school. Parents will not know at the time that they apply where they will get transport to, because they won't know whether or not the nearest school will be oversubscribed. In many parts around the borders of North Yorkshire, the nearest school will be outside the county. If children attend these schools, schools in North Yorkshire will lose out on pupils and funding, which could lead to the closure of some North Yorkshire schools. It will also mean that some North Yorkshire council tax payers will be unable to get home to school transport to a North Yorkshire school. The nearest school may be a church school which the parents do not subscribe to. Options to reduce transport costs by recommissioning services, or using council-owned vehicles rather than private contractors, or looking at safer walking options, have not been considered. In the first years of a new council there are many other areas where savings could be made. Why not end the subsidy of £2.7M each year that the Council makes to the Harrogate Convention Centre?

In support of our main feeder Secondary school, we would like to support Settle College who we feel would be significantly affected by this proposal in a negative way. We have concerns about the potential impact on the future education choices of our children and parents/carers and how education in North Craven could be negatively impacted in both the short and long term by this proposal. We feel that based on the information we have, the calculations completed by the local authority are inaccurate and that the impact on our main feeder school would be very different to what is projected. We would strongly ask that the local authority re-look at this.

I pay for my son to travel 13 minutes on a bus. The price is extortionate. We have one school in Northalton, there should be at least a choice for another school within a certain radius with free transport. It is not just people on benefits who struggle financially, parents with mortgages are struggling right now. The system is so unfair. My mortgage alone is £1800 right now. The council should offer free transport.

Investment in Education is an investment in the future. NYC has made significant savings by removing democracy from local councils (such as Ryedale) and in creating a central monolith. Time now for NYC to invest that money back into Education and ensuring our children have paid for transport to access education.

The removal of 50% share means that families who have tried to split amicably will be penalised. This has happened in my school

Important to save money as much as possible. Fully agree with removing as much eligibility for transport paid for by the taxpayer as possible. It is important not to subsidise peoples choice of where they choose to live with free transport.

An element of choice, particularly for ongoing secondary education, can be a significant factor in the progress and ultimate success of pupils who may feel less suited to and not happy at their nearest school. For schools with a wide catchment area within a rural environment the impact of strict application of the new policy is a cause for concern and I would like to see a little more flexibility. My own children who did not require transport, thrived alongside other young people who would now have fallen only a few miles outside the proposed limits. Children would still have to be transported to their nearest school with distances that would result in very little reduction in cost. Strict application of the proposed Home to School Travel Policy could potentially lead to a reduction in pupil numbers in some schools with the consequent reduction in what those schools can offer. Whilst I appreciate that savings have to be made, any policy on transport should take into account the impact of the changes on the quality of the educational offering in North Yorkshire.

We live in (Redacted) and the nearest secondary school to where we live is skipton which my child attends. The removal of the bus service which I was happy to pay for with out any public replacement is ridiculous. It is too far to expect my daughter to walk on her own especially in the darker winter nights - the main road is 60 miles and hour in to (Redacted) and not appropriate to walk on her own. Secondly there are circ 20-25 parents from the village that have to individually use their cars to collect their children from the secondary schools in skipton creating more traffic and congestion and is not promoting green travel. My suggestion would be to either provide a public route before 9am from the village Into skipton so the children can pay daily to get to school there is a public bus to get home at 4:25 which is suitable to use. Or provide bus service that all children can pay to use - I could easily get 20 students that would sign up for this but have not applied in the past as it was always pot luck if you could use the bus.

I think those that need the transport and can pay for it should. I think that those who need the transport and can't pay for it those are the people the council need to help. There should be school buses provided and that families are charged to use the service. I think SEND and medical conditions have a real impact on children and families. It is very very difficult for all. Purely financial decisions can't be made. It needs to be a more holistic view for the child and for what is best for them long term. The right educational setting has to have an impact and the transport requirements have to be a consideration but in the round. I think there should be a form of point system to see if there can be a contribution on the costs.

The use of taxis is a prohibative cost. Whilst some children with significant needs need this, many could be on a school bus. If needed have a second staff member on board - far cheaper then lots of taxis Also please reintroduce the ability for parents to pay for an empty seat on a school bus - it helps council and individual families

No

Settle College offers young people a broad and balanced curriculum, alongside excellent pastoral support. The proposed transport change would cause a significant reduction in student numbers and therefore a potential impact on this offer. The savings would not be realised in this area as the students would still require transport to their nearest secondary school, with little change to actual distances travelled. There is serious concern in the community about the potential impact on Settle College caused by such a severe drop in pupil numbers both immediately and in years to come, and the after-effects of this decline on the local area.'

As the meeting at Ingleton may well have indicated, the feelings about this are very strong in the area. I hope you will take note of the following, especially after Richard Flinton has given an interesting insight to the future of schools and the Craven community. I will mention this further anon - please read on. It is essential that transport remains in place for reception pupils, regardless of age of child. However, I was bitterly disappointed to hear that the reason for this is the ease for the transport department to organise, rather than it benefiting the communities, schools and, above all, the children. This highlights that parts of the current policy can remain in place, but only if it benefits the council workers and makes their lives easier, not the families they are supposed to be representing and serving. This is the sound bite I shall be sending to the press and every councillor who will be voting. It's a dangerous game to ignore the needs of the community for the ease of a public department and I would be very careful in allowing that to come out to the press. I'm sure you've had a fair few responses explaining why the removal of catchment school will impact the Craven area so badly and I would like to hope that you've come to the conclusion that it isn't right for this area. Richard Flinton has emailed to state that the council hopes to "realise a financial benefit over time through this proposed change" and it is very sad that he expects this as I shall explain - and I would like it to be raised with the executive members when reviewing the feedback. As your own transport contractors have already explained, there is no saving in transport costs by forcing pupils to go to QES, rather than Settle College. It costs exactly the same. However, by forcing (I know Richard Flinton has done his bit to toe the party line and say parents still have the choice, but they don't - they can only go where they can get transport, so it's a pointless pretending otherwise) people in Bentham, Ingleton, Burton, Clapham, etc to choose QES, they will, without doubt force Settle College to close. It will be a painful, long, drawn-out process that will hurt everyone involved, but it will close. Perhaps then, the council will see a saving, but not in transport. It will cost significantly more to bus children to QES, Lancaster and Skipton. Not only that, the pupils will have to endure over an hour on the bus each way. So, the net result for this amendment would be a school closure and hundreds of children under North Yorkshire Council's care that are facing two hour commutes and under the care of the bus driver for this length of time. Perhaps Settle College closing is the saving that Richard Flinton is referring to, but to forcibly close a successful school in the heart of a large, rural community would make re-election very difficult for any council member who votes for it. On the plus side, there is a simple solution. Whilst there can only be one policy, as your transport staff have already said, there are times when you have to do things on a case-by-case. Surely, your policy needs to state that the decision to choose between catchment or nearest school needs to be made on a local level. Craven is very different from Harrogate, York or even Skipton. Therefore, how can a policy for an urban centre work for a rural site? Surely, a simple line saying it requires a case-by-case judgement for schools would remove any anguish and still stand to make savings, rather than by closing important schools. As a way of highlighting the ridiculous nature of the proposal, imagine this: child A wants to go to QES and applies. Child B wants to go to Settle but can't get transport because they are closer to QES so has to apply to QES. Child B gets a place due to QES' admission policy, but Child A doesn't get in. Child A goes to a school they don't want to, child B goes to a school they don't want to, and it saves NYC nothing. Don't do it!!

1. There seems to be an assumption that parents who work would be able to organise other arrangements should their child need to be accompanied to school (in the instance of other children of the same age being able to walk alone, ie child 1 has special.educational needs). Where parents (single or both) work to keep a house for their family, not all employers give freedom to work around school transport commitments. DLA transport allowance would certainly not cover other provision. I know this may be rare but in choice of paying rent keeping your child safe when attending school, you can see how that makes for a challenging decision. The parents wanting to fulfil their responsibilities for educating their child and to keep them safe and housed. 2. In year changes of school are not necessarily outlined fully. Where a parent (single) chose another school further away because of work commitments (I realise the new policy says it does not recognise work commitments as their issue) so they could drop off a child with special educational needs, however they then need to change in school to their nearest but cannot accompany their child to walk safely. (Single parent, job no allowance for circumstance) Would they then apply for the sen assessment in year? Would this be a case for extenuating circumstances? 3. Overall the new document is much clearer, seems much more credible, more easy to see your own circumstances and how they fit within it. 4. Special educational needs being recognised without travel being outlined in and ehcp or need for an ehcp is wonderful, especially since ehcps are even harder to get even for those with obvious need. It gives those of us with sen kids hope we will be heard and helped. 5. It could still be clearer that travel accomodations all depend on the circumstances in the initial entry year, regardless of which year they are trying for transport help. I think where the example talks about moving to a nearest oversubscribed school from a further away school and whether the child would have initially received a place could be clearer or referred to in more examples. I think especially of where it says the "last child given entry " whether the applying child would have received their place or not had they applied, is this in the entry year? Or the last child taken in to the school at all? as this could be an in year enrollment for all sorts of reasons and be coming from further because of expulsion or area move. Even if the school was oversubscribed in the initial year, beyond their PAN, they may have accepted beyond that number, which child is the last? The PAN max child or the last child beyond PAN numbers?

I personally think the school transport is great as it , I think if they become difficult for children to travel to school it will cause a greater issue of traffic in small areas. Schools are already over run especially small village primary schools and Bedale high schools where there is so many cars collecting students it's not helpful to local residents or the environment but some people may not have the option other then to start dropping there children off.

Absolutely ridiculous proposal as in our case North Yorkshire will be paying for all the children in our part of the county to go to a Cumbrian school loosing Yorkshire students .And the local Yorkshire school loosing the funding that goes with them

I strongly disagree that transport for the catchment school will be removed and will potentially become payable. I live in a village that the catchment school is not the nearest school and currently there is nil transport for the nearest school, so as a parent I will be penalized financially for selecting the catchment school. I feel in this situation the policy should remain the same. There are many struggling family's financially with the current state of affairs. I am a single parent with a child in secondary school and one due to start next year. I work as a professional in the NHS on average wage and I am not eligible for benefits but this would have a huge negative impact of the quality of life to my children and I, as travel cost would be a finical burden I cannot afford. I am disgusted it has been proposed to remove travel to the catchment school. I seriously hope this is re considered.

Its ok taking in a 2 mile to the nearest school however there has been no thought process to whether there are footpaths. I pay for my children to get a private bus to school due to the fact there are no footpaths on a large section of their "walk" to school and on a 60 mile per hour road I'm not letting them walk down that as it would be irresponsible however this is at an expendital cost to myself when I am already bankrupt and with no chance of been able to drive them myself. Its whether them 2 miles can be walked that needs looking at!

Start helping working parents. Just because we don't receive benefits does not mean we don't struggle. My son attends Thirsk school. We could do with help with travel.

My concern at present is the inability of council staff (whom I have been in conversations with) to fully understand the needs of families of children with Send and the impact on not only those families if travel arrangements are not in place but the impact it has on the wider community.

If we choose to send our children to the second nearest school, who have more places available than children in their catchment area then I would like to see the cost of school transport reduced by the amount it would of cost the council to give them free transport. I totally accept our choice should not be completely free of charge but because of where we live being so far from the second nearest option we have to use a private ' not for profit' company and it is at a significant monthly cost. I feel strongly that the council should subsidise a small portion given that the second nearest school is not over subscribed. Our nearest school is subscribed by a town that is the same distance away from us as we are to the second nearest school and their students are offered transportation at a reduced rate. Why should we be penalised for using a private company that services children from further afield when it is a not for profit organisation. This lady set this up because her son had no way to get to this school either several years ago. They now have 3x 16 seater minibuses, demand is high and it is over subscribed. Safeguarding is a high priority and we are working parents. Each family travelling there are back each day would also have an impact on the roads and climate change. Which another aspect of the policy to be considered.

currently travel passes for children not eligible for free travel, but who wish to use these services are only available for whole days. consider making this more flexible to allow for set journeys per week, obviously where availability allows. but if the service is already running, this would ensure a better return on potentially 'empty' seats.

Parental contribution to the cost of travel needs to be introduced. I don't believe this would be a barrier to attendance and it could be means tested

This consultation has not been widely shared (ie I was only informed by my children's school of it today) and the meetings have now all happened. How would you calculate distance to work out "nearest" (crow flies or road connections) - this isn't very clear? This will have a big impact on villages (eg mine!) where the excellent catchment school is not the nearest - does this need to be rethought in conjunction with thinking about catchment areas? The transition period of the new policy will be rocky, distressing for parents with more than one child (eg one at catchment school with continuing free transport and 2nd having to go to a different school because no longer eligible for free transport). In villages like mine kids already go to multiple local state secondary schools (there are 4 or 5 in the area) but very few go the closest (it's not the catchment) and a new bus would have to be provided - has this sort of situation been modelled in the costings?

Transport should still be free for children attending their nearest sixth form school

The council will not see any cost saying whatsoever as the transport companies will just raise their prices. ie, a bus has 10 kids on it, the company charges the council £1 per kid, that is £10 for the bus. The new policy makes 5 kids walk or go in the car, the bus company now needs to charge £2 per kid to pay for that bus to run. The council still pays £10, but now there potentially are 3 extra cars on the road & 2 kids walking & now in danger! Some services just need to be run better, bus companies usually run their old & knackered busses for the school runs anyway. Offer them less money, they need the school run just as much as the council does!(probably more, they are not the ones trying to cut it) The village & road situation in North Yorkshire is different to London, where everywhere has a footpath & street lighting, around here, were lucky if we have a verge to walk on.

We live in (Redacted)when we applied for Ryedale school we could pay for a place on a shared bus. This was cancelled with no notice and now cannot be reinstated. Children in rural North Yorkshire have no opportunity to have any choice in school as there is no public transport system to be able to use as an alternative. They are at a disadvantage to in city children who would be able to get to 2 or 3 schools. If Parents could pay for places on buses organised by the council it could acutally be profitable for the council. The lack of buses altogether have a negatvie impact on childrens health and well being.

Should be means tested. Check walking routes are safe. Ie well lit, footpaths etc. Lots of school bus runs are through villages with little or no safe footpaths on route to schools. Also it cruel to only offer transport to one household if child has two homes due to divorce/ separation. Offer a reduced price to both households to make it fairer and also means test this.

The lack of consideration of post 16 transport in this consultation is unhelpful. The whole school career should be considered as one. The fact that you make post 16 kids pay is absolutely ridiculous. This encourages them to start using their cars as soon as they pass their test. This is counter to any claims of environmental sustainability that you make as a council

Where the distance to school from home address is similar (within a few miles) to multiple schools in catchment, parents should get to choose which school to send their child, without being penalised by having to pay for transport for the sake of a mile or 2.

The proposed changes to transport to only the nearest secondary school could have a huge detrimental effect on rural schools like Settle College, meaning lower numbers and in effect, no choice for parents. To bus students to another school seems counterproductive and will have a huge effect on the local community in Settle and surrounding areas, making them less attractive to families and children in future years. I strongly disagree with this proposal.

Settle College offers young people a broad and balanced curriculum, alongside excellent pastoral support. The proposed transport change would cause a significant reduction in student numbers and therefore a potential impact on this offer. The savings would not be realised in this area as the students would still require transport to their nearest secondary school, with little change to actual distances travelled. There is serious concern in the community about the potential impact

I think having a choice of school that is most suitable for your child is important and transport shouldn't have to be big factor for parents providing it is not an unreasonable distance from their home address

Very poor policy. Does not help me or roughly 30-40 other parents in Riccall get their children to Brayton Academy. Extra cars on extra journeys which is bad for the environment. More traffic and huge disturbance to local residents at drop off / pick up time creating a negative feelings and unsafe environments. Due to the early start time my child would be unable to get a bus and I would not want him walking the distance in the dark. Many parents would be happy to contribute to the travel costs to enable transport to be arranged. Short sighted and unfair to dictate 'suitable school' too this does not allow choice for both children and parents - very archaic.

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As the population is so spread out in this area I feel that it would be unlikely to save a large amount of money as the travel time for most children affected would be lowered only marginally rather than reduced significantly or eliminated, this seems to be a poor economy if it will reduce options open for individuals education and potentially reduce the quality of schools in the area. Indeed one child having to be moved to a further away school for support, special needs or just "fit and feel" will negate marginal savings made. I feel that Settle College offers young people a broad and balanced curriculum, alongside excellent pastoral support. The proposed transport change would cause a significant reduction in student numbers and therefore a potential impact on this offer. The savings would not be realised in this area as the students would still require transport to their nearest secondary school, with little change to actual distances travelled. There is serious concern in the community about the potential impact on Settle College caused by such a severe drop in pupil numbers both immediately and in years to come, and the after-effects of this decline on the local area.

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I can understand a desire from the authority to impose a common sense policy which is looking to save the tax payer money. However, this has to be balanced with the impact to the families involved - and also, as all good policies do, have an exceptions process for common sense and established precedent to kick in. (Redacted) is in the catchment area for Helmsley Primary School and currently there are 4 children going there. By the time that they are old enough for Secondary school, they will all have siblings at Ryedale school because Helmsley is an established feeder school for Ryedale - and in our case - that was a determining factor in us choosing our house, in this village and the primary school for our children. Because there are already children in the village that go to Ryedale on free school transport - and this will continue once the younger siblings start.....there is literally a bus already coming. If the proposal is put in place then a second bus will be required to come up Sutton Bank to pick children up.....consequently costing the authority and the tax payer more money rather than creating a saving. It will also cause significant grief to the families involved because we all feel very strongly that we want our children to go to the same secondary school as their siblings. So in summary, the proposed policy - in the case of (Redacted) - is a spectacular own goal if implemented as planned without the facility for sensible exceptions. Many thanks for considering this feedback.

School transport i paying 8.00 pounds a day's that's to much for me.thats is 160.00 a month's. 😞

I feel concerned that schools like Settle College, with wide catchment areas will be adversely affected by the change to funding only being available for the geographically nearest school. This could adversely affect student numbers and removes choice for families. Should settle college close due to lack of students this would have a hugely negative effect on the town.

This would crush local communities and make life very difficult for working parents

This could negatively affect so many people and whole communities if it went through

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The changes to the nearest eligible school criterion is very poorly thought through. This could be a disaster for families who will end up with children in different schools in different counties, with all the logistics and social disadvantages that would bring. It makes no sense at all not to fund transport to a pupil's catchment school; in such a large rural area differences of a few miles are immaterial. This policy will have a negative effect on Settle college, which has a number of pupils for whom the nearest (out of catchment) school is technically closer. I suspect this will be used as a back door excuse to reduce funding to small rural schools, with the excuse that pupil numbers are dwindling (because parents cannot afford to pay for transport, despite it being their catchment school and preferred school).

I am concerned that the transport policy is not following the catchment school. Catchment schools should be the nearest to the home and if they are not then catchments need reviewing. Going to your catchment school with peers is important for children and I feel that not using this as the benchmark for travel provision is unfair on pupils and schools. Catchments should be changed to be the nearest school or travel should be provided to the catchment school.

Parent choice is essential and the fact we offer selective schools should be taken into account. This change to the policy is clearly going to impact the ability of children and parents to strive for the best education possible. This policy will clearly negatively impact the population of North Yorkshire who can not afford to pay for transport. No surprises from a Conservative run council that this has not been thought of. Futhermore there is no clarity over whether buses that are going to have to be provided for the next 7 years will allow parents to pay for their children to travel on them.

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I would like to see our children accompanied on the school bus by an additional adult - with authority - so that the bus driver can drive - without the need to manage the behaviour of poorly behaved children

It will take away my child's choice of school they wish to attend. I could have 2 children at 2 different schools. I will not be able to afford to send my children to the same school if I have to pay for transport. It takes away my child's choice.

The change to nearest school only is, in my view, objectionable. Secondary schools allocations are prioritised on a catchment area basis. Myself and others may find themselves allocated a secondary school we are in the catchment area for, but not receiving transport as it is not the nearest. I believe this should remain as nearest or catchment. On a wider point, we are comfortable paying for school transport, provided NYCC is working with providers to ensure bus timetables are sensible compared to school start and finish times, and the provision is safe for secondary school students.

removing "free" transport to and from school is simply a bad idea. It will have a negative impact on schools, communities and the future of the entire area.

In the area with which we live Settle College/High School is integral to our community. It is the main town which brings together all the smaller neighbouring villages. That school community continues into later life and now all our children go to school together. We still live in a community where everyone does still know and support eachother. If the decision to change transport eligibility is put into action we risk losing our closest high school within at least a 30mile radius. My children live in (Redacted). It would mean a (Redacted)commute to the next nearest school. I appreciate this may work in some parts of North Yorkshire. But i feel very strongly that in our very rural area it will have a negative impact. I would sooner pay for my child to go to our nearest school (which is Settle), rather than lose our school. Make all transport, to any school, cost and offer support to those who cant afford it.

When small local schools are closed it seems harsh not to transport these pupils to a local school even if the schools are within 2/3 miles. The policy should specifically address this, and perhaps give a time limit to support families with transport. If you bought a house in a village with a school, you may not anticipate your need to transport your future children to school and could be inconvenienced.

We live in Tockwith. Our nearest Secondary school (different LA) is Wetherby. Currently, almost all children in Tockwith attend either Tadcaster or Knaresborough. Having to pay to travel to either of these is going to have huge and negative knock on consequences.

We are concerned that families from Bentham and Ingleton will not be able to attend their first choice school - this will significantly reduce income for Settle College and this will equate to a drop in provision standards affect all children attending Settle College.

The proposed policy is not to the interest of Settle College and its families - the North Craven Area is frequently overlooked when it comes to planning and taking the interests of local schools inot their decision making. We only have ot see all the school closures in the last ten or so years. My family is concerned that families from Bentham and Ingleton will not be able to attend their first choice school - this will significantly reduce income for Settle College and this will equate to a drop in provision stanadards affect all children attending Settle College. We are against the propoal and are alarmed that the public consultaion has been planned before parents have had a chance to grasp the meaning of the proposals.

Time for a re-think and to scrap this policy. My family is concerned that families from Bentham and Ingleton will not be able to attend their first choice school - this will significantly reduce income for Settle College and this will equate to a drop in provision stanadards affect all children attending Settle College. The proposed policy is not to the interest of Settle College and its families - the North Craven Area is frequently overlooked when it comes to planning and taking the interests of local schools inot their decision making. We only have ot see all the school closures in the last ten or so years. My family is concerned that families from Bentham and Ingleton will not be able to attend their first choice school - this will significantly reduce income for Settle College and this will equate to a drop in provision stanadards affect all children attending Settle College. We are against the propoal and are alarmed that the public consultaion has been planned before parents have had a chance to grasp the meaning of the proposals.

The proposal disadvantages Settle College and the families who attend this school in the future - it will lead to the school's demise and possible closure like as has happened to other schools in the area following the North Craven Review where we lost Middle Schools and orimary schools. We know the authority have blown their transport budget and need to recover costs but these proposals are disadvanatgeous to the College and need to be reconsidered.

The policy could lead to the demise of Settle College. Is this intended? What about free choice of schools for families at Bentham and Ingleton. If Settle College is adverely affected then this affects the life long learning of pupils at Settle Primary and Giggleswick too. In this economic climate reduced numbers and income for Settle College could be disasterous. It scould lead to reduced provision - such as the sixth form not being viable, less subject choice, reduced staffing, less choice for students when choosing options. At worse t could make the College unviable.

I am against the Porpoed changes. My family is concerned that families from Bentham and Ingleton will not be able to attend their first choice school - this will significantly reduce income for Settle College and this will equate to a drop in provision stanadards affect all children attending Settle College. Settle Primary pupils will be affected when they transition to the College as its provision will have been affected by a potentially huge drp in numbers affecting provision. I am concerned that there have been enough closures of schools in this area already. Rural areas such as ours are at risk of seeing a secondary school closure if these proposals go ahead.

We are against the proposals and its impact on rural secondary schools such as Settle College which will lose children as a result and see families not able to afford to attend their first choice of school.

Disadvantages Settle College if no one from Bentham or Ingleton can afford to go there - the potential drop in numbers will undermine this great school.

Nearest school is fine in principle but need to consider the safest routes etc... in this. If getting to the nearest school means having to go on a bus over a narrow moortop road rather than follow a more main route down a valley (could be further distance but quicker/larger roads) then this needs to be considered on each geographical location not just pin & radius approach on a map.

I feel fewer children will be able to get to Settle College; this will negatively affect my children in the long term and our ability as a community to fully educate children locally.

Concerned about pupil numbers dropping at Settle College as a result of the proposed travel policy and the effect of subsequent reduced funding on the secondary school provision in the Settle area

We could loose a valuable school in our area, having a negative impact on a lot of children and their families. Removing the choice for a school is unacceptable, many families have different reasons for chosing different schools and shouldn't have this choice taken away from them, many (like ourselves) wouldn't afford to pay for transport. It's so sad that we could loose the school so close to us because people can't afford the travel costs. It's a wonderful school and it would be such a shame to see it struggle with it not being the nearest school for a lot of people that use it.

As school is a requirement by law I think it is hugely unfair to charge for the access to school. The Council's proposal will negatively impact on the parents' and child's choice of where to send their child for families in areas such as Bentham, Clapham, Ingleton etc. Additionally, Settle Collage will lose future pupils due to this proposal as families will have to take into account the impact that the additional cost of travel to their preferred school will make on their finances. This will especially affect families with lower wages or more children.

I live in Tockwith and chlidren here have a catchment of Tadcaster or King James in Knareborough. Our 'closest' school is Wetherby, which is not our catchment school and in a different LA, and not as good a school as Tadcaster or King James. Children would still go to King James or Tadcaster as the better schools, adn catchment schools but would now have to pay for transport - families with 2-3-4 children would have to pay thousands on transport to get their children to their catchment schools

I am upset that we will be made to pay for our child's transport. The closest school is in a neighbouring LA. We are not permitted to use the local services within that LA as we are 'not part of it' for instance using the waste disposal (tip) in the neighbouring LA. Yet we will now be expected to send our children here for free transport that was previously provided . Also because the nearest school is within a different local authority - term times are often different . We could potentially have one child in North Yorkshire (Whitby) for one term and another in guisborough (Redcar and Cleveland) for another . Paying for transport would be another expense, in what is already an uncertain time financially for parents . We are really disappointed and feel let down .

There are many assumptions which suggests the report lacks substance and fact-based evidence. The analysis makes assumptions on a number of choice patterns which also could change, based on charges which change with every tender term. The proposed saving on the consultation is based on unsupported long-term suggestions which the report acknowledges could change and would therefore produce a different result and possibly might not make any saving at all on a different day so this is not a true and acute picture of any saving/costs that may be incurred as a result of the changes. The survey was conducted on a single snapshot of the county and as a single overview does not accurately represent and termly or yearly pattern, without any substantive evidence to support further saving on a term or yearly basis. I would go as far as to suggest that this survey is not fit for purpose to future project any savings and further snapshot over a year with an average saving would better reflect any potential costs/saving that may be achieved. No reference is made as to whether any other surveys were carried out which might have produced a less favourable result. In summary, the consultation is poorly represented and heavily biased with an analysis based on a series of possibly, maybes, could be, There are too many assumptions without any evidence to support the results and the future of our children and the nation's prosperity and development cannot and must not be based on a spurious analysis which itself states would produce a totally different outcome on a separate day and therefore can't be relied upon for an accurate projection of future savings. I would suggest the council would be negligent and wholly irresponsible to risk the future of our children, both educationally and their emotional wellbeing and future health, based on these spurious and unsupported projection.

transport is poor, there is poor communication and they do not take into account my child's additional needs and instead place him on a bus with lots of other children with SEND and no or poor training for the transport staff. transport arrive early most of the time to collect and not very helpful if my child is struggling that morning. i find the drivers and escorts rude. i do not understand the routes the bus takes either and how my child can be on transport for so long. it is ridiculous to know that some children in my childs school travel for almost two hours one way to school

Based on current numbers we would see a drop in student numbers of 73 students, should similar patterns of admissions continue; this drop in numbers would cause us significant financial detriment.

Policies like these are not family friendly- they are difficult to follow for anyone with send and give little thought to families on low income, with send children and make it harder for single parent families to work as they are so restricted by lack of transport to school for their children

This policy will only exacerbate the issues with falling pupil numbers for schools in which there is little/no house building. This, in turn, will make financial challenges even greater, thereby increasing costs for NYCC too.

The example bubbles at the end need to include an example where.... Student X lives near a co-ed school which is 3 miles from their house. The have been successful in gaining admission to a Grammar school which is 8 miles from their house. (it's unclear for parents who may skip to this section if this is funded or not). If there is any reduction in funding there will be an impact on schools like Upper Wharfedale. The policy isn't clear with regards to the grammar school system. Are students who live nearest Upper Wharfedale but get into grammar school receiving free places?

Lack of suitable SEN provisions is the reason transport is needed unfortunately the closest SEN school is 90 mins away

1 of our children is SEND. And currently travels an hour each way. We are unable to afford to pay for this and your proposal could mean us potentially paying. We have no choice as the schools themselves choose if they can meet need. However if the school has places but cant meet need your proposal doesnt make clear if that is where the travel provision would end? Would we then have to pay for transport as a school 20 mins away has places but as they won't accept the child they end up an hour away and the parent and family is penalised? I hope this is understood when amending proposals. Thanks

Settle College has been the first choice for a growing number of families in Ingleton when choosing a secondary school. North Yorkshire Council is now proposing that families who do choose Settle College in the future will have to pay for their own school bus, potentially costing a family with two children going to Settle College over £2,000 every school year. Many families will not be able to afford that kind of extra spending. They will be forced to send their children to their second choice school, which will be outside North Yorkshire, just because it is a couple of miles closer. For every child that does travel outside of North Yorkshire, the council will pay for a bus and so will save nothing, but Settle College will lose about £30,000 from the Government – money that is no longer going into education in North Yorkshire. In short, families will either have to pay or lose their first choice of school. Families will lose out and Settle College will lose out: losing income and missing the brilliant contribution that pupils from Ingleton can make. The headteachers of the primary schools in North Craven have always worked closely with Settle College headteacher to ensure that every aspect of transition is smooth for pupils going into Y7. This partnership between Ingleton, Bentham and Settle College will cease to exist if all the pupils in these two villages are forced to choose QES because of this new proposed policy. It will be the end of an era and the end of a successful model of collaborative working.

Consideration of road suitability, particularly in winter months, must be taken when putting forward the amendments. A school may be deemed as closer in terms of distance, but practicality makes it unsafe for travel in winter. If amendments were to go ahead, I can only assume that the local authority will commit itself to ensuring roads will be priority for gritting and will be well maintained to ensure safe travel for children.

I feel that , from a distance and without the lives experience of certain geographic localities , the policy may seem appropriate and the rationale fair. However , the way it would affect my family and those in the village in which I live would be disproportionately negative . As defined by route finder and therefore I can only assume your GIS system , our 'nearest' secondary school provision is in York , 8 miles away , in a different local authority and which a very small minority , if currently any of the children attend . The mileage discrepancy between this school and the 'catchment ' school is a matter of yards but the enactment of this policy would adversely affect the families within the village . Im unsure how this new policy aligns with school admissions policy as in 'reality' it could mean that parents have no choice but to send their children to the nearest catchment school under the terms of school admissions policy but under the terms of your policy this is no longer a 'suitable school' . I find this viewpoint challenging as the council is making the decision around school suitability based on an arbitrary measure of length . This measure of length fails to take into account communities needs and needs a more nuanced approach. It does appear to be a paper exercise in cutting costs to LA , which I appreciate is necessary , but not to be achieved by passing this cost onto parents who often have little choice as to the school they access.

It isn't clear from the policy whether children with SEND who are to attend a specialist school will remain eligible for home-school transport. My child with SEND and an EHCP will be attending a specialist secondary school In September 2024, the travel distance for him is over an hour each way and he has had transport confirmed. This however wouldn't be his "closest school", there are multiple mainstream schools much closer as well as several SEN schools who do not have a place available for him. He will therefore travel from our home in (Redacted) to Harrogate to access a school which can meet his needs. It would be advantageous to have some clarity over whether this would still meet the threshold for home-school transport in the revised policy as this is ultimately out of our control (we would prefer a closer school if one was available). In future would this be required to be included within his EHCP as a request or be automatically available as it is now? Having to justify the need for transport in these circumstances, at an already stressful time for SEN parents would be unreasonable in my opinion.

It is not safe for my children to walk to school. There is no footpath and too many unconsiderate irresponsible drivers.

My oldest child was sent to catchment school (my youngest will follow this year) this is not our closest school, we also had no say. I would like to be reassured that my children will not be adversely affected. There was no clause in draft policy that says something like "changes will ONLY affect those changing schools beginning school year 25/26" or similar. All the parents who have been awarded school places for 24/25 could be concerned. All those applying for schools FROM this September could then be made aware BEFORE choices and subsequent results.

I think it is ridiculous that a council would suggest this when it means people living in North Yorkshire wouldn't get free transport to a North Yorkshire school. We live in Bentham and it means we wouldn't get free transport to Settle College.

Much of the county has a network of RoW which would NOT be suitable routes to school pupils of any age, due to ground conditions, darkness etc across rural areas. Simple distance on foot by RoW would be incorrect. NYC should implement what IS a safe route to walk/cycle, and then assess if this is available from a location (eg village)

Severe weather affects our local high ground routes to school. Roads are often impassable in winter due to floods, snow and ice. The nearest school will often not be the safest route to school to/from Swaledale and Wensleydale.

Not sure how it fits with policy but increase in before and after school provision, means buses are part full and many parent car journeys too from school is a problem I can see increasing.

I worry about the safety aspect under section 5. The route from my village to Bedale High is extremley dangerous. There are no footpaths, poor visibility for drivers and blind bends. I hope that the bus route is not taken away. As a single parent, who works full time with absolutley no benefits- I'd have to make my child walk to school as there is no adult to take them or accompany them on the route. My son also plays a brass instrument, which is heavy; he is expected to carry a PE kit, and at several points across the year, needs a cookery kit as well. It's not physically possible to carry what is expected of them for nearly 3 miles! I have a(Redacted) going to (Redacted) in Sept and that's going to be £650 for transport, this bill is going to be difficult to pay- I can't find the same for a just under 3 mile journey for my son to attend high school. It's unreasonable.

Removes choice, adds anxiety, changes villages

I'm all for reducing the cost of school transportation, and I appreciate that this might lead to a reduction in parent choice. However, it seems utterly preposterous that despite living in North Yorkshire the proposed new policy would force my children to attend a school in West Yorkshire!

I dont believe that the impact of the proposed changes to the policy fair. There are plenty of additional areas that saving should be made before impacting the children & families that depend on these services. It appears that the selection criteria for children being accepted to individual schools can change significantly when the council thinks it can save money

Currently it won't affect us due to the system not being fit for purpose for my daughter due to special educational needs which aren't being met. If it was I feel that if we had to only attend a school which was classed as the closest for transport needs then that takes away a child's right to a positive education. A child needs to attend the best possible school for them irrelevant of Sen needs as there are various reasons that children attend which school they do. I agree that the 50/50 addresses should be improved but general school transport shouldn't be impacted.

Another nail in the coffin of our children's education, parental choice and putting money before education. Hopefully a change in government will enable education to rise back up the priority list.

Send provisions should not included in any proposed changes. Send children should get transport to the school that WILL provide the best care for that child. And its not always the catchment school

All children should be entitled to free school transport to their school of choice. I don't believe that North Yorkshire Council, in their ivory tower, should be allowed to discriminate when they have no idea of the geographics of their own county. It's as bad as London dictating to Yorkshire, which is what the devolution was trying to tackle in the first place.

If my child has been excepted in a school out of my region, do they still qualify for the free transport. For example, living in Catterick but been excepted for a Richmond School? Thank you

For three years I have struggled to get my children to school. We live in the middle of two catchment areas. My children used to get on a bus to Richmond school. This was then stopped and we were told that they could no longer get on the bus. One child about to go into his GCSE year. The bus still goes passed the stop they used to get on and another child from a house further away is allowed on. I had to live my job due to this and it has had a significant effect on both children, my mental health and our financial situation due to jobs and not being having to work around them not being able to get to school unless I drive them. There is no public transport where we live. The nearest catchment school is half a mile closer than the one they attend and was/is in special measures by Ofsted.

Unless the council are planning to grit high moor roads daily in winter this is a completely ridiculous situation.

Elective travel to the non-nearest school isn't something that the council tax payer should be funding in the current climate.

The provisions for free home to school transport are already far too restrictive and unfairly applied. All children (up to the age of 18) should have the right to free home to school transport regardless of the school they attend and whether this is the nearest available school. Potentially the cut off point for free transport to and from school could be a distance of around 20-30 miles. Many families have to pay thousands of pounds a year in transport fees to ensure that their child/children can attend a decent school where they will achieve and be appropriately supported, a cost which is prohibitive for many and significantly affects quality of life for those who have to pay it. Once again there is little consideration given to pupils living in more rural communities who may live almost equidistant from two or three schools but would only be provided free transport to one of the schools despite the travel distance difference often being less than one mile. With more and more failing or inadequate schools parents should be free to select the best school in the area for their child and should not be prohibited in doing so by the huge financial cost of paying for transport if they do not attend their nearest school.

I disagree with the proposed changes. Our taxes should continue to cover free travel to and from a school as many parents can not afford the additional costs. This proposal will likely result in the numbers of students attending schools in further away locations to drop, meaning the schools have less funding to be able to provide good facilities. Other schools, and smaller schools may then struggle to accommodate larger numbers of students. This change will have negative affects and should strongly be reconsidered.

Again, my Parents are being penalized for living in a remote location. Why should any parents have to pay for us to go to school. I'm going to sixth form next year and they have to pay for pass for that, even though government rules we have to stay in education.

I feel this is an unfair decision. We live in the Reeth area and the proposed change of school is not good- the roads to get there are terrible on a normal day let alone in bad weather. The current option of Richmond school is working fine. The roads are still not the best but they are a better option than the new proposal. It feels we are been penalised for living in the countryside. Also I understand people on low incomes can't afford to pay but neither can working parents now with the cost of living crisis. Working families get no subsidies on anything - we barely have anything left at the end of the month ! I think majority of working parents will agree. If it was to go ahead they should reduce the bus fare to go to preferred choice to a few hundred pounds not the extortionate price currently at over £600 ! This is far too expensive for everyone.

I was open minded about unitary authority until this. no understanding of local communities or roads in winter. Decisions made far away with no knowledge of splitting up communities. A prime example. I live in Swaledale. It isn't even an option on the questionnaire. I ticked Richmond. This needs a rethink

The economic reasons to seek change have been clear. Here are two points to consider: (i) The proposals may not, in practice, bring the hoped for economic benefits. Whilst, for example, all school traffic heads from the end of Swaledale down towards Richmond, the proposals will see this split in different directions, with additional vehicles required, and some journeys travelling over difficult cross-dale roads. On paper this looks sound but the practice could be very difficult and potentially costly. (ii) The proposals seek to address economic issues but there are other issues to take into account. These include (a) The environmental cost of additional vehicles, some of which climbing up and down cross-dale roads. (b) The cost of time to some students. Their new journey may be shorter in miles but significantly longer in terms of time. (c) The damage to attendance figures. Students are likely to have more days when they are unable to attend due to winter weather. (d) The health and safety of students may be jeopardised when school days are cut short in an emergency and students must be transported home. This is rare and normally only happens when winter weather worsens suddenly and unexpectedly during a school day. Transporting students back 'up dale' is challenging enough as it is. Transporting them from one dale to another brings a whole new dimension of risk and danger. I do think we are facing the need to make savings and these will not be popular. I think, however, any proposals that stick to a crude 'nearest school' in terms of miles risks costing more money, not less. And it brings other additional costs and risks as described above.

Catchment based transport, as the current situation, is most suitable for our location. The move to a nearest school, regardless of location would be very detrimental to the delivery of high quality education in the area. The category missing is for those living under the mileage threshold, but without a suitable walking route to school. This current facility needs to continue and also be clarified within the documents. The proposal is wholly unacceptable on many fronts, driven by cost, and not the best outcome for children in education.

We live in a rural location and nearly all the children at my daughter's school use school transport at some time during their primary education. Our school currently pay for transport from home to our nearest school, geographically, and then the County pay for transport on to her taught school. The cost to the school is huge. I would like to see the County paying for all transport that is required to get my daughter to school. Then for secondary education our nearest school geographically would not necessarily be our first choice due to their reviews. However we may not be able to afford the transport pass for her to get to our preferred school so she may be limited to attending the nearest school just because of our income. I completely understand that the county need to make cuts to their expenditure but feel that this issue needs to be addressed by central government and the County need to stand firm in that every child deserves the best education they can access regardless of their family's income.

The removal of 2 transition days for SEND students is awful and puts SEND students at a significant disadvantage relative to their peers. Also, changing to nearest school should not happen for residents of Swaledale. They currently travel to Richmond school on the safer lower road. The nearest school to the is Leyburn on a narrow high road, impassable on wintery mornings. Often foggy and icy. This would increase the risk to schoolchildren as well as putting pressure on Wensleydale school to accommodate the extra students.

I have (Redacted)in (Redacted) different schools, so as a working family the changes to the school transport will have a detrimental effect on our household. We live in (Redacted)and I walk my youngest 2 children to our local primary/nursery provision, my next child has multiple and profound learning disabilities and has a EHCP and attends (Redacted), and my eldest is going in to his GCSE years in September at (Redacted) I would not be willing to change my eldest child's school at this stage in his education and it would be extremely difficult to transport him to school around my other children and attend work on time. Even more so if I have to transport my other children to (Redacted). Meaning I would have to be in 3 places at one time, or pay for breakfast club, where that is available, with loss of earnings. I feel this will also have a huge affect on the quality of education in schools, from either being over or under subscribed. I think the changes to the policy are unrealistic, unsuitable and quite frankly ridiculous. If the council needs to save money I suggest it explores another department for this. Many many families would be impacted in an extremely negative way if the proposed plans are to go ahead.

I think that my child's school will suffer if the changes are made regarding free transportation to the school in the Local Authority catchment area and making children go instead to the nearest school. I think this change could mean a significant reduction in the number of students attending my child's school in the future, resulting in a deterioration to the wide ranging and high quality curriculum currently on offer.

Our nearest school is Leyburn. Our children attend Richmond School. We chose this school on the basis that it offered a far superior range of subjects and extra curricular activities. It also has a sixth form on site. We would never want our children to attend Leyburn school simply because it is the nearest school. We should not have to make this choice because it would be where free transport would be available. I cannot see that the proposed change in provision of school transport is going to be anything other than detrimental to school children in this area. Living in a very rural area we are reliant on school transport to get our children to school. We would be left with no parental choice about which school our children attend. I worry that the resulting drop in pupil numbers at Richmond school would mean a real reduction in the quality of education provided at the school, which can only be detrimental to an already declining rural population.

Don't vote Tory

This new proposal will have an extremely negative impact on the families in Ingleton and Bentham. The demographic and rurality of these areas mean that parents are going to be but in financial difficulty in choosing to go to Settle college the only North Yorkshire school they have available to them. Families will be forced to have to go across county for their education. Causing disruption not only for transport, financial impact and juggling different holidays if families have children and parents working and attending different schools in different counties.

Awful proposal to take away funded travel. Our nearest secondary school isn't always the best choice for our children and doesn't suit their needs.

Why in the world do the council constantly insist on making changes that make life harder for the people living within its district.

Living in Ingleton in North Yorkshire, the proposal of 'amendment to the main eligibility criterion to be nearest school (with places available) would have a huge negative impact on our nearest school in the County, Settle College. This school is a fantastic school that needs pupils from Bentham & Ingleton, to lose these pupils to a school in another county would be detrimental to Settle College's size, funding and future. Living in Ingleton, our council tax is paid to NYC, yet this proposal is setting out a rule that would see both us & the school lose out - madness. I urge you to reconsider this, before many families and a superb school is affected.

That all children are expected to attend school until the age of 18 therefore transport should be funded until the age of 18.

This is wrong, and it takes away a choice for parents and our children for their education! This is a huge set back, and in many cases has no environmental benefits

I am saddened by the new proposal and it will affect my family massively. We are not in the position to afford transport but want the best for my children

I think this will hit families hard financially and mean a lot more school days will be lost due to dangerous roads/winter conditions making travel impossible for those that can't fund a bus pass for the school on the safer route

As working parents we have 2 options, leave employment to transport our children or have them sent to whichever school has places... Freedom to choose the school most suited to your child's needs is being removed. Public transport is not an option as we live in a rural area, potentially our children could spend 3 hours a day on transport to go to a school that does not match their needs, this would not benefit the child, their peers, the school. Yet again budgets before children. It's bad enough that post 16 they can't get to a college (even though until 18 they have to be in education) now you are penalising them for living in a rural area from the outset.

I would like to see better investment in cycle paths across the county to assist children getting to school themselves. Thirsk is a classic example of a recent uplift in house building, increased traffic and yet nothing to facilitate alternative transport options, other than the car. There needs to be more joined up thinking, not just about a simple saving from reducing services, which is short term strategy.

If the proposals go ahead we are concerned that future families are being denied the element of parental choice in selecting the most suitable school for their child as financial costs may influence their decision. The Selby area is diverse, with 3 secondary schools in close proximity - each school has its own strengths and identity which parents consider carefully when choosing education for their child. The new proposals deny this option to parents on the basis of them being able to either use their own transport or pay for transport to and from school. We are concerned that many families currently with children at our Academy will be unable to afford to send siblings to the school this could potentially have a negative impact on family life and children's welfare - school start times, inset days and holidays could be all impacted.

This consultation has been extremely poor. There has been a chronic lack of information provided to all parties. Your modelling of data has been shown to be incorrect and further information has not been received. NYC workers have expressed their own dismay at the plan. This has either been extremely poorly thought-out/ organised, or has purposefully been underhand/ sly in order to get through a cost saving exercise with as little challenge from external parties as is achievable. The plan essentially makes it more difficult for disadvantaged families to choose the education for their child that they wish, compounding disadvantage even further. A poor show on all fronts.

As a teacher at a secondary school, I find the plan to ENFORCE students/parents to utilise the geographically nearest school to be utterly unsuitable for the needs of our rural catchment. Historically and currently, many parents actively choose to send their children to our school despite living as in distant rural locations in the Dales. This has been a choice of the parents/children who have been able to access the education that their deserve at our school. Your proposal to ENFORCE that students can only be provided with funded transport to the geographically nearest school has MAJOR implications for a range of stakeholders. This includes: 1 - Dividing rural communities, particularly for young children, who share social lives with their neighbours but because of their grid reference on an OS map MUST attend different schools. This feels like social segregation - something akin to what happens in Belfast due to religious background. Villages, who have long had communities of children attend our school, will now see friendships severed as they have to attend separate schools due to geographical location. 2 - By losing, what we estimate to be 140 students over the course of 5 years, it is quite likely that such a loss will have huge financial implications for our school. Teachers will be made redundant, the sixth form may have to close, and financial cuts to the quality of education that ALL students at the school experience will be diminished. This decision WILL DIRECTLY correspond to reduced life chances for young people attending our school - not just those who can't attend. Extra-curricular cuts, subject offer cuts, SEN support - all will suffer as a result of reduced pupil intake. 3 - Implications for other schools - where geographically near schools are at/near full capacity, this change will create issues for other schools in terms of accommodating the increased numbers of students they will receive. Have you even checked as to whether they can accommodate for these extra children? My likely guess will be no - especially as you made NO contact with our school regarding this change. 4 - Diminishing the educational experience for the child - by limiting the choice that parents have in terms of sending their child, you are forcing students to attend schools with lower outcomes. This is purely because of your inability to manage your own finances - instead passing the burden onto schools to deal with. This is typical of a conservative county council. Years of cuts, lack of forward planning and then further cuts to deal with the poor management that you have applied for the last 13 years. Have you considered cuts within the county council itself? Why should our CHILDREN suffer as a result of YOUR poor management of funds. 5 - Have you even consulted with the affected children, parents, schools and bus companies? The lack of information supplied to the general public about this proposed change has been very discrete, vague and somewhat hidden from the public. Furthermore, there is no real specific information about who is exactly is impacted. The way this situation has been handled, from start to now, has been utterly incompetent. How can this go ahead when the level of consultation for all stakeholders has been so poor. I really hope that the public on May 2nd will show to you how utterly incompetent this county council truly is.

When choosing a school each child has individual needs that parents have to consider and the nearest is not always the best choice for that child . At a time where anxiety and school attendance is a huge issue changing the transport to only the nearest school is going to be a disaster for many pupils as parents will have reduced choices in where to send them .

We live on the school route of (Redacted) but our catchment school is outside of the county, (Redacted) goes to richmond but i have to take him to school which is a massive strain on myself and jacks father as we live on a farm and (Redacted) works away a lot . It would be much easier if (Redacted) could get the bus that passes our farm track end!

I think the whole policy is a shambles. The lack of response you have given to schools who are affected by this has been disgraceful. The amount of children and families affected will be huge, and the negative impact this will have is huge.

Do not make this unnecessary change!

If you create a blanket policy that free transport is only provided to the nearest school, children living at the edge of the county will be disproportionately affected. If the policy said that free transport would be provided to either: the nearest school; or, if the nearest school is not in the county, the nearest school in the county, it would make a big difference to children living at the edge of the county and is likely to have a negligible impact on the council itself (as, in reality, the majority of children in the county will have a school within the county as their closest school).

I understand the DoE review and desire to reduce costs, however these reduction will come at the expense of some schools losing pupils making school assets redundant, whilst other schools potentially having insufficient capacity; requiring capex. Each of these have material costs, which when offset against the proposed savings need to be fully understood to assess actual net gain or potential loss. In North Yorkshire, given the county's size and sparse population if implemented there is a wider community aspect to consider and knock on consequences if implemented - which is likely to be a disincentive to young families moving into and those staying in NY, which would be regressive in all areas and increase an already lopsided demographic. I do hope the government has a rethink or provides dispensation for rural counties - one size fits all is too simplistic and seldom achieves (successfully) the desired outcome.

Myself and my family live in North Yorkshire and the catchment secondary school is Whitby. The nearest suitable secondary school is however in Redcar and Cleveland. This school may or may not have spaces available when my children leave primary school. If it does, this document appears to suggest that paid school transport will only be offered to a school out of catchment area. There are three school years between my children, this means that if numbers of the nearest suitable school fluctuate and increase during this time, the catchment school may become the nearest suitable school. Meaning that transport could be provided to two different but both deemed to be 'suitable' schools. This does not provide any sort of certainty for children or families. It also seems unfair that when the decision to send our children to school was made, the catchment school was Whitby and paid school transport would be provided. It is proposed that this decision will change. In my view, this could lead to children moving to secondary school without a group of friends and will be detrimental to the children's wellbeing. All sporting curriculum activities and sporting events are done in the Whitby Schools, to equip children to move on to secondary school there, get to know the school etc. Should the travel policy change, this may mean that children have to attend a different school in a neighbouring authority, due to consideration around travel costs. This does not seem to be fair.

This would remove parental choice and would be divisive as some would pay for/provide their own transport and others would not be able to and so would have no choice.

This is a massive rural county, of course the transport costs are going to be higher. Richmond school is an excellent school but with fewer pupils attending then the funding will go down and so will the standards and opportunities for the pupils of the school. The chill does a great deal for the community and also the members of the Armed forces and their families in nearby Catterick Garrison.

It is outrageous that this proposal is being made with so little time before it is potentially implemented. We purposefully moved in 2021 to a village in the catchment area for our children's future secondary school (which is not the nearest one) aware that their transport would be provided and the cost covered. We selected this secondary school in autumn 2023 for our son to start in September 2024. It is shocking that this proposed change could be introduced after parents like us have made and been granted our school of choice which is in catchment but isn't the nearest. The provision of free transport is an important factor that we considered when making this choice so for the criterion to possibly be changed after this decision has been made is appalling. The burden this will place on our cost of living is significant and an unbelievable pressure when our council tax has already increased this year.

One impact that could negatively affect families is that it may limit their ability to move house within the county while keeping their child in the same school. This could be a particular problem for those in temporary or rented housing, and without long term housing security. Please also consider the impacts for families that have one child already in a secondary school that is not technically the closest suitable with a second child in primary school. Under the new policy, they would be forced to either send the second child to a different secondary school to their sibling or pay for school transport. I think taking an approach of only offering free transport to the nearest suitable school creates potential problems for people that live close to equal distance between two or more schools, as it could force them towards a school that is less suitable or convenient for a variety of reasons. It is not always a case that a school is or is not suitable, there may be differing degrees of suitability. Please consider building in a bit more of a buffer in to this. I suggest adding that, if the difference in distance between the home and two (or more) 'suitable' schools is five miles or less, then free transport would be available to either school.

We feel that these proposals are very concerning to us as a family. School transport has always been provided and our eldest child attends the catchment school of Richmond and we live on the very edge of the catchment. We bought a house to be in the catchment (with free transport to school) so we knew, or thought we knew ...once the children were at secondary school they would be able to get to school without any help from us. We are both working parents, with work commitments and work in the opposite direction to the catchment school, so would be unable to manage transporting our 2nd child to & from Richmond each day. Our 2nd child possibly having to attend a totally different school seems ludicrous as would involve managing the admin for x2 different schools, systems etc, the different holidays (how would this even work for a family?!). The main overall reason for our distress is our children and their happiness at school. This proposal of changing how the whole school place application process should have been planned & talked about years in advance! Not moving children who have been attending a primary school in readiness for them to go on to secondary (friend groups etc) for the system all to be changed for our 2nd child. It would be v distressing for our younger child to leave her primary school friends and have to attend a secondary school in Darlington (not knowing anyone)! I hope there will be extended consideration given for siblings....to continue to have access to free transport for their secondary years. We hope this is reconsidered! If transport will be provided for another school, how is this saving money?! There will still be buses driving between villages/homes to "the nearest school".

Really concerned at the thought of having siblings at different schools in potentially different counties at the same time for following reasons. Different school holiday dates. Different uniforms. Dealing with two different schools at the same time for secondary. We chose to live where we do based on the fact that we could send our children to our chosen catchment school and they would both receive the same standard of education. Or a crazy situation where one child qualifies for free transport at current school due to current set up being honoured but younger child needs driving to the same location. I would prefer to see that younger siblings are part of the same proposed honouring agreement as older siblings. Also another concern in order to get free transport for a younger sibling we would be forced to send them to a school where they know no one without a choice. Very harsh when many of their friends from primary would still qualify for catchment school. Surely a child in middle of primary education should have a seamless transition to catchment school where we have been lead to believe they can attend and still qualify for free transport. Could even end up with situation where two buses arrive in same village everyday to driving two siblings to different schools how is that even saving councils money? The whole situation feels like a complete shambles and poorly considered.

I think that children with an EHCP attending a special school or Post 19 setting should automatically qualify for free transport as they don't have a choice but to attend a college in a different town. For example, my child could not go to our local sixth form college as it does not provide suitable courses for those with learning disabilities. We have no choice in the matter - he cannot walk from Richmond to Northallerton and he does not have the capacity to use public transport. I think parents all parents and carers should be able to choose the right school for their child, within reason. The proposal will mean the children from families with higher incomes will be able to pay the transport fees and attend the school of their choice while those from lower income backgrounds may be forced to choose the nearest school which may not be able to meet their child's needs. Those from lower income backgrounds will be more significantly impacted by this proposal which in my view, is ideologically wrong. I am also concerned about the financial impact on the school where I work. This proposal could result in a significant reduction in numbers which could jeopardise the breadth of the curriculum on offer and result in redundancies across the school.

I understand the need to save money, however you will be putting a very good school in your own county at a serious disadvantage, not to mention removing the element of choice currently available! Moreover, parents are struggling, should the proposals go ahead, parents will automatically choose the school attached to funded transport, rather than looking toward which school may best suit the needs to the child! And our alternative school falls under a different county, are we seriously contemplating going to fund this bus route, which is outside of Yorkshire boundaries? Maybe consider as a compromise, parents pay for the first and maybe second year only! Funded from year 9 and up, and let these other proposals go! Support your own Yorkshire County schools!! Please reconsider this!

The proposals are wholly unworkable and certainly will be detrimental to families living in the remotest rural locations. Merely looking at a map and allocating a school place on distance may very well seem reasonable until you look at the facts. A county boundary, the Cumbria/North Yorkshire roads which are impassable over the winter months owing to altitude and extreme weather. Coupled with it being a dead spot with no mobile coverage will undoubtedly mean that the children are more likely to spend more days at home owing to poor road conditions. There would certainly need to be an effective liaising with a Cumbria council to change the current winter road status of the B6270 and for the winter months a 4 x 4 vehicle. Quite how the safety concerns could be met when a majority of the journey is without any mobile coverage. The practicalities of this recommendation have not been fully thought through. For families with children already attending North Yorkshire schools it would be impractical and rather stupid to have different term times and uniforms....a minor issue you might think but rural hardship is a real problem and this proposal is yet another reason that young families will not remain in Swaledale. Culturally, a traditional rural area such as this will suffer when the social cohesion that has existed for generations is dramatically changed as families and children are split up in this way. We feel strongly that for us the only option would be to home educate our children.

I feel that if the council decide to go with the proposed changes, it would affect not only my child having a choice of which secondary school to go to (without a huge financial impact on our family) it would also significantly affect our area of North Yorkshire. I struggle to understand why North Yorkshire Council would provide transport to another County's school, thus reducing the attendance/funding to one of their own schools. Settle has been a fantastic source of education for many years for children from Ingleton, Bentham and surrounding villages.

We have a younger sibling who will be subject to this new policy. However, as parents, our "suitable choice of school" for our eldest child, was made on the grounds of FREE SCHOOL TRANSPORTATION being offered, to that facility, within catchment. We want to ensure that both children attend the same school. However, with the removal of the FREE TRANSPORTATION this becomes a significant challenge. It is UNFAIR and UNREASONABLE for the council to expect siblings to be forced to attend different schools, as a result of this new policy. Currently there is NO OTHER PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION routes or services available from the outer village that we reside in, to my eldest child's school. How are parents expected to ensure that siblings attend school, if there is no other alternate public transport network available, to fulfill this task? Whilst the environmental impact of fewer transport services for the council to manage, will decrease, the overall environmental impact of expecting parents to drive children to school, will rise significantly! This is not a "green initiative!" Had this policy been made clear earlier, then we would have seriously considered where we would have purchased a home! Living in a small outlying village we researched the options available to us in terms of secondary schools and transportation networks and costs. All of these factors were taken into consideration prior to selecting 1st choice of school for our eldest child, with the view that both children would have the same facilities and opportunities made available to them. It appears that the psychological impact on our children's wellbeing based on them potentially now being separated into different secondary schools has not been considered by the council. The nearest suitable school policy would result in 2 siblings being forced to attend different school, which is totally unacceptable. Council tax fees have increased, however, an important council funded service is being proposed to be removed. How and where are these anticipated savings going to be re-assigned? We feel strongly that introducing such a significant change in policy part-way through our children's secondary education, impacting our budget financially, as well as their well-being is unfair and unacceptable and we would request that siblings are allowed to continue their educational journey at the same educational facility.

Bentham secondary pupils are split into two, Settle College and QES. Having a child who is autistic we need to ensure he is able to attend Settle College, as this is our nearest school and the most suitable place for him. He will feel safe, secure and supported there rather than attending a school that is now too big. Road links to Settle are far better than the road links to Kirkby Lonsdale, ensuring the pupils will be safer and have a shorter journey time.

Settle College has been the first choice for a growing number of families in Bentham and Ingleton when choosing a secondary school. North Yorkshire Council is now proposing that families who do choose Settle College in the future will have to pay for their own school bus, potentially costing a family with two children going to Settle College over £2,000 every school year. Many families will not be able to afford that kind of extra spending. They will be forced to send their children to their second choice school, which will be outside North Yorkshire, just because it is a couple of miles closer. For every child that does travel outside of North Yorkshire, the council will pay for a bus and so will save nothing, but Settle College will lose about £30,000 from the Government – money that is no longer going into education in North Yorkshire. In short, families will either have to pay or lose their first choice of school. Families will lose out and Settle College will lose out: losing income and missing the brilliant contribution that pupils from Bentham and Ingleton can make.

The change to the free transport from catchment to nearest school will force us as a family to send our children to be educated outside North Yorkshire. We will no longer be eligible for free transport to Settle College in North Yorkshire as our catchment school and will be forced to accept the free transport (provided by North Yorkshire) for my children to be educated across the border in Cumbria at Queen Elizabeth School in Kirkby Lonsdale. This change removed our choice of secondary school as we will not have the funds to pay for transport per year per child to be educated in North Yorkshire or be able to transport ourselves twice a day. So there is no choice under these new arrangements. Yet we will still have to pay council tax to North Yorkshire for educational services in the county without my children benefitting. The impact on Settle College will be immediate. And once parents start thinking Settle College is a dying school, they will start pulling children out or making alternative arrangements. This change will leave Settle College financially vulnerable as they will lose all the revenue for pupils from the Government. This money will go into QES whilst North Yorkshire will still have to fund the transport of our children. So in North Craven, this proposed policy is going to cost North Yorkshire money not save them money. Please support your North Yorkshire schools and reject this change from catchment to just nearest school because in our rural areas, close to county borders, there is going to be a loss of pupils to North Yorkshire Schools, because parents around here will choose to send their children to a more secure school across the border if we lose our free transport to Settle College.

I have concerns of the dropping number applying to my child's secondary school and what they can offer students in the future.

This may have a huge impact on choice of schools and the routes that the children will have to take to school. In my local areas some of the roads are not really suitable for accessing the "nearest" secondary school. The closest by distance does not always mean the closest in terms of travel time. There needs to be a better look at the impact of small villages and where students will need to attend school. I feel this is a blanket approach that will work better in a large city, but North Yorkshire is a very rural county! Some students already spend a significant amount of time on schools buses, and I am concerned about how well this idea has been scrutinised to best serve the very rural communities. I would also like to know more about the details of where this saving will come from, how this conclusion has been arrived at, how the number of buses required has been calculated, etc.

In Skipton the high schools are very close together. The closest one to us would be Skipton Academy however the bus drop off point for all schools (including Skipton Girls and Ermysteds) would be very close together. Skipton Academy would always be our closest school but could our children receive transport to the other schools as I assume it would be the same bus from our village? The appendix examples do not clarify the position on this.

Completely barbaric and NYCC should be ashamed that their data and correspondence related to such a huge change in policy has been minute if not none. The data provided initially was wrong and you wrongly didn't tell those organisations effected by this change that the data you sent them was wrong. This is a malicious and devious move by NYCC.

Your 'nearest school' policy is a disgrace. Not only is this cost saving measure poorly designed, you cannot implement this for people who have already made decisions based on the current policy. We live in a village where the catchment is Ryedale school, but where this isn't the nearest one. As we're in catchment for Ryedale school (for our child who is currently in year 6) we selected this because transport would be provided and costs covered. Under your new policy this would not be covered, but we have already made the decision!!! You cannot retrospectively apply this for people who have based their decisions on the current policy. This would likely be subject to significant challenges. We strongly oppose this policy, and would be willing to apply whatever pressure we can to ensure it isn't adopted.

Who wrote the consultations? Vogons? It's long-winded, labyrinthine and confusing. Unless you work in Local Government education delivery and transport policy the ordinary North Yorkshire resident will not be able to understand it; was that your intention- thus making the decision already made by obfuscation? I do not think it would pass Crystal Mark accreditation. So the proposal is to FORCE pupils to their nearest school, removing any child/ parent/ family choice? How does this contribute to placing the child centrally to their educational needs and abilities? As for 'Appendix 1'- which school offers >2 languages? It seems they're stuck in the French and German 1980s...where can I access Spanish or other languages, for example? I have already witnessed a pupil compromise due to GCSE choice limitations at 'our' school- this consultation feels like it's shoving people into local schools because of an ulterior motive that isn't placing the child central to their needs and aspirations. I'm really disappointed- almost frightened, in how this consultation reads- it's coercive, feels like this '15 minute town' threat is being imposed upon us, and it's removing freedom of choice for individuals because of a county level policy: HRA, Protocol 1, Article 2: Right to education No person shall be denied a right to an education. In the exercise of any functions which it assumes in relation to education and to teaching, the State shall respect the right of parents to ensure such education and teaching is in conformity with their own religious and PHILOSOPHICAL CONVICTIONS. If it is NYC's intention to remove a family's choice of school and thereby philosophical convictions, you might face some serious push-back- and for disclosure you might want to raise this point to your committee/ make it a matter of public record.

Although it does not impact upon my family directly as our nearest school is our school of choice, it may impact us indirectly. The potential numbers of children who attend our school could be influenced by the changes and this may have effects on finances and provision provided for my children. Transitions from primary schools to secondary schools are also very important for children's well being and removal of feeder school/catchment school choice for children could have an impact upon children's mental wellbeing.

The whole 'consultation' process has been an absolute joke. There has been misinformation, false information and a seriously questionable method of sharing this information with affected parties whether they be parents/cares/staff/pupils. I am fully aware of the difficulties in funding for schools, however this is a complete miscarriage of justice for families in already-disadvantaged positions either financially or because of geographical location and could single-handedly destroy a lot of the Dales communities in which they are dependent on young people remaining in the area. How the council have been allowed to go ahead with this consultation in this way is disgraceful.

The difference will make such a difference to families in Ingleton. You are in effect encouraging them to choose a school in a different county (QES in Kirkby Lonsdale in Cumbria) over a school at a very similar distance which is in the same county, that they live in (and pay taxes to!) (Settle College in North Yorks) This will have a huge impact on the school in NY losing many valuable pupils because families will have to send their children to the school for which they get free transport. Also, considering the school in the different county (QES in KL, Cumbria) is over subscribed, how is this a logical decision by taking away pupils away from Settle college? We live in such a rural area, we can't be categorised like a urban area.

Our current LA school is Richmond. Based on this guidance you are suggesting that my child should attend their nearest school which is in County Durham but the schools admission policy would mean that we would be at the bottom of the list for eligibility. So unless you are proposing changing how the school's admission process works you are discriminating us for applying to our nearest LA school and not battling the appeals process to try and get a place at our nearest school. There has been very little consideration, it appears for children who live in rural areas within the county. In current climate where school attendance is at an all time low and you are struggling to get children into school, it amazes me that you are making it even more difficult for parents to get their children to school.

it is obvious that north yorkshire will have one of the highest school travel expenditure due to the fact of it being one of the largest counties and predominately rural. stipulating that the council will only pay for transport to the nearest school disadvantages people with restricted income.

Living in Reeth means that our nearest secondary school is Leyburn resulting in a journey over the moor. In bad weather, this route is not always gritted and is dangerous to travel on. I have concerns that my children would not be able to attend school due to travel disruption in the winter or be faced with a dangerous journey, neither of which is acceptable. The main road to Richmond school is gritted and cleared and a much safer route.

Removal of the free transport scheme for many children including my own will negatively impact household finances. As a single mother on one income and two school aged children I would not be able to afford the cost of a bus service. Pushing myself and many others onto the road to drive. Darlington Road is already congested and it's only a matter of time that a child is seriously harmed. This proposed home to school scheme will see a surge of vehicles driving and dropping children off on that road.

Your 'nearest school' policy is inappropriate. This is clearly a cost saving measure only. The impact of the implementation of this for people who have already made decisions based on the current policy will be detrimental to children and families. We live in a village where the catchment is Ryedale school, but where this isn't the nearest school. As we live in the catchment for Ryedale school (our child who is currently in year 6) we selected this school because of its proximity and because transport would be provided and the costs covered. Under your proposed policy these costs would not be covered. This would have a detrimental income on household incomes and family life. We are also concerned that such a proposal will impact on significantly increased car travel into the village of Nawton to Ryedale School. This cannot be squared with the local authority's Climate Change Strategy 2023-30 which commits: To mitigate carbon emissions from travel and transport we will reduce travel in fossil fuel by iii. Enable and support people to choose multi person travel options, such as public transport (buses and trains), community-based transport, demand responsive travel, car share and car clubs. We strongly oppose this policy and will be making representation to elected members to that effect.

I think free school travel to a school you choose is very important. I think local community is important

There may be issues as the bus companies do not currently run services with enough places for people who already pay, so once the free taxis are taken away families will find it even harder to get their children to school in an affordable and sustainable way. Please don't leave any decisions in the hands of transdev. They are truly incompetent and if we had any other option we would pay it. If North Yorkshire ran their own paid for bus scheme we would pay.

We moved to the area for a specific school (Settle) and we meet almost all the criteria to access free transport, however the new proposal will mean we are unable to access free transport to the most suitable school for my child with SEND needs. Not only, separating children from their peers, support systems and trusted adults will have a huge negative impact on their mental health, especially for my daughter. As a family with 2 children attending primary school for another 6 years at least, makes our choice for secondary school impossible, even though it is our nearest catchment school. I think it's disgusting that such a proposal is even allowed to take place, which just shows the lack of thought or care that goes into the children of our county. This will make the quality of many families lives incredibly poorer, especially those unable to drive/accommodate such travelling, in order to give our children the best quality of education and mental health. We as a family feel incredibly let down by this proposal and sincerely hope more thought is put into this decision on the councils part. A council that only repeatedly lets down their SEND children in multiple ways already regularly, this is just another issues to add to an already disheartening list.

I currently have one child in year 7 at our catchment school, however this is the 5th closest school (according to admissions). This means my 2 other children will have to be refused a place at 4 other schools (3 of which are out of area) before being offered free home to school transport. There is currently transport arrangements from my village to my catchment school and my nearest school (also in North Yorkshire), however no transport to the other 3 schools, and as such I was advised by admissions that were the policy to be implemented, and I was offered a place at one of these 3 schools, that free transport would be provided at additional cost to the council, rather than allow my child to access the current transport in operation to my catchment school free of charge. This makes no sense in a time when cost saving is a priority. As far as I understand it, the transport to my catchment school will continue to run and if I wish my other children to use this service I may potentially have to pay upwards of £700 per year to access it, assuming she was to be offered a place at a 'nearer' school. Therefore this is not a cost saving but rather a cost making exercise. We chose our catchment school for my eldest child as we didn't want to worry about whether he would be offered a place, or not and we are very happy with the school, in addition I do not want my other children to go to a different secondary school. Had I known that we may not be eligible for free transport to our catchment school I may have made a different choice for my first child. Whilst I appreciate funding is limited and difficult decisions may need to be made I do not believe restricting free home to school travel to nearest school only is the answer. By excluding catchment schools you are increasing administration costs, as I will have to apply to 4 other schools, increasing stress levels for parents, waiting to find out where their child will get a place, and finally increasing costs of transport by having to provide additional transport to schools where currently there is none, rather than allowing children to use an already existing service.

As governors of Richmond School we are deeply concerned by the potential impact of these new proposals. Richmond School is a highly successful rural school with strong parental support . The current number of students on roll mean the school is able to offer a wide ranging broad and balanced curriculum and outstanding enrichment activity beyond the school day. Richmond School has a national reputation for music and sport. This is a significant factor which influences parental support. The school is highly effective at keeping all young people, including those with significant challenges in the learning environment. Furthermore the transition to 6th form study is seen as a highly desirable option for students from Richmond and wider North Yorks schools. We have real concerns that the potential drop in numbers could result in the 6th form provision being unavailable. There is little doubt that some of the more highly qualified teachers are attracted to North Yorks because of the opportunity to deliver post 16 courses. In our regular discussions with parents it is overwhelmingly clear that Richmond is a first choice for their children because of the reputation it enjoys in the wider community. Dales parents for example state that Richmond has always been the school of choice for generations of families and thy expect that to continue. Richmond School understands it's community which is broader than the immediate town and encompasses students from rural farming areas as well as military families.The recent service childrens' school awards recognised the contribution and quality of provision at Richmond School. In the next phase of this consultation we would suggest that the question of split villages and therefore additional transport to the nearest school is costed. This may be significant cross county. Equally has the journey for buses from the Upper Dales to Leyburn or Kirby Stephen been analysed for suitability for bus routes and lack of access in the winter months? The breadth and quality of Richmond School's offer to all families within the current catchment area will be severely impacted by the new transport proposals. Despite a number of requests we have still not received answers to important questions we have pursued with the LA. For example why has the impact of these proposals on all North Yorks schools not been shared widely? Have the other local authorities affected understood that their transport costs may rise as North Yorks fall? This lack of transparency coupled with the consultation period falling across the Easter holiday has restricted the school leaders opportunity to fully engage with parents, staff and partner primary schools. Families we reach out to on an individual basis are still unaware that despite having older siblings at Richmond their younger children will have to attend a different secondary school. For example Croft, Barton, Brompton on Swale, Gunnerside, Reeth, Hunton and Arrathorne etc Whilst we understand the need to cut budget costs we strongly feel that the negative impact of these proposed changes on a highly successful, well regarded school by the community it serves and Ofsted ,are unacceptable.

The Second Home Policy is a shambles. I co-parent and my children are with me 2 out of 5 school days Even with the option to pay for a bus place - I was told there were no spaces. Now you are removing this option completely this results in my situation where my Step daughter gets a bus and gets dropped off at home and I follow the bus driving my daughter to the same school for the same time - the same thing happens after school How does any of this policy also tie in to any Green and environmental policies you should be adhering to by trying to reduce the amount of parents having to drive their children to schools

N/A

As parent I believe I should have the right to chose the best school for my child - not purely based on distance. Perhaps funding should be opened up to the nearest 2 schools to at least allow parents the choice. Also, if funding for school transport was to be reduced and therefore more children are not eligible then you will find more traffic and accidents on these already congested residential streets near the schools. For example, Richmond School and SFX school are already extremely busy with cars and no where to park. I dread to think of the situation if less students are getting buses and more parents will drive. The complaints will be through the roof as the roads are already packed with cars!

As a resident of Reeth and knowledge of Swaledale and Arkengarthdale roads in winter it is alarming that NYCC are prepared to compromise the education and/or safety of local children by forcing transportation over roads which are untreated and vulnerable to extremes, because of altitude and remoteness. Have you carried out risk assessments for e.g. travel from upper Swaledale to Kirkby Stephen or Arkengarthdale to Barnard Castle via the Stang? The rush to save money would indicate otherwise. The road from Buttertubs and down Swaledale is a priority gritting route to keep the dale as accessible as possible and enable school transport to function. Do you intend to extend the priority gritting status through Swaledale and with co-operation from the neighbouring council into Kirby Stephen or in the other direction to Barnard Castle? Are you prepared to compromise the safety of school children on their provided transport and the drivers of those vehicles when the weather closes in and in 20mins elevated roads become impassable or extremely slippery. Some common sense needs to be applied. You will know the demograph of dales residents. You will know that working families are rarely in a financial position to fund the transport of their children to their chosen school. Much better understanding by NYCC is required instead of looking for opportunities to charge for transport services that are at odds with actual practicalities. Does NYCC understand the financial and practical implications on the schools themselves. Some schools it would seem potentially will suffer a drop in pupils whilst others would see an increase. Can either absorb those changes. What financial impacts are there for both. Are there enough transport providers who can or are able/prepared to support the new transport structure you propose. They after all have a duty of care to their staff as well as their passengers. Whilst I understand financial pressures ideas that are conceived in an office environment with the application of a spreadsheet miss the bigger picture. I do hope that common sense will prevail and the anxiety that young families are feeling with these proposals as they stand will be alleviated. I look forward to being kept informed.. Thank you.

I have one child currently attending Richmond School and using free transport. If these changes go ahead my other child would not be eligible for free transport to the same school. It would also require the council to provide an additional service to provide the existing service to the school for those children already attending and a separate service to the nearest school for the younger children!

You have completely removed the choice. Living in a rural area the route to the closest school is a terrible journey particularly in winter. In fact - in winter months the school bus would have to do a round trip which is probably the same distance as the school that is further away. The standard is also not as high to the school I would choose two miles further away! If my child goes to the school closest he will not have the same opportunities. Its much further away from my work route making school appointments much more difficult. It also will reduce the intake from the school that is classed as the better school reducing their income and will therefore be of detriment to their future pupils. The school closest to my home does not offer the same opportunities, does not have the same standards, is harder to get to and doesn't have a sixth form. This is taken away the free choice of school and is a detriment to my child, family and other schools - families on lower incomes - how is this fair?

I moved to my current home address based on the fact it's the in the Richmond catchment area. The closest schools are in Darlington. I do not wish to send my children to a Darlington school but you are leaving me with no option. It's disgraceful

We are a rural county, the fact that this is even being discussed and raised is appalling. Let's say we had to send our children to a school in Darlington because of your proposals I would question whether we should be paying our council taxes to North Yorks. Penny pinching exercise that actually deters young families from living in rural communities. How about the local authority saves money in its systems and processes of work instead of levelling it at our young people.

How you can decide this based on an as the crow flies calculation mwnajng it will actually take longer o the bus for childrent to attend the school that you deem nearest baffles me

We cannot meaningfully respond to the consultation, as we have not been provided with key information requested- this information was first requested in March and has been requested on multiple occasions (including in public meetings) throughout the consultation. Whilst officers were working with us initially and agreed to extend the consultation period when they accepted that their modelling (the basis of this consultation) was wrong, they latterly failed to respond to emails and share additional information requested. Without the information requested, we cannot meaningfully respond to the consultation as we have no idea as to how it will impact communities in NYC. Stakeholders that have provided feedback have unknowingly based their feedback on, at best, limited information and at worst, inaccurate information. The current position: - we only received accurate data modelling for our schools on Monday 15 April (the consultation commenced on 19th February) - schools in NYC have not been issued with the data modelling unless they requested it. Many schools and communities have no idea how the proposals being consulted on will affect them - schools/stakeholders were not informed that the consultation had been extended (until it went out in the red bag after a meeting we had with officers on Friday 12 April) - stakeholders were not been informed that the consultation was extended due to the mistakes identified in the data presented at the start of the consultation period (we have noted that a comment has recently been added under the FAQ section of the website -around challenge received- re the extension) - data modelling for all schools has not been provided to us and all stakeholders (this was requested on two separate occasions in mid March) - NYC have not updated or shared any revised financial modelling that reflects the revised data modelling. Therefore, we are not aware of the potential financial savings based on the accurate data modelling Whilst we understand that NYC need to save money, it appears that this consultation was merely a box that NYC had to tick to change their current school transport policy- it certainly does not feel like a genuine and transparent consultation process. Therefore, we ask that councillors give all stakeholders the information they require to meaningfully respond to this consultation and that this consultation process is rerun.

I have to pay over £600/year for my child to attend the school that is the closest secondary school to his primary school (which was also the closest primary school to our home) simply because it is not the closest secondary school in North Yorkshire, by 2miles. His school bus place is only guaranteed if there is a space. So I pay for what would otherwise be an empty seat on a bus already travelling to QES. Effectively, this is the situation that many parents will find themselves in if they live in Bentham or Settle but wish to send their children to Settle College. In our rural communities, nobody wins, neither schools nor pupils or parents, by changing the criteria of 'closest school' only for funding of school travel.

We as a family have chosen to live in North Yorkshire and part of that was that we want to be involved in everything that North Yorkshire has to offer. we pay council tax to not to Yorkshire. It feels like you are trying to punish the children for living in a rural place and sending them out of area for schooling is really not fair for them. If we wanted to send out children to school in a different county we would have moved or indeed stayed were we were previously. I feel so strongly against this proposal to send children to their nearest school if this means they have to go out of area as it would be for our children. It also is a form of discrimination as parents that can pay have the choice to let their kids go to the school in North Yorkshire rather than the majority that won't be able to afford this. Kids from the same village will get split up with regard schooling and potentially just because parents can't afford to pay for the bus just to send their child to the school in the same county as we live. Please please please keep our children being able to access the secondary school in the same county as we live.

We have emailed H2Stransportreview@northyorks.gov.uk to provide substantive views on this consultation. Contact details for the substantive response are: John Furlong LeaP Project Cerebra johnf@cerebra.org.uk

Please see all emails from (Redacted) to email address H2S... and you will have all of my comments, queries and questions. Quite frankly the 4000 characters you have provided won't provide enough space for what me or a lot of parents or carers have to and want to say! Kindly address the points raised in my emails. Best regards (Redacted)

Completely unacceptable to suggest that children will be obliged to attend their nearest school simply because of this massive change in transport policy. No regard is being taken with respect to the current circumstances of nearest school (always oversubscribed) no regard is being taken of children having a sense of the next stage in their school career as they will feel certainty will be lost. No regard to the concept of effective transition from Year 6 to Year 7 . If the Council really cares for the children and young people of North Yorkshire they will reconsider the whole scheme.

There is currently a bus running to our local North Yorkshire school that passes where I live. If the 'nearest school' rule was to take effect the nearest 2 schools would be out of county, but they are not big schools. So potentially the one bus would be replaced by 2 buses as the schools may fill up, and then maybe a third to go to the original school tripling the cost. This is something you may have to face county wide, not a saving at all!

I think it's absolutely disgusting that as a parent you aren't able to send your children to a school of your choice if you can't get the child to said school on your own. There are many working families who struggle on a day to day basis and taking this away means more children will be sent to underprivileged schools and that not by choice. Taking this away will put families into more poverty. Instead of paying the fat cats at the top all the bonuses how about working for minimum wage like everyone else does and see how hard it actually is without raising council tax or taking more help away from families who want better for their children. Don't pay out our hard earned money on bonuses for people who sit at a desk all day doing nothing. Give back to the community and stop taking everything away. Kids suffer already more than anyone

The proposed changes will cause huge disruption, anxiety and financial issues in our family. We will have one child in secondary school in Richmond and one forced to go to Hummersknot in Darlington as we will not be able to afford to transport her ourselves. We will have no choice of schools. In addition, the schools in 2 different local authority areas have different holidays which will cause issues financially, will mean family holidays will be very difficult to plan and the children will not be able to attend after school activities as we will not be able to pick them up from 2 places at once. This policy will also cause numbers to drop in Richmond school, affecting its finances and risking the quality of its offering. I disagree with this proposed change so strongly on environmental grounds too, we will be taking one bus off the roads and instead putting 30 or 40 cars out instead. I believe this proposal has been made by simply considering financial benefits and has totally disregarded the needs of the young people the local authority is tasked with providing for. Once again, I strongly disagree with this policy proposal and would consider it discriminatory to my children as they are having reduced choice and forced apart from siblings.

I strongly oppose the change of eligibility to the 'nearest' school only even if it's in a different local authority. I don't drive which isn't an issue at present my younger child attends primary school in our village but elder child gets the school bus provided to our nearest secondary school in North Yorkshire. Should this proposal go ahead, there would be no service bus, there are no safe footpaths and I cannot drive so are the council going to pay for individual taxis to transport youngest child to the 'nearest' School

The consultation does not consider the impact the changes the proposed policy will have on schools and the communities they support (page 19). Many schools are the hub of the community, where children and their families come together to build local, often isolated, communities. Some communities will be split by the fact some children live at one side of the village to their friends. Some schools will also have to reduce staff if they are adversely affected by this change. At a time of challenging recruitment in schools, to lose excellent teachers and support staff seems counterproductive to supporting young people recovering from the setback of the pandemic. The proposal also seems to be directly opposed to supporting disadvantaged students and closing the gap. If they are lucky enough to live in the right place they gain the challenge and support they need, if they don't then they will attend schools that are not as able to support their needs, therefore the disadvantaged gap widens further. Choice of school seems to be selective as it is only available to those who can financially afford it.

I think it would be very detrimental to our children to expect them to go to a different county to school potentially going to have children in schools in different counties (primary and secondary) which will have a huge affect on the family. Schools in different counties have different holidays, can't expect parents to have to sort childcare for different county holiday provision. It is a very bad proposal and really hope it doesn't go through.

It is a disgrace that as a household of two working parents who contribute a significant portion of our wages to income tax, that free transport to our chosen secondary school may not be provided. It is another example of working people being put upon while other groups who do not contribute to society are looked after left right and centre. Transport to a suitable and desired site of education should be an inalienable right and not be treated as a privilege.

How do you identify closest school - as crow flies or miles eg on Google?

As a resident living in Swaledale I think the roads network from Swaledale to Cumbria and Wensleydale are dangerous so secondary age children in Swaledale should still be able to go to Richmond regardless of where in the Dale, the B6270 is gritted up the Cumbria and Teesdale border to allow people and parents to get their children to school safely. Primary school children in Swaledale it is ridiculous when most parents that have 2 cars that a minibus service is put on for them to drive half a mile to school. Most have to drive past or to where the school is to get to work etc. it is a luxury to have the minibuses in my opinion and massive waste of money.

We live in Ingleton. Our eldest child attends Settle College and we are very happy with the excellent provision for lots of reasons. If the proposed amends go ahead nyc will still be paying for pupils to be transported to the "nearest@ school which is QES. So they would not be saving money at all. There should not be a blanket policy. If the Ingleton is in a unique situation. The proposal is ridiculous.

I understand that the proposed new policy does not have regard to the travel time or potential difficulties with some of the routes to the "nearest" school locations. For example I understand that, whereas children from Swaledale and Arkengarthdale generally go to Richmond after Year 6 at present, some may now be expected to go to Leyburn, Barnard Castle or Kirkby Stephen instead. This is notwithstanding that travel to and from those locations may in practice take longer and involve higher level routes on narrower roads which can often be difficult, problematic and dangerous particularly in winter and other unpredictable or adverse conditions. I therefore request that this element of the proposed new policy should be reconsidered

Significant school traffic increases through new outing villages including the bottleneck at Skeeby will significantly increase risks to pedestrian and road traffic safety due to an increase in private use vehicles required to transport children to school along an already congested route

I think your questionnaire is misleading. Trying to establish if we have understood your proposal as opposed to getting views on whether we agree with your proposal! Offering transport to our nearest school which isn't our catchment school is totally unacceptable. What if our nearest school has no places?? How do we get our child to school then? You are basically forcing parents to either pay for the transport (which is yet ANOTHER financial burden putting on families) or take our children to school ourselves therefore causing traffic chaos as hundreds of other parents do the same! What you are also yet to disclose under this new proposal is the cost of the transport should we chose to send our child to our catchment school?? This as a minimum should have been highlighted so we know what we are dealing with and are fully informed to make choices. Under the new proposal you would be dividing families based on what they can afford. For example, you would send a bus to my village to collect a child going to the "nearest school not in catchment" which would be free. Another bus will come along to collect a child going to the catchment school which the parents have had to pay for. Then another parent will jump in the car and take their child to the catchment school because they can't afford the bus and their child didn't get in to the "nearest school not in catchment". It all sounds such a mess!

Quite frankly, I think this will be of huge detriment to our area. Myself & husband both attended Settle College and have always intended on our children attending there too - it is our nearest high school IN North Yorkshire after all...! To think this option may now be taken away from us because of the new council set up is utterly ridiculous and very very sad. We as a family, amidst the cost of living crisis which many many families are suffering with also, will not be able to find an additional £2k every SINGLE year (for potentially 7 years for each child) to fund our children to go to the nearest high school within our district. How utterly ridiculous, discriminative and above all, a very selfish, money orientated move by NYC.

Yes. We live (Redacted) miles from Settle school and (Redacted) miles from Skipton secondary schools. We are not in the catchment for Settle, but we are for Skipton. Your proposed policy on distance calculation is opaque and does not provide us with any insight into what would actually be considered our nearest suitable school. We assume Settle, but that is not necessarily going to be the nearest, dependent on the preferred transport route which may not utilise minor roads. The different schools that we will consider for our children also includes Upper Wharfedale (about 8.5 miles away). We are not in catchment for this school. The proposed policy creates uncertainty over whether transport could be provided, even if we wished to and were capable of funding it ourselves. The proposed policy pushed the onus onto families to find transport solutions at their expense, with the only gain being that of a saving in expenditure for the authority. This is short sighted, and does not take account of the associated structure of the schools admittance and applications approach (i.e. why allow pupils to apply to a school that they could not realistically get to?)! This places pressure on families in both social, wellbeing, and economic terms. A better way would be to ask for contributions to transport costs from families that can afford to do so and allow families and their children the opportunity to apply to and attend the school of their choosing. The policy also does not allow for parents / carers contractual employment situations, and it will be a lottery regarding whether we could transport our children to school or not dependent on what kind of job we have. The policy is not therefore in keeping with the essential and priority aim of government that those capable of employment should be in employment. We strongly object to the proposed policy as whilst it may save financially for the authority in the short term, it will be damaging to the success and wellbeing of schools and pupils and their families.

Adjust the criteria to nearest school and school within x miles tolerance of another school in the catchment area. For example, Upper wharfedale is our closest school (Redacted) away, but our preferred school is Skipton girls high which is (Redacted) away. So its effectively penalising parents for living a few miles to one school or the other.

The fact that children could be forced to go to a school where no other friends could be attending will have a negative effect on childrens mental health. They have formed relationships which will help them transition into secondary and you will be removing this. Children in different schools with different holidays will be a logistical nightmare for single parents.

I think provision of school transport still needs to be the catchment school, not just to the nearest school. We live on the border of North Yorkshire and West Yorkshire- on the the north side, our catchment secondary school is King James but the nearest school is Wetherby High. There is no point in having transport to Wetherby High (as the nearest school) as my children will be going to King James and therefore provision should be made for that. I live in (Redacted), and the other 20 children who get on the bus in our village to get to King James will I am sure feel the same.

In my circumstances, without the provision of free transport i would struggle to safely get my children to school and back every day. We live in an area where they would be required to walk along an A road without adult supervision and as shodt workers we simply cannot escort them to school every morning because of work commitments. We have no family in the area to help with getting them to school and financially would struggle to add the cost of two bus passes to our outgoings. The children attend our closest geographical school for these reasons and the provision of free transport when living in the catchment area is important when you consider their safety without it. I believe that without it it is wholly probable that a child would be injured or killed whilst walking along a 60mph road to school. There is no alternative route that is safer for them and it is poorly lit, uneven under foot and involves crossing the railway. The safety of the children who live in the catchment area is paramount and should be seriously considered when making these changes. In my opinion the provision of transport for children attending a school many miles from their home and not their catchment area is where costs should be incurred for parents as this is a choice they make and commit to when not selecting their closest school

I don't really know how to describe the way in which this consultation has been managed other than to use the word 'shocking'. Every part of the process has been poorly executed, leaving schools and local families largely 'unaware' of the impact of the proposals. The following issues have arisen for us and by implication other schools: There was no 'easy to understand' information available for schools/ families. The consultation was emailed to a member of staff in charge of buses rather than the Headteacher directly and did not arrive via The Red Bag. No impact data was provided unless requested and even then, a very basic error was made and we received data that was entirely inaccurate. This will have been the case for other schools. We had to wait a long time for updated data and the opportunity to discuss our concerns with NYC officers, rendering a large part of the consultation process 'useless'- how can we respond to a consultation when we have no accurate facts to work on? The extension to the process was not shared until we raised this issue at our meeting on Friday 12 April (we were informed of this in the week before the Easter holidays. We were told the extension was in the Red Bag. We had already received the Red Bag that day and it was not included. The extension information was then emailed out via a second Red Bag later in the day. The extension information did not include the reason ie that the initial data shared was flawed and so if a school had asked for data and had not realised errors were made, the school would be responding based on inaccurate facts. Schools have not been made aware of the impact on other schools either- something we have repeatedly asked for. There has been no updated financial modelling completed, based on the revised impact data. We have therefore been unable to work effectively across our primary schools to ensure a joined up understanding of the future situation for our school (which will affect all parents with children in Y5 and below) and to respond as a group. I have also been unable to ensure our parents have an accurate shared understanding of the situation as we have had to wait so long for any clarity. I am absolutely sure that the vast majority of parents still have no idea of the implications of this as NYC has failed to work in a transparent way- certainly parents I have spoken to recently from our school and others had little, if any idea, until I sent a letter out this week explaining the changes in the simplest of terms. In terms of the proposal itself, due to the rural nature of North Yorkshire, travel to school should, by necessity be different to the minimum statutory requirement. If the proposals go ahead, and we do indeed end up with 140+ students fewer on roll, our offer will by definition be reduced. Staff will be made redundant and our curriculum and rich extra-curricular offer will shrink. Lots of families choose us because of these- especially those where the students have additional needs. I also have grave concerns for the future of a school based sixth form provision for the children in The Dales. Maintaining a Sixth Form is extremely difficult and with potentially 30 fewer students in each year group, it is hard to see how we can continue to sustain what we now offer and indeed at a certain point, any education offer can become unviable. As very little that we have said to date appears to have been listened to, it is with heavy heart that I fill this in. We have spent days and days working on this matter behind the scenes as the information from NYC has been so poor. I urge officers to listen to the responses to the consultation and make the decision to treat this unique situation in the 'exceptional' way it requires.

I have a child currently accessing transport provided by NY to attend our catchment area secondary school. We also have a further 3 children at primary school who wish to attend the same school in future. Our nearest school is out of our catchment area and I would feel uncomfortable making applications to this school if the eligibility criteria for applications does not change in line with transport policy. In addition, this school is about, but could possibly be less than 3 miles away based on the policy. The route is unpopulated with national speed limit routes which would not be safe for my children to walk unaccompanied, but could be deemed safe to walk with an adult which would leave us having to provide our own transportation. There is no service bus route. This would negatively impact the attendance of my children where any siblings are at primary school. We would have to be in two places at once. Currently my child at secondary school can safely walk to a bus stop for her NY transport from our home. This may also impact the earning ability of my family as one of us would need to reduce our working hours or cease work completely if reduced hours were not possible in demanding careers in order to be available to transport our children to their nearest school on time in absence of any provision or public service bus routes. I also note that it is very difficult for me to verify the costing information you have supplied in relation to transport costs of the county and these compared to other costs due to the delay in publishing audited accounts. There is no indication of how this policy could impact the numbers attending different schools and the pressures and outcomes this could cause in terms of under and over subscriptions - has this been considered? Has any consideration been given to whether cuts to public transportation could be reversed to compensate and alleviate any problems accessing alternative arrangements? Has any consideration been given to the interaction with school place eligibility which is heavily based on catchment area so at odds with this policy? Where will the savings be directed? Are funds to be reinvested in children's services or taken away from children? How would this impact council tax payments?

This seems like a poor proposal, removing choice for parents and also students. This also affect schools such as Richmond School which has a very proud and ancient history of serving the rural and local community. If these changes go ahead, the school role will be significantly affected, removing curriculum choice and taking jobs out of the local economy.

I strongly disagree with the nearest school not being in catchment. It's going to end up with children not getting places at their nearest choice and then not getting transport to their catchment school. It would also involve changing bus routes sometimes to pick one child from a family up when the others get a different bus to the catchment school. Either redraw the catchment areas so children attend the nearest school or keep transporting children to the catchment school. Changing the policy discriminates against rural children and adds to rural deprivation

Settle college could lose pupils and therefore funding if Bentham pupils have to travel to QES in Cumbria. QES is way too big. Settle college is a better school and shares holiday dates with the local primary schools, an important factor for families. Residents should not have to pay to send their children to the better, in county school.

My children attended Settle College and were eligible for free transport as were many other children in Bentham. I firmly believe that free transport should continue for future Bentham pupils. Settle College is the closest school in travelling time and it is in North Yorkshire, and provides quality education for the children of our community. Withdrawing free travel will mean that local children will have to travel outside North Yorkshire and will have a significant negative financial impact on the school.

It seems that, unfortunately, finance seems to take precedent over what is right and best for children, young people and their families. This proposal could mean that siblings attend different schools for a time and it would also mean children moving to a school in a different county to the one they are currently in. The larger issue here is that very good schools will lose pupils to schools that are not as suitable or effective which makes this whole scenario morally abhorrent. I do not know why an LA would want to take students out of a strong improving school and put them in what could be oversubscribed weaker provisions. The modelling and planning around this whole agenda has been poor - inaccurate and not fully thought through. In all honesty, this is a consultation regarding a not fully formed idea rather than an actual proposal. Has it been confirmed that other schools have the facilities and staffing to cater for these children? In some cases - we are talking about huge changes for the sake of 1-2 miles on a journey. The upheaval would be huge and we could end up with a big school having empty space and then the cost of upgrading the other schools (at a cost) with temporary buildings in order to facilitate the moves. School places should not become a postcode lottery otherwise deprivation increases as do life chances. People will start to sell perfectly nice homes and move just to be nearer the school of choice as was the case in years gone by. A review of transport arrangements was always inevitable however clear planning, timely consultation with actual evidence of impact and mapping and a graduated approach would be far more appropriate. Or just increase council tax a little in order to spread the cost burden without the drastic action here. I think most people would rather pay a little more council tax and maintain the status quo. We hope the council will reconsider this rushed decision and spend more time planning and ensure that, at the heart of this, young people are taken into consideration and what is best for them. We are a very good school who deserve to maintain the students we have and look after well. We have a long history of providing a good education to young people in the local community and to reduce this capacity would be detrimental to our school, the young people and the local area.

MY child currently attends St Hilda's primary in Ampleforth (Redacted). Should this school close (which is under consultation at the same time), we would be forced to our nearest school, which is being defined as St Benedict's RC school. St Benedict's is not designated as a rural school it is not a village school, and has a selective admissions policy based on religion. How can we, as parents who are expected to work to create more taxes for UK wealth (government recent policies, for example the additional free school hours for <3 year olds, are wholly designed to make more parents work to ultimately contribute more in tax), be expected to have to reduce our hours to be able to send our child to an inclusive school (e.g. Helmsley). This is leaving us with no choice but to give up/reduce work hours - ultimately, it may mean we leave a currently thriving service village. I can understand how this policy is suitable for more urban areas where there are several schools within small radius areas and therefore catchment areas are relatively arbitrary, but in a rural area we could be in a situation where our nearest school is not suitable on religious grounds (would you send a Catholic child to a Jewish or Islamic school for example?) and does not have a catchment so does not have to take us. Or a catchment school (Husthwaite) that we are within the admission area, but could not travel to, or the nearest inclusive school (Helmsley) but we are not in catchment and so could easily get turned away (in 2027/28 they are currently expected to be at maximum capacity). This policy does not work for rural communities where there are several near schools, which allow parent choice. This is actively removing choice heavily from working parents and is discriminatory towards those of either a none or different faith.

Appendix D2

Date	From	Message
9/3/24	Rishi Sunak	<p>Dear Sir/Madam</p> <p>For your information below.</p> <hr/> <p>Dear Mr Sunak</p> <p>I have recently learnt about the potential changes to Home-School transport in our area, meaning that our children will only receive paid transport to our closest school. This will potentially have a huge impact on our three children's (currently aged 10, 8 and 3) secondary school education. After thriving at Richmond School myself and progressing to University where I achieved a First Class Honours degree, I will always take their education seriously. My husband had a positive experience at Richmond School too.</p> <p>With the proposed changes, transport will only be provided for Kirkby Stephen Grammar School. Whilst closest, this involves a very tricky journey to school during the winter months over Tailbridge (547m above sea level), which I know you are familiar with. A diversion on lower routes would involve a 50 mile + journey, which is not practical at their age. Schools are complaining about poor attendance records and these changes will definitely not help in our area. Getting a bus company to tender for such a route would be difficult and I would imagine one that would go for the tender, might not be particularly reliable. I would hope the Council will agree when the route is assessed.</p> <p>The second closest school would be Wensleydale School. Again, there would be difficult inclined route to pass if the shortest route was taken, or even the valley routes include lower gritting priorities than the direct Priority 1 gritting route (after the first part from our house to the B6270) to Richmond.</p> <p>Whilst the fees for transport to the preferred school for our children would be considerable and a challenge for us (approximately £2,100/year when they all reach secondary school), we would be forced to pay it if the changes go ahead. My biggest worry would be that a bus would not be available for spaces at all if the changes happen and taking them to school ourselves would not be possible with our jobs (an upland hill farming family and I work part-time away from the farm too).</p> <p>I understand the change will reduce costs in some parts of the county but with only a 3 mile distance between Leyburn and Richmond for us, the difference is negligible but could have a significant impact on our children's school career.</p> <p>I appreciate other counties do not have the option of transport to their catchment schools already (local school only), but I think the nature of our rural area is the reason that the change has not been made here and generations have attended school in Richmond. There are many other families who will be affected negatively in upper Swaledale and I am sure</p>

		<p>others will be writing to you. Our catchment options are currently the two schools in Richmond and Wensleydale School, I would really hope this continues to be the case and hope you might be able to help in our fight.</p> <p>I look forward to hearing from you soon.</p> <p>Yours sincerely</p>
9/3/24	Rishi Sunak	<p>Dear Mr Rishi Sunak,</p> <p>I write to you as a parent from upper Swaledale with deep concerns about the proposed changes to the current Home-School transport policy. If these changes go ahead our child and all other children in our area will only receive paid transport to our closest school (Kirkby Stephen) which as you know from Keld is over a particularly dangerous route which is never fully gritted in the winter months due to it being deemed unsafe for gritters, let alone buses and cars. I struggle to believe you will get any transport company to take the tender as they will not safely be able to get to school certain times of the year, if they do Swaledale children will unfortunately have very poor attendance records, this will ultimately affect their education which we obviously don't want to see. We get extreme winters in Swaledale with snowdrifts, as well as black ice and sheet ice which on any road is not nice but on the Tailbridge road is lethal. A diversion from Keld to Kirkby Stephen is 50 plus miles which is ridiculous for children of school age.</p> <p>The last person to go to school in Kirkby Stephen from Swaledale is Doris Harker nee Whitehead, this was over 50 years ago which in itself surely highlights that no one from this area has chosen to go to school over this route for a very long time due to the road simply not being fit for transport in winter months.</p> <p>Our second closest school is in Leyburn (Wensleydale School) which also has no safe route in bad weather, Grinton top and Stainton Lane are both roads that are not well gritted in winter. There is only a three mile difference in distance from the Keld - Richmond route and the Keld - Leyburn route. This in my mind is a no brainer especially when you take into account the safety of our children should be the most important factor when it comes to school transport. Not distance. Not money. I urge you to help us stop these changes and put our childrens safety first.</p> <p>Yours sincerely</p>
14/03/24	Rishi Sunak	<p>Having recently been made aware of the new school transport consultation published by NYCC, I have raised my concerns with the council but would like to bring your attention to the issues this may cause, albeit I'm sure you will be being inundated with similar correspondence from other parents in the Dales.</p> <p>In the consultation document there is much focus and consideration on the "safety of walked routes", obviously aimed at those within the 2/3 miles of their school, but no mention of the safety of roads for buses.</p> <p>I assume this is completely obvious and therefore think it is unnecessary for me to be concerned, however I would just like it to be checked that these proposed changes won't actually come into place for the children of Upper Swaledale, and their transport arrangements will remain the same,</p>

and they will travel down the dale - currently to Richmond School.

This consultation suggests that transport would be provided to 'nearest suitable school' but isn't very clear on what 'suitable' means. The nearest school for Upper Swaledale by road miles is Kirkby Stephen, in Cumbria, but I trust this won't actually be an option that NYCC are considering. The B6270 from Keld to Kirkby Stephen is not a suitable route at all in winter months, which often runs from November through to March. The road is sometimes not gritted at all, due to it being deemed not safe for a gritter. For anyone who lives at the top of Swaledale and experiences first hand how exposed the road is to the extreme weather conditions in winter, it is obvious just how many days school the children would miss if their school transport was over the country border. This would be of huge detriment to their education. The idea of children being transported over a road with a 14% gradient, at 530m altitude to school is simply ridiculous. It is just common sense to continue to take all children of Swaledale down the dale towards Richmond.

I understand the proposed changes are with the aim of saving costs. The current transport situation for the children of Swaledale are as follows:

A Mini bus from Ravenseat to Gunnerside (10miles), then a coach from Gunnerside to Richmond (17miles). Currently 2 bus contracts, for the whole of Swaledale, with total mileage of 27 miles.

Under the proposed changes, the children of Swaledale would be split, around the Gunnerside area, with the children of Upper Swaledale (Gunnerside up to Ravenseat) being transported to Kirkby Stephen (their nearest school), so the situation for Swaledale would be:

A Mini bus from Gunnerside to Kirkby Stephen (17miles), plus the existing bus from Gunnerside to Richmond(17miles), so 2 bus contracts, for the whole of Swaledale, with total mileage of 34 miles.

Therefore for this specific community, I cannot see how this would be a cost saving, instead it increases total miles between the 2 buses, as well as travelling over a very unsuitable road.

I appreciate that I am sure there are many other areas in the whole of North Yorkshire where these changes will decrease costs and improve efficiencies, however I trust that the whole point of this being a consultation is to highlight/confirm any exceptions to these very simplistic changes, and Upper Swaledale must be one of them.

The communities living and working in the Dales already face many challenges both logistically and financially for school and work opportunities. Bringing in changes to transport policies like this would completely deter any young families from moving to the area, specifically Upper Swaledale, if their only school options where transport is provided is by travelling over a dangerously high route.

NYCC will surely agree that safety is paramount in defining which school is 'suitable'.

If parents had to transport their children to the school that is truly suitable

		<p>(Richmond) then this would have a hugely negative impact on working parents. Many of these working parents have overcome the challenges of maintaining a career alongside raising young children, and if transporting their children from Upper Swaledale to Richmond, two times a day, was to become the only option, this would take 2 hours out of every working day for all of those working parents. There could be almost 20 vehicles travelling 54 miles a day.</p> <p>I do hope NYCC is not aiming for the dales to become only a museum where tourists visit at weekends, and instead is going to support those who live, work and look after these rural areas.</p> <p>I have never before felt the need to email yourself about any issues, however in this instance the impact this could potentially have is so huge I feel I must contact you and I hope you can provide support in reassuring the people of Upper Swaledale that these changes will not be coming into place for our community.</p>
14/03/24	Rishi Sunak	<p>I have recently learnt about the potential changes to Home-School transport in our area, meaning that our children will only receive paid transport to our closest school. <i>[REDACTED TEXT]</i></p> <p>With the proposed changes, transport will only be provided for Kirkby Stephen Grammar School. Whilst closest, this involves a very tricky journey to school during the winter months over Tailbridge (547m above sea level), which I know you are familiar with. A diversion on lower routes would involve a 50 mile + journey, which is not practical at their age. Schools are complaining about poor attendance records and these changes will definitely not help in our area. Getting a bus company to tender for such a route would be difficult and I would imagine one that would go for the tender, might not be particularly reliable. I would hope the Council will agree when the route is assessed.</p> <p>The second closest school would be Wensleydale School. Again, there would be difficult inclined route to pass if the shortest route was taken, or even the valley routes include lower gritting priorities than the direct Priority 1 gritting route <i>[REDACTED TEXT]</i> to Richmond.</p> <p>Whilst the fees for transport to the preferred school for our children would be considerable and a challenge for us (approximately £2,100/year when they all reach secondary school), we would be forced to pay it if the changes go ahead. My biggest worry would be that a bus would not be available for spaces at all if the changes happen and taking them to school ourselves would not be possible with our jobs <i>[REDACTED TEXT]</i></p> <p>I understand the change will reduce costs in some parts of the county but with only a 3 mile distance between Leyburn and Richmond for us, the difference is negligible but could have a significant impact on our children's school career.</p> <p>I appreciate other counties do not have the option of transport to their catchment schools already (local school only), but I think the nature of our rural area is the reason that the change has not been made here and generations have attended school in Richmond. There are many other families who will be affected negatively in upper Swaledale and I am sure</p>

		others will be writing to you. Our catchment options are currently the two schools in Richmond and Wensleydale School, *REDACTED TEXT CONTINING PERSONAL AND IDENTIFYING INFORMATION
14/03/24	Rishi Sunak	<p>I write to you as a parent from upper Swaledale with deep concerns about the proposed changes to the current Home-School transport policy. If these changes go ahead our child and all other children in our area will only receive paid transport to our closest school (Kirkby Stephen) which as you know from Keld is over a particularly dangerous route which is never fully gritted in the winter months due to it being deemed unsafe for gritters, let alone buses and cars. I struggle to believe you will get any transport company to take the tender as they will not safely be able to get to school certain times of the year, if they do Swaledale children will unfortunately have very poor attendance records, this will ultimately affect their education which we obviously don't want to see. We get extreme winters in Swaledale with snowdrifts, as well as black ice and sheet ice which on any road is not nice but on the Tailbridge road is lethal. A diversion from Keld to Kirkby Stephen is 50 plus miles which is ridiculous for children of school age.</p> <p>The last person to go to school in Kirkby Stephen from Swaledale [REDACTED TEXT] 50 years ago which in itself surely highlights that no one from this area has chosen to go to school over this route for a very long time due to the road simply not being fit for transport in winter months.</p> <p>Our second closest school is in Leyburn (Wensleydale School) which also has no safe route in bad weather, Grinton top and Stainton Lane are both roads that are not well gritted in winter. There is only a three mile difference in distance from the Keld - Richmond route and the Keld - Leyburn route. This in my mind is a no brainer especially when you take into account the safety of our children should be the most important factor when it comes to school transport. Not distance. Not money. I urge you to help us stop these changes and put our childrens safety first. *REDACTED TEXT CONTINING PERSONAL AND IDENTIFYING INFORMATION</p>
14.03/24	Rishi Sunak	<p>It has recently been brought to our attention that our local council have been reviewing their home to school transport policies.</p> <p>As a part of the policy, North Yorkshire county council would like to amend and change a major part (in our eyes living in the western part of the North Yorkshire) of the policy! In which we think this would have massive detrimental affects on our children!</p> <p>The new policy is stating that the children would have to travel to the nearest school, and this means it could be in a neighbouring county! For us this would be our children would have to apply for Kirkby Stephen school! This for us is not an option! The road is not suitable for a bus or taxi to be carrying school children especially in winter! This road does not get gritted it sits as a height of 1740ft and is completely exposed to all elements of weather! Previously when we have been asking for this road to be gritted, Westmorland council have deemed it not safe for a gritter to be travelling on in bad weather! But yet you're willing to put our children on this road?!</p>

		<p>If we are right in thinking if this policy goes ahead but we chose not to send to Kirkby Stephen purely on safety issues for our own children, we then have to pay and organise our own transport then to the school of your own choice!</p> <p>The families of the upper Swaledale community, in which we are a part of your constituency. Would like to take this opportunity in asking whether you could discuss this matter further with North Yorkshire county council, as we feel our opinions alone may not help! We just all feel we are getting punished for the beautiful part of the world we live in!</p>
15/03/24	Rishi Sunak	<p>I have just been made aware of proposed changes to school transport and catchment areas by North Yorkshire County Council.</p> <p>I live in Arkengarthdale and under the proposal my child would have to go to secondary school in Barnard Castle, which would mean crossing the A66 road and the Stang Road which is routinely impassable in the winter with snowfall, both of which are extremely dangerous!</p> <p>Not only this but all students in Reeth and Gunnerside Primary School would be split up and sent to different schools which will be deeply distressing for all concerned and totally avoidable. Please put yourself in our shoes, would you consider it acceptable for your children to be sent on a potentially dangerous journey on a daily basis?</p> <p>There is a meeting at Richmond Town Hall tomorrow at 1.30pm that I will be attending with other very concerned parents, we really need your help!</p> <p>I urge you to look into this quickly and take it as seriously as we are.</p>
21/03/24	Rishi Sunak	<p><i>[Redacted text]</i> Reeth and Gunnerside school, it is a small school that around 80 children attend. The proposed changes would mean that our children will be entitled to transport to only their nearest school which would be Wensleydale School in Leyburn. Other children that attend Reeth and Gunnerside school that live further up Swaledale will have transport provided to Kirby Stephen School and those living in Arkengarthdale will have transport provided to Barnard Castle school. There are many reasons why I believe NYC has not thought about the implications to the proposed changes, and I have listed these below.</p> <p>Safety: Wensleydale school is 12 miles away from our home, but the road can be very dangerous, and it is not a priority road that is gritted in the winter, the road can be very steep in places and not always safe to pass other oncoming vehicles, there is also a 7.5 ton weight limit restriction on the road. The current catchment school where transport is provided for all of those living in Swaledale and Arkendarthdale is Richmond school, the road to Richmond along the B6270 is well maintained, gritted as a priority road and is the safest route to school in and out of our Dale.</p> <p>Children living further up Swaledale will be provided with transport to Kirby Stephen school which means them having to travel on roads that are not gritted and can be steep in some places.</p>

Children that live in Langthwaite in Arkengarthdale will be provided with transport to Barnard Castle school, again not only going over the Stang which is an ungritted dangerous road, it also means them having to cross the A66.

The Department for Education states that school transport will be provided for children if there is not a 'safe' route to walk to school. Why does this policy not extend to mention that transport will be provided on 'safe' roads.

Another concern is that children are going to miss a number of days at school due to the roads not being safe to travel on during winter months.

Community: Dividing the friendship groups already made at primary school will ruin our community for generations to come, it is unfair to isolate any child when they have been in a class size of 8, then to potentially split them from their friends due to their postcode when being sent to secondary school.

Jobs: *[Redacted text]* if transport is not provided to Richmond school I will have to leave my job so that I am able to drive my children to school each day and pick them up, I will look for another job in Richmond. For my employer and many others in the Dales this will have a detrimental impact, they are already short staffed due to the cost of affordable homes and affordable rent in the Dales.

Housing: There are many second homes in Swaledale and Arkengarthdale, by changing the transport to school it may have a significant knock-on effect of young families wanting to bring their children up here. It could potentially reduce the cost of houses due to families of school age children not wanting to live here or it even increase the amount of second homes, both of which will ruin the community.

Local transport: There is very limited local transport that our children could use so this is not even an option.

Cost: The proposed cost is just under £800 a year per child if we choose to send our children to Richmond school and that is only if there is a space on the bus to do so, it is not a cost that I can personally afford so I feel that NYC will be forcing myself and many others into a decision based on not having the money to pay for the transport.

Consultation: I attended the consultation meeting on Thursday 14th March at Richmond Town Hall along with 6 other people, one of those being the head teacher from Richmond school. I would have been surprised to see such a low turn out however I was expecting it as most other parents I have spoken to did not realise the meeting was on, nor did they understand what the proposed changes would mean for their families. I was also surprised and saddened to hear that the head teacher of Richmond school had not been told about the proposed changes even though it was going to have a detrimental impact on her school. I asked at the meeting why a consultation had not taken place in Swaledale or at Reeth or Gunnerside considering it is going to impact every pupil at the school and the community, I was told that it was because they could not

		<p>find anywhere to hold the meeting. I have asked as a matter of urgency that a consultation meeting is held in this area before the closing date of the consultation period on April 12th, I was advised they would 'see what they could do'.</p> <p>I understand NYC need to save money, but I do not believe putting this cost onto families is the correct way. I do not also understand how NYC will save money as currently they provide two coaches, these will have to be replaced with at least 5 or 6 minibuses due to the many other schools it will have to provide transport to, a coach will not be able to travel on the road to Wensleydale school due to the restrictions.</p> <p>I am a very concerned parent and I do not believe that any consideration has been taken about the safety of our children when travelling to school or the impact it will have for our community, I feel that NYC are putting initial financial benefits above these.</p> <p><i>*REDACTED TEXT CONTINING PERSONAL AND IDENTIFYING INFORMATION</i></p>
22/03/24	Julian Smith	<p>Following the recent Local Government reorganisation (carried out at the behest of your Government), when Craven District Council and others were subsumed into the much larger and more remote North Yorkshire Council, based at Northallerton, we on the western periphery of the District are now seeing the first fruits of this change.</p> <p>Tomorrow afternoon (Thursday 21st March), a public meeting will be held, here in Ingleton, to explain plans to amend the Home School Travel Policy.</p> <p>The main proposal is 'C - Amendment to the main eligibility criterion to be 'nearest school (with places available)', to match the statutory requirement.'</p> <p>This bland-sounding proposal has considerable, very far-reaching consequences.</p> <p>The nearest secondary school to Ingleton, Bentham and Burton, is in the next county, QES at Kirkby Lonsdale, in Cumbria - 7 miles from Ingleton.</p> <p>Settle College, in N. Yorkshire, is 11 miles from Ingleton.</p> <p>Under the proposal, in future, only travel from Ingleton to QES at Kirkby Lonsdale would be subsidised. The Council clearly anticipates sending children across the County boundary - that is specifically mentioned in the FAQ's on the Consultation.</p> <p>The ramifications are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Everyone leaving the local primary schools would have to apply to QES (Kirkby Lonsdale), initially, which would not have the capacity for all the children. (However, school finances being roll-number dependent, you can be sure they would cram in as many as humanly possible!). Most local children would be sent to QES, but a few others (chosen on a random basis), would not, and would still go to Settle College.

		<p>Families would be split, to everyone's great inconvenience - and bear in mind that Cumbria and North Yorkshire tend to have entirely different holiday dates.</p> <p>2. Because Settle College would no longer have these important feeder schools within its catchment, it is estimated it would lose a huge amount of income, and would probably quickly become unviable as a unit. Settle is already a modest-sized, rural secondary school, so is already vulnerable to the financial effects of scale, and it may, perhaps, be considered less important by those in power on the other side of the Pennines.</p> <p>If Settle College were to close, then the children from Settle, Horton and all the surrounding areas (including some travelling from Ingleton etc.) would have to be transported - at great extra expense and hardship - to Skipton (26 miles from Ingleton, on a difficult road).</p> <p>The deleterious effects of such changes to the towns and villages here in West Craven surely hardly need spelling out, as they are obvious and wide-ranging - but perhaps not so to Council bean-counters?</p> <p>3. Less obviously, but of vital importance, the children from Ingleton and the other schools mentioned currently have the benefit of being part of the North Yorkshire catchment for sporting and other cultural activities. Running, for instance, which is enjoyed greatly by redacted text and redacted text school friends, is based at Giggleswick. Take them out of North Yorkshire's ambit, and they will have to join up with Cumbrian schools, which will be far less convenient, at much greater distance - and impractical on school nights.</p> <p>4. Although few in number and living near the borders of 'God's Own Country,' and therefore of little consequence, we still pay Council Tax and Business Rates to North Yorkshire Council, and we are entitled to proper services from them in return - especially as those Council Taxes are levied at a higher rate than in Cumbria!</p> <p>The Council will doubtless claim they have to make savings, and this will help them more effectively spend scarce funds.</p> <p>However, I understand, on very good authority, (though unofficially, for obvious reasons!), that the comparative costs to the Council of transporting children to Settle College and QES are - exactly the same! That's because these costs aren't primarily based on mileage, but on time involved, which is identical.</p> <p>So, if there is no actual fiscal advantage to the Council in making this change, one has to ask - what is the point of this exercise? And one is driven to conclude that it must surely be to drive Settle College out of business, in the name of centralisation and 'efficiency.' That would be myopic lunacy.</p> <p>This is a matter which is too important to be left to the tender mercy of a far-away Council with myriad financial problems to solve.</p> <p>]</p> <p><i>*REDACTED TEXT CONTINING PERSONAL AND IDENTIFYING INFORMATION</i></p>
26/03/24	Julian Smith	<p>I am writing to you with regards to the consultation that is currently happening for school transport in NYCC.</p> <p>I feel strongly that the rural communities of North Craven are going to be left with no choice but to send their child out of county to QES at Kirkby Lonsdale, as they won't be able to afford school transport to Settle</p>

		<p>College. The long term affect will be that Settle College will be forced to close due to low numbers.</p> <p>I attended the meeting Ingleton last week, and couldn't help feeling that the blanket approach that is being proposed just will not work for North Craven.</p> <p><i>*REDACTED TEXT CONTINING PERSONAL AND IDENTIFYING INFORMATION</i></p>
28/03/24	Rishi Sunak	<p>We, Arkengarthdale Parish Council, are contacting you with regards to the proposed changes in school transport policy, since we have found the online consultation to be impractical for a parish council. We object to the proposed changes and outline our concerns below.</p> <p>We have also written to NYC to Cllrs Wilkinson and Carlton as we would like our concerns to count as our submission to the consultation. We have been unable to complete the online survey as it has been designed for individual respondents (parents/pupils), rather than groups/committees who need to be able to view the entire survey (rather than one question at a time) in order to reach an agreed response in a time-efficient manner. Neither the technical format nor the question format of the survey makes it easy for a parish council to complete.</p> <p>Our first concern is the timing of the public consultation meeting: Holding it on a lunchtime in the middle of a working week was not convenient for many people, and indeed several parents have indicated that it was impossible for them to attend this meeting owing to work commitments.</p> <p>Our second concern is the lack of clarity in the justification for awarding a contract to a national taxi firm (24x7 Ltd) apparently based in Essex, operating from Ripon. This firm will send buses and drivers from Ripon to transport pupils from Arkengarthdale and Swaledale to Wensleydale, although a local bus operator already exists in Reeth. With no local knowledge of the communities, outlying properties and the local road conditions under certain weather conditions, we are unconvinced that this proposed new arrangement can (a) make financial sense, (b) be environmentally sustainable and, most importantly, (c) be in the best interests of pupil safety.</p> <p>Our third concern is the effect that the proposed changes could have on the interests and well-being of local school pupils. The populations of Arkengarthdale and Swaledale feed the primary school at Reeth, which is geographically and socially the 'centre' of a very close-knit, supportive community for children and adults. Both dales are several miles long. The changes to the policy would effectively segregate local children into three zones according to the geographic distances they live from the nearest school. We can only summarise that someone with no local experience of the dynamic of the upper dales' communities or the character of roads between upper Swaledale and Kirkby Stephen (Cumbria), or between upper Arkengarthdale and Barnard Castle (County Durham), or between lower Swaledale/lower Arkengarthdale and Leyburn has devised this</p>

		<p>plan. Not only are all these roads frequently impassible in bad weather, but the notion of pulling young children out of their core community by sending them to three different schools in three different counties based on journey differentials of just a few miles seems incommensurate with the amount of disruption and distress it could cause.</p> <p>Arkengarthdale Parish Council would like to emphasise the sentiment expressed by many in the local community which is that anyone living in these two dales would not consider this plan to be a sensible or practical proposition as it increases the risk levels in terms of road safety, school attendance and personal well-being. We strongly oppose the proposed changes, and request that the option to continue with existing arrangements is given serious consideration.</p> <p>We would be grateful for clarification on the justification for proposing these changes. If this is financially motivated, we would be grateful if you could share the calculations with us that relate to the options for the current and proposed school bus services specifically for Arkengarthdale, so that we can see for example, how the additional costs relating to increased winter maintenance on the proposed 'Priority Two' bus routes (The Stang and Leyburn moor road) and the increased cost of sending at least twice as many vehicles and drivers to Arkengarthdale make the proposed changes financially feasible.</p> <p>We look forward to hearing from you, Arkengarthdale Parish Council</p>
04/04/24	Rishi Sunak	<p>We, Reeth, Fremington and Healaugh Parish Council, are contacting you with regard to the proposed changes in school transport policy, since we have found the online consultation to be impractical for a parish council. We object to the proposed changes and outline our concerns below.</p> <p>We have also written to NYC to Cllr Wilkinson as we would like our concerns to count as our submission to the consultation.</p> <p>We have been unable to complete the online survey as it has been designed for individual respondents (parents/pupils), rather than groups/committees who need to be able to view the entire survey (rather than one question at a time) in order to reach an agreed response in a time-efficient manner. Neither the technical format nor the question format of the survey makes it easy for a parish council to complete.</p> <p>Our first concern is the timing of the public consultation meeting: Holding it on a lunchtime in the middle of a working week was not convenient for many people, and indeed several parents have indicated that it was impossible for them to attend this meeting owing to work commitments.</p> <p>Our second concern is the lack of clarity in the justification for awarding a contract to a national taxi firm (24x7 Ltd) apparently based in Essex, operating from Ripon. This firm will send buses and drivers from Ripon to transport pupils from Arkengarthdale and Swaledale to Wensleydale, although a local bus operator already exists in Reeth. With no local knowledge of the communities, outlying properties and the local road conditions under certain weather conditions, we are unconvinced that this proposed new arrangement can (a) make financial sense, (b) be</p>

		<p>environmentally sustainable and, most importantly, (c) be in the best interests of pupil safety.</p> <p>Our third concern is the effect that the proposed changes could have on the interests and well-being of local school pupils. The populations of Arkengarthdale and Swaledale feed the primary school at Reeth, which is geographically and socially the 'centre' of a very close-knit, supportive community for children and adults. Both dales are several miles long. The changes to the policy would effectively segregate local children into three zones according to the geographic distances they live from the nearest school. We can only surmise that someone with no local experience of the dynamic of the upper dales' communities or the character of roads between upper Swaledale and Kirkby Stephen (Cumbria), or between upper Arkengarthdale and Barnard Castle (County Durham), or between lower Swaledale/lower Arkengarthdale and Leyburn has devised this plan. Not only are all these roads frequently impassible in bad weather, but the notion of pulling young children out of their core community by sending them to three different schools in three different counties based on journey differentials of just a few miles seems incommensurate with the amount of disruption and distress it could cause. Reeth, Fremington and Healaugh Parish Council would like to emphasize the sentiment expressed by many in the local community which is that anyone living in these two dales would not consider this plan to be a sensible or practical proposition as it increases the risk levels in terms of road safety, school attendance and personal well-being. We strongly oppose the proposed changes, and request that the option to continue with existing arrangements is given serious consideration.</p> <p>We would be grateful for clarification on the justification for proposing these changes. If this is financially motivated, we would be grateful if you could share the calculations with us that relate to the options for the current and proposed school bus services specifically for Reeth, so that we can see for example, how the additional costs relating to increased winter maintenance on the proposed 'Priority Two' bus routes (Leyburn moor road) and the increased cost of sending at least twice as many vehicles and drivers to Arkengarthdale make the proposed changes financially feasible.</p> <p>We look forward to hearing from you,</p> <p>Best wishes</p> <p>Reeth, Fremington and Healaugh Parish Council</p>
24/04/24	Keir Mather	<p>24 April 2024 Enquiry received from Keir Mather MP</p> <p>Please find attached Keir's response for the Home to School Travel Policy consultation dated 24 April 2024.</p> <p>Please could you kindly ensure this is received by the appropriate team(s) - I understand the consultation closes this week.</p> <p>To whom it may concern,</p> <p>I am writing to you in relation to the proposals for a revised Home to School Travel Policy.</p>

It is my understanding that the consultation on the new policy ends this week. I note that, in the Council's draft proposals consultation, it was noted that the authority would be seeking the views of local Members of Parliament on the changes.

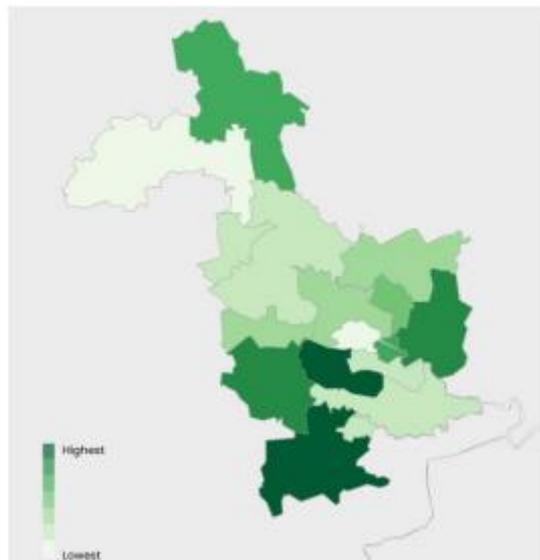
Speaking to constituents across Selby and Ainsty, it has become increasingly apparent that the proposed changes have raised questions and concerns for families who stand to be impacted. I have since carried out a survey, sent to all those who had contacted me on this issue specifically, and also shared via my social media. I intend to share a copy of your anticipated response with those who engaged with the survey - so please do let me know if any of it is to remain confidential.

I understand that lots of families are confused about the impact of the proposed amendments for their locality. 50% of survey respondents were not previously aware of the proposed changes. Families have highlighted to me that they would like further clarity on the policy, specifically in relation to school catchment areas.

Issues have been highlighted around safety for pupils. One respondent said that the policy, as the proposals currently stand, would mean that their child had to take a 48-minute walk to school along a busy highway, with no proper footpath and inadequate street lighting during the darker months.

The Selby area could be impacted disproportionately by the proposed amendment to the main eligibility criterion for free transport to be 'nearest school'. Selby's position on the edge of North Yorkshire means that several of my constituency's communities lie on a tricounty border. For many families in these areas, the 'nearest school' often lies outside the county.

The below map shows the level of response to the survey by ward in my constituency:



I would be grateful if you could outline how the council plans to 'assess travel requirements on the grounds of special educational needs, disability and/or mobility on a case-by-case basis for eligible children'.

SEND parents have expressed their feeling that greater clarity is needed on this and the proposed changes to travel allowances.

As you know, the Selby area also does not have a specialist SEND school. I am pleased that the application for the much-needed new special school for the area is progressing through the planning process. Given that the implementation date is before the new school is set to open, many of the parents who have responded to my survey have understandably expressed concern that choice of provision for children with SEND may now be reduced even further by the proposed changes.

Please could you outline whether any specific steps will be taken to mitigate the impact of the changes on the Selby area, taking into account the aforementioned lack of SEND provision and the cross-border challenges?

Many parents are understandably worried about the financial impact of this policy change. Families tell me they are struggling with the rising cost of living, and whilst I'm conscious of the need to manage expenditure, I would be grateful if you could outline if any further support will be made available to families. I understand that the 'statutory provision for lowincome families' remains unaffected, however I recognise not all families who will struggle with transport costs will be eligible for this provision. I would welcome any further support you might be able to introduce to mitigate financial worries for families in the Selby area.

I am grateful to you for taking the views of my constituents into consideration. It is very important to me that those impacted by changes have the opportunity to voice their concerns. I would be more than happy to discuss any of the above, or any of the details of my survey in greater detail at a mutually convenient time.

Thank you for your anticipated response.
With best wishes,
Keir Mather MP
Member of Parliament for Selby and Ainsty

Appendix D3

Date	From	Message
21/2/24	Kirk Hammerton	<p>Received from Kirk Hammerton Parish Council</p> <p><u>NYC CONSULTATION ON FREE SCHOOL TRANSPORT ENTITLEMENT – KHPC RESPONSE</u></p> <p>This is Kirk Hammerton Parish Council’s response to North Yorkshire Council’s consultation document proposing a revised policy for Home to School Transport.</p> <p>Our response focuses on the main proposed policy change, as described in Part 2C of the explanatory document –“<i>Amendment to the main eligibility criterion to be “nearest school (with places available)”</i>”</p> <p><u>Background</u></p> <p>We are responding to the consultation not only with regard to how it will affect current secondary school age pupils who live in our Parish, but also having in mind the “Maltkiln” new housing development which NYC proposes to deliver on land close to our village, some of which is within our parish boundary.</p> <p>NYC’s Planning Department has recently published a Development Plan Document for Maltkiln. There is to be no secondary school in the new settlement. Pupils will be expected to travel each day to Boroughbridge High School, which is to be upgraded using a capital contribution from the Maltkiln developer. We assume this means that BBHS will be the sole “catchment” school for pupils living in Maltkiln, just as it is at present for pupils who live in Kirk Hammerton.</p> <p>In the case of Maltkiln and KH, the nearest school geographically in North Yorkshire is King James, Knaresborough. That school is also the easiest for pupils to travel to using public transport, because of the train service linking Knaresborough with Cattal and Hammerton stations.</p> <p>King James is not, however, a catchment school. Pupils living in KH (and presumably also Maltkiln) can apply for a place at King James, but pupils who live in the King James catchment area are given priority. There are sometimes places available at that school, but availability tends to be limited. Depending on demographic changes, whether the school is full, or whether some places are available, can vary from one year to the next.</p> <p>It is arguable that schools in Wetherby and Acomb, in York, may be marginally closer to Kirk Hammerton than either KJ or BBHS. Children do not attend those schools, because they are in a different education authority area. We are assuming that the new policy would not be applied in a way that denies free travel to KH residents because schools like these are slightly closer.</p> <p><u>Commentary</u></p> <p>The vast majority of our children go to BBHS, because it’s their catchment school. All children attending the catchment school should be given free transport.</p> <p>If child A reaches year 7 in 2025 and chooses to attend BBHS, in a year when there happen to be places also available in KJ, it is unfair to require child A’s parents to have to pay for transport, simply because child A had the misfortune to reach year 7 age in a year when</p>

another school, which they never wanted to go to anyway and is not their catchment school, happens to have places available.

If child B, one year younger, elects to go to BBHS in 2026, on reaching year 7 age, and in 2026 there happen to be no places available at KJ, does this mean child B gets free transport to Boroughbridge when child A has to pay for transport for the whole of their time at school? It's obvious that this is unfair. Entitlement to free transport becomes a lottery.

When child B reaches year 8, if it then turns out that KJ suddenly has a place available in year 8 (maybe a family happened to relocate, so their child no longer goes to KJ) does that mean child B suddenly has to start paying for transport?

The effect of the new policy will be that more parents just drive their children to BBHS, rather than pay for the bus. The inevitable increase in car usage is contrary to NYC's other policies on protecting the environment (and, indeed, directly contradicts its policies for Maltkiln).

Given that all the secondary school age children from Maltkiln will be expected to attend BBHS, this situation will affect large numbers of children. In our responses to consultations relating to Maltkiln, we have highlighted the need for a new secondary school in Maltkiln itself, rather than requiring large numbers of pupils to travel to BBHS. If NYC is worried about the costs of free school transport, why don't you just follow our suggestion and ensure schools are located where the majority of the children live? Please can the Education and Planning Departments speak to each other?

Once a parent has found a place for their child at a school, it's unlikely they will move the child to another school without good reason. "Good reason" will not include whether the second school happens to have places available that year and so might suddenly become the school to which free transport will be provided.

This change of policy won't save NYC any money in our area. Going back to the example above, NYC will have to pay for a bus to transport child B to BBHS, because child B is entitled to free transport. The bus will therefore be running every day, with all the attendant costs, so it's hard to see how the new policy will produce any cost savings for NYC.

In these circumstances, why can't child A be allowed on the bus too, without having to pay? How will denying child A this right save NYC any money?

If in a given year, there are 2 places available to non-catchment area pupils at KJ, and there are 50 children from Kirk Hammerton who go to BBHS instead, does that mean all 50 have to pay for transport? It makes no sense. Only two of the 50 could ever have gone to the other school.

Conclusion

It doesn't take long to think of scenarios where the new policy would create obvious unfairness. We have illustrated why it makes no sense in an area like Kirk Hammerton and Maltkiln. This surely can't be the only example in the whole of North Yorkshire.

		<p>The policy won't save any money, because in most cases buses will have to run anyway and NYC will have to pay for them.</p> <p>The complexities of deciding who qualifies for free transport and who doesn't are described above. Making the decision has the potential to absorb large amounts of management time and distract officials from other duties. The hidden costs should be factored into any calculation of what, if any, savings will be made.</p> <p>NYC Education Department designates a catchment school for children in our village. If it wants to simplify its free travel policy, why doesn't it just give free travel to the catchment school and nowhere else? If parents choose to have their children apply to a different school, they are free to make that choice, but they then become responsible for transport. Wouldn't that be fairer?</p> <p>Kirk Hammerton Parish Council</p> <p>February 2024</p>
28/2/24	Whixley Parish Council	Received from Whixley Parish Council

		<p style="text-align: center;"><u>NYC CONSULTATION ON FREE SCHOOL TRANSPORT ENTITLEMENT – WPC RESPONSE</u></p> <p>This is Whixley Parish Council's (WPC) response to North Yorkshire Council's consultation document proposing a revised policy for Home to School Transport.</p> <p>Our response focuses on the main proposed policy change, as described in Part 2C of the explanatory document – "<i>Amendment to the main eligibility criterion to be "nearest school (with places available)"</i>"</p> <p><u>Background</u></p> <p>We are responding to the consultation not only with regard to how it will affect current secondary school age pupils who live in our Parish, but also having in mind the "Maltkiln" new housing development which NYC proposes to deliver on land close to our village, some of which is within our parish boundary.</p> <p>NYC's Planning Department has recently published a Development Plan Document for Maltkiln. There is to be no secondary school in the new settlement. Pupils will be expected to travel each day to Boroughbridge High School (BHS), which is to be upgraded using contributions from the Maltkiln developer. We assume this means that BHS will be the sole "catchment" school for pupils living in Maltkiln, just as it is for pupils at present who live in Whixley.</p> <p>In the case of Maltkiln and Whixley, the nearest school geographically in North Yorkshire is King James, Knaresborough. That school is also the easiest for pupils to travel to using public transport, because of the train service linking Knaresborough with Cattal stations.</p> <p>King James is not, however, a catchment school. Pupils living in Whixley (and presumably also Maltkiln) can apply for a place at King James, but pupils who live in the King James catchment area are given priority. There are sometimes places available at that school, but availability tends to be limited. Depending on demographic changes, whether the school is full, or whether some places are available, can vary from one year to the next.</p> <p>The vast majority of our children go to BHS, because it's their catchment school. All children attending the catchment school should be given free transport.</p> <p>Is the proposal to ditch the longstanding practise of having catchment schools for which free travel is provided if justified and replace it with free transport only to the closest school.</p> <p>If this is the case a child in Whixley going to their catchment school of BHS either because they wanted to or couldn't get a place at King James wouldn't then get free transport. That's simply not fair and we would strongly urge NYC to drop this policy.</p> <p>The effect of the new policy will therefore be that more parents just drive their children to BHS, rather than pay for the bus, which is contrary to many of NYC's other policies.</p> <p>Given that all the secondary school age children from Maltkiln will be expected to attend BHS, this situation will affect large numbers of children. The need for a new secondary school in Maltkiln has been highlighted on many occasions. This makes more sense than requiring large numbers of pupils to travel to BHS. If NYC is worried about the costs of free</p>
29/4/24	Ingleton Parish Council	<p>The following was received from Ingleton Parish Council after the consultation period but has been included for consideration.</p> <p>On behalf of Ingleton Parish Council I would like to raise the following issues following our attendance at the extremely well attended public consultation meeting held at Ingleton Community Centre:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. We live in an area which is extremely close to the NYC boundary with Lancashire and indeed Cumbria CC, therefore the cross County relationships with schools is of significant importance and indeed relevance as far as your new policy is concerned due to the fact that Queen Elizabeth School at Kirkby Lonsdale enters the equation for secondary education. Have adjoining education authorities been

		<p>consulted? Are they now going to adopt this strategy? We believe, for our area, this is extremely relevant and important.</p> <p>2. The option of educating secondary age children from our area in North Yorkshire appears to be under threat. How can that be justified in terms of the future viability of Settle College. It is ironic that, in the past, parents have been refused the option of free transport to Queen Elizabeth School at Kirkby Lonsdale due to it being under the jurisdiction of a different education authority, If this new policy is implemented the only option, providing there are places available, is Queen Elizabeth School. This represents a total turnaround in our area.</p> <p>3. Ingleton Primary School is, as we understand, almost up to capacity in terms of numbers. Could this new policy increase numbers? Have any plans to provide an extra classroom at Ingleton Primary to provide extra pupil accommodation? As an aside plans for additional housing in Ingleton could further exacerbate the situation.</p> <p>Kind Regards</p> <p>Ingleton Parish Council Clerk</p> <p>Email : ingletonclerk1@hotmail.com</p> <p><i>Redacted Information</i></p>
22/3/24	Arkengarthdale Parish Council	<p>Received from Arkengarthdale Parish Council</p> <p>[Redacted information] Dear Cllr Wilkinson and Cllr Carlton</p> <p>Cllr Yvonne Peacock suggested that we, Arkengarthdale Parish Council, contact you with regards to the proposed changes in school transport policy, since we have found the online consultation to be impractical for a parish council. We object to the proposed changes and outline our concerns below.</p> <p>We would like this email to count as our submission to the consultation, which we have been unable to complete online as the survey has been designed for individual respondents (parents/pupils), rather than groups/committees who need to be able to view the entire survey (rather than one question at a time) in order to reach an agreed response in a time-efficient manner. Neither the technical format nor the question format of the survey makes it easy for a parish council to complete.</p> <p>Our first concern is the timing of the public consultation meeting: Holding it on a lunchtime in the middle of a working week was not convenient for many people, and indeed several parents have indicated that it was impossible for them to attend this meeting owing to work commitments. Our second concern is the lack of clarity in the justification for awarding a contract to a national taxi firm (24x7 Ltd) apparently based in Essex, operating from Ripon. This firm will send buses and drivers from Ripon to transport pupils from Arkengarthdale and Swaledale to Wensleydale, although a local bus operator already exists in Reeth. With no local</p>

		<p>knowledge of the communities, outlying properties and the local road conditions under certain weather conditions, we are unconvinced that this proposed new arrangement can (a) make financial sense, (b) be environmentally sustainable and, most importantly, (c) be in the best interests of pupil safety.</p> <p>Our third concern is the effect that the proposed changes could have on the interests and well-being of local school pupils. The populations of Arkengarthdale and Swaledale feed the primary school at Reeth, which is geographically and socially the 'centre' of a very close-knit, supportive community for children and adults. Both dales are several miles long. The changes to the policy would effectively segregate local children into three zones according to the geographic distances they live from the nearest school. We can only summarise that someone with no local experience of the dynamic of the upper dales' communities or the character of roads between upper Swaledale and Kirkby Stephen (Cumbria), or between upper Arkengarthdale and Barnard Castle (County Durham), or between lower Swaledale/lower Arkengarthdale and Leyburn has devised this plan. Not only are all these roads frequently impassible in bad weather, but the notion of pulling young children out of their core community by sending them to three different schools in three different counties based on journey differentials of just a few miles seems incommensurate with the amount of disruption and distress it could cause. Arkengarthdale Parish Council would like to emphasise the sentiment expressed by many in the local community which is that anyone living in these two dales would not consider this plan to be a sensible or practical proposition as it increases the risk levels in terms of road safety, school attendance and personal well-being. We strongly oppose the proposed changes, and request that the option to continue with existing arrangements is given serious consideration.</p> <p>We would be grateful for clarification on the justification for proposing these changes. If this is financially motivated, we would be grateful if you could share the calculations with us that relate to the options for the current and proposed school bus services <u>specifically for Arkengarthdale</u>, so that we can see for example, how the additional costs relating to increased winter maintenance on the proposed 'Priority Two' bus routes (The Stang and Leyburn moor road) and the increased cost of sending at least twice as many vehicles and drivers to Arkengarthdale make the proposed changes financially feasible.</p> <p>We look forward to hearing from you, Best wishes Arkengarthdale Parish Council</p> <p>Redacted Information</p>
21/2/24	Reeth Parish Council Clerk	<p>Is this for sharing on social media, or are you corresponding with parents etc separately?</p> <p>Sorry to play devil's advocate, but is one of the reasons that the percentages are so low for council school bus services is the bus route doesn't go to the right places? I find it strange that parents would miss out on a freebie when it would make it easier for them to get to work. Sorry just curious not criticising.</p>

		Thanks
20/2/24	Clerk to Hellifield Parish Council	This consultation is directed at Parish and Town Councils. Is there any intention to include the public in any such consultation? Or to provide any information that can be cascaded to the public for input to their Council?
20/2/24	Clerk to Sinnington Parish Council	Hi This consultation could go on the agenda or councillors could respond as individuals if they wish.
28/2/24	Clerk to Kirk Hammerton Parish Council	I have a written response from Kirk Hammerton PC regarding the above consultation. I can't answer your on line survey as I am trying to just submit the response. Please can you forward to the correct department as a pdf document?
28/2/24	Clerk to Whixley Parish Council	Morning - me again. Can I submit Whixley PC's responses in pdf form regarding the above consultations as per KHPC? Thanks NYC CONSULTATION ON FREE SCHOOL TRANSPORT ENTITLEMENT – WPC RESPONSE This is Whixley Parish Council's (WPC) response to North Yorkshire Council's consultation document proposing a revised policy for Home to School Transport. Our response focuses on the main proposed policy change, as described in Part 2C of the explanatory document – " Amendment to the main eligibility criterion to be "nearest school (with places available)" " Background We are responding to the consultation not only with regard to how it will affect current secondary school age pupils who live in our Parish, but also having in mind the "Maltkiln" new housing development which NYC proposes to deliver on land close to our village, some of which is within our parish boundary. NYC's Planning Department has recently published a Development Plan Document for Maltkiln. There is to be no secondary school in the new settlement. Pupils will be expected to travel each day to Boroughbridge High School (BHS), which is to be upgraded using contributions from the Maltkiln developer. We assume this means that BHS will be the sole "catchment" school for pupils living in Maltkiln, just as it is for pupils at present who live in Whixley. In the case of Maltkiln and Whixley, the nearest school geographically in North Yorkshire is King James, Knaresborough. That school is also the easiest for pupils to travel to using public transport, because of the train service linking Knaresborough with Calal stations.

		<p>King James is not, however, a catchment school. Pupils living in Whixley (and presumably also Maltkiln) can apply for a place at King James, but pupils who live in the King James catchment area are given priority. There are sometimes places available at that school, but availability tends to be limited. Depending on demographic changes, whether the school is full, or whether some places are available, can vary from one year to the next.</p> <p>The vast majority of our children go to BHS, because it's their catchment school. All children attending the catchment school should be given free transport.</p> <p>Is the proposal to ditch the longstanding practice of having catchment schools for which free travel is provided if justified and replace it with free transport only to the closest school.</p> <p>If this is the case a child in Whixley going to their catchment school of BHS either because they wanted to or couldn't get a place at King James wouldn't then get free transport.</p> <p>That's simply not fair and we would strongly urge NYC to drop this policy. The effect of the new policy will therefore be that more parents just drive their children to BHS, rather than pay for the bus, which is contrary to many of NYC's other policies.</p> <p>Given that all the secondary school age children from Maltkiln will be expected to attend BHS, this situation will affect large numbers of children. The need for a new secondary school in Maltkiln has been highlighted on many occasions. This makes more sense than requiring large numbers of pupils to travel to BHS. If NYC is worried about the costs of free school transport, why don't you just ensure schools are located where the majority of the children live? Please can the Education and Planning Departments speak to each other?</p> <p>We would urge NYC to consider this policy in the context of all its other priorities and if the outcome will be to remove the right to free transport to an areas designated catchment school to drop it all together.</p>
6/3/24	Town Clerk, Settle Town Council	<p>Good morning,</p> <p>At the Council meeting held on the 4th March the Council resolved that there were unable to respond to the questionnaire at this moment in time – however they look forward to receiving details on the outcome of the consultation.</p> <p>Best wishes</p>
12/3/24	Clerk to Eppleby Parish Council	<p>Dear H2S,</p> <p>The Parish Council have asked that I contact you as they would clarify regarding the meeting at Richmond Town Hall on Thursday 14th March, who is this meeting intended for? is it parents, Parish Councillors etc?</p> <p>Kind regards</p>

13/03/24	Clerk to Cononley Parish Council	<p>Good morning</p> <p>Cononley Parish Council considered the review at their meeting on 12/03/24. The online form is aimed at individuals rather than a Parish Council however they wish to make the following comment.</p> <p>The new proposals should apply to the nearest non-selective school rather than just the nearest school. This is due to some students living closer to a selective school but attending the nearest non-selective school.</p>
14/03/24	Clerk to Buckden Parish Council	<p>Please find attached a letter from Richard Ingram, Chair of Buckden Parish Council regarding the current consultation on the changes to the Council's Home to School Travel Policy.</p> <p>(Redacted Information)</p> <p style="text-align: right;">14/03/2024</p> <p>Dear Ms. Newbold</p> <p>Ref: Consultation – Home to School Transport</p> <p>We have reviewed the consultation documentation relating to the changes to Home to School Transport policy and have submitted a response via the online questionnaire.</p> <p>However, we felt it was necessary to draw your attention personally to our very real concerns about the amendment to the main eligibility criterion to: 'nearest school (with places available)'. We appreciate that this is to match the statutory requirement, however, given the potential specific implications for our parish, we believe what is proposed is both impractical and unreasonable. This relates to the specific topography of this part of the Dales.</p> <p>Specifically, there are three hamlets within the parish of Buckden – Oughtershaw, Greenfield and Beckermonds - where children have always gone to Kettlewell School, even though Hawes school is marginally closer – in distance, if not in time. This is because the single-track road over Fleet Moss which stands between these locations and Hawes rises to a height of some 1900 feet; it is the highest road in Yorkshire and is the 13th highest in the UK. It is a single-track road, is frequently blocked by snow and even when not blocked can be dangerously icy as the gritters often can't get up the 1 in 4 gradient section. The parish council strongly believe it is not acceptable for NYC to put our children in danger by requiring them to travel to school on such a road; a secondary consideration is that it would inevitably have a negative impact on their attendance record in winter.</p> <p>We propose that a better way of amending the policy to meet the regulations would be to define a specific catchment area for each school based on the "nearest school" criterion but adjusted to take into account such special factors as roads which are completely unsuitable for school transport.</p> <p>We trust that you will give our proposal serious consideration in your consultation process.</p> <p>Yours sincerely,</p> <p>Richard Ingram Chair Buckden Parish Council</p>
19/03/23	Clerk to Askrigg and Low Abbotside Parish Council	<p>Please find attached letter which I have been asked to send regarding the above. I have also forwarded a copy to Cllr. A Wilkinson</p> <p>Kind regards</p>

ASKRIGG & LOW ABBOTSDALE PARISH COUNCIL

Redacted Information

19th March 2024

Home to school travel policy - consultation

I have been asked to write to you regarding the above. This consultation was discussed at our last Parish Council meeting where those in attendance had concerns over the proposals.

We feel that this proposal has not been fully thought through in terms of the impact it will have on those living in deeply rural areas. Additionally, any plans for cost savings in these areas will probably not result in saving any money in our opinion.

On behalf of the Chairman, Askrigg & Low Abbotsdale Parish Council

c.c. Mr Stuart Carleton
Cllr. Annabel Wilson

21/3/24

Clerk to
Arkengarth
Parish Council

Cllr Yvonne Peacock suggested that we, Arkengarthdale Parish Council, contact you with regards to the proposed changes in school transport policy, since we have found the online consultation to be impractical for a parish council. We object to the proposed changes and outline our concerns below.

		<p>We would like this email to count as our submission to the consultation, which we have been unable to complete online as the survey has been designed for individual respondents (parents/pupils), rather than groups/committees who need to be able to view the entire survey (rather than one question at a time) in order to reach an agreed response in a time-efficient manner. Neither the technical format nor the question format of the survey makes it easy for a parish council to complete.</p> <p>Our first concern is the timing of the public consultation meeting: Holding it on a lunchtime in the middle of a working week was not convenient for many people, and indeed several parents have indicated that it was impossible for them to attend this meeting owing to work commitments.</p> <p>Our second concern is the lack of clarity in the justification for awarding a contract to a national taxi firm (24x7 Ltd) apparently based in Essex, operating from Ripon. This firm will send buses and drivers from Ripon to transport pupils from Arkengarthdale and Swaledale to Wensleydale, although a local bus operator already exists in Reeth. With no local knowledge of the communities, outlying properties and the local road conditions under certain weather conditions, we are unconvinced that this proposed new arrangement can (a) make financial sense, (b) be environmentally sustainable and, most importantly, (c) be in the best interests of pupil safety.</p> <p>Our third concern is the effect that the proposed changes could have on the interests and well-being of local school pupils. The populations of Arkengarthdale and Swaledale feed the primary school at Reeth, which is geographically and socially the 'centre' of a very close-knit, supportive community for children and adults. Both dales are several miles long. The changes to the policy would effectively segregate local children into three zones according to the geographic distances they live from the nearest school. We can only surmise that someone with no local experience of the dynamic of the upper dales' communities or the character of roads between upper Swaledale and Kirkby Stephen (Cumbria), or between upper Arkengarthdale and Barnard Castle (County Durham), or between lower Swaledale/lower Arkengarthdale and Leyburn has devised this plan. Not only are all these roads frequently impassible in bad weather, but the notion of pulling young children out of their core community by sending them to three different schools in three different counties based on journey differentials of just a few miles seems incommensurate with the amount of disruption and distress it could cause. Arkengarthdale Parish Council would like to emphasise the sentiment expressed by many in the local community which is that anyone living in these two dales would not consider this plan to be a sensible or practical proposition as it increases the risk levels in terms of road safety,</p>
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		<p>school attendance and personal well-being. We strongly oppose the proposed changes, and request that the option to continue with existing arrangements is given serious consideration.</p> <p>We would be grateful for clarification on the justification for proposing these changes. If this is financially motivated, we would be grateful if you could share the calculations with us that relate to the options for the current and proposed school bus services <u>specifically for Arkengarthdale</u>, so that we can see for example, how the additional costs relating to increased winter maintenance on the proposed 'Priority Two' bus routes (The Stang and Leyburn moor road) and the increased cost of sending at least twice as many vehicles and drivers to Arkengarthdale make the proposed changes financially feasible.</p> <p>We look forward to hearing from you,</p> <p>Best wishes</p> <p>Arkengarthdale Parish Council</p>
	Clerk to Tockwith Parish Council	<p>Hi,</p> <p>I would like the Councillors at Tockwith with Wilstrop to look at this survey as a group, however the questions can only be accessed when you've answered the previous question.</p> <p>Do you have the questions in word or pdf format that you can send to me so that I can circulate them?</p>
28/03/24	Clerk to Reeth, Fremington and Healaugh Parish Council	<p>We, Reeth, Fremington and Healaugh Parish Council, are contacting you with regard to the proposed changes in school transport policy, since we have found the online consultation to be impractical for a parish council. We object to the proposed changes and outline our concerns below. We have also written to NYC to Cllr Wilkinson as we would like our concerns to count as our submission to the consultation. We have been unable to complete the online survey as it has been designed for individual respondents (parents/pupils), rather than groups/committees who need to be able to view the entire survey (rather than one question at a time) in order to reach an agreed response in a time-efficient manner. Neither the technical format nor the question format of the survey makes it easy for a parish council to complete.</p> <p>Our first concern is the timing of the public consultation meeting: Holding it on a lunchtime in the middle of a working week was not convenient for many people, and indeed several parents have indicated that it was impossible for them to attend this meeting owing to work commitments.</p> <p>Our second concern is the lack of clarity in the justification for awarding a contract to a national taxi firm (24x7 Ltd) apparently based in Essex, operating from Ripon. This firm will send buses and drivers from Ripon to transport pupils from Arkengarthdale and Swaledale to Wensleydale, although a local bus operator already exists in Reeth. With no local</p>

		<p>knowledge of the communities, outlying properties and the local road conditions under certain weather conditions, we are unconvinced that this proposed new arrangement can (a) make financial sense, (b) be environmentally sustainable and, most importantly, (c) be in the best interests of pupil safety.</p> <p>Our third concern is the effect that the proposed changes could have on the interests and well-being of local school pupils. The populations of Arkengarthdale and Swaledale feed the primary school at Reeth, which is geographically and socially the 'centre' of a very close-knit, supportive community for children and adults. Both dales are several miles long. The changes to the policy would effectively segregate local children into three zones according to the geographic distances they live from the nearest school. We can only surmise that someone with no local experience of the dynamic of the upper dales' communities or the character of roads between upper Swaledale and Kirkby Stephen (Cumbria), or between upper Arkengarthdale and Barnard Castle (County Durham), or between lower Swaledale/lower Arkengarthdale and Leyburn has devised this plan. Not only are all these roads frequently impassible in bad weather, but the notion of pulling young children out of their core community by sending them to three different schools in three different counties based on journey differentials of just a few miles seems incommensurate with the amount of disruption and distress it could cause. Reeth, Fremington and Healaugh Parish Council would like to emphasize the sentiment expressed by many in the local community which is that anyone living in these two dales would not consider this plan to be a sensible or practical proposition as it increases the risk levels in terms of road safety, school attendance and personal well-being. We strongly oppose the proposed changes, and request that the option to continue with existing arrangements is given serious consideration.</p> <p>We would be grateful for clarification on the justification for proposing these changes. If this is financially motivated, we would be grateful if you could share the calculations with us that relate to the options for the current and proposed school bus services <u>specifically for Reeth</u>, so that we can see for example, how the additional costs relating to increased winter maintenance on the proposed 'Priority Two' bus routes (Leyburn moor road) and the increased cost of sending at least twice as many vehicles and drivers to Arkengarthdale make the proposed changes financially feasible.</p> <p>We look forward to hearing from you, Best wishes Reeth, Fremington and Healaugh Parish Council</p>
2/04/24	Clerk to Tockwith with Wilstrop Parish Council	<p>Received from Tockwith with Wilstrop Parish Council</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Tockwith with Wilstrop Parish Council Feedback from residents regarding the H2S Travel Consultation 2.04.24</p> <p>Many thanks for sending this. We had a couple of concerned residents attend the March PC meeting on 25th March and they would like to seek clarification on the below:</p>

		<p>1) Confirmation that there will no longer be a choice of schools if pupils want to receive H2S transport.</p> <p>2) There will no longer be catchment schools as such. Everything will be based on the nearest suitable school.</p> <p>3) “Nearest suitable school” will be regarded as the nearest school to a home address regardless of whether it is in a different Local Authority (this would be Wetherby for Cowthorpe/Tockwith)</p> <p>4) Will free transport be provided to the nearest school even if it is not in the North Yorkshire LA and will this apply to existing pupils at that school (say, Wetherby).</p> <p>5) Whether free transport will continue to be provided if a child is already attending the non-nearest secondary school</p> <p>6) If a child is in the final year of primary and has already been allocated a place at a non-nearest secondary, will they still qualify for free transport</p> <p>7) If a child already has a sibling at a non-nearest secondary school, will they also qualify for free transport to avoid children from having to attend two different schools</p> <p>8) Will a bus still go from Tockwith/Cowthorpe to KJS if there are eligible students eg on an EHC plan? And if so, can the child still use the bus on a paid basis</p> <p>9) If due to the changes, most children from each year at Tockwith decide to go to Wetherby High and there are not enough places for one year, will they then get free travel to KJS (or the 2nd school on the mileage list) for the duration of their time there?</p> <p>The Parish Council is not due to meet now until 22nd April. We’d like to consider the survey at the 22nd April meeting once we’ve received clarification on the above. Could we be offered an extension until 23rd April to send our responses?</p> <p>Can you confirm that if implemented, only the Knaresborough bus would be eligible for free school travel? If I am reading it correctly, it will effectively take away the choice of secondary schools for young people in Tockwith and Long Marston, as it states free school travel will only be available for the nearest school. Historically the villages have attended both Tadcaster and Knaresborough schools, with the second only 1.5 miles closer than the first. If free travel is removed for future pupils wishing to attend Tadcaster, a significant proportion of children moving up to secondary each year will not be able to attend their school of</p>
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		<p>choice. Being able to choose a school where they feel comfortable, where the environment and approach meets their needs, is critical to young peoples' mental health and enabling them to achieve their academic potential. As the Tadcaster bus also serves villages which are closer to the school on its current route, it will still need to be paid for by NYCC under the new strategy, but the subsidy will be removed from our children. So the savings will be non-existent or minimal, compared to a huge impact on pupil mental health and pupil choice. Is my reading of the policy correct, that for Tockwith there would only be free places on the Knaresborough bus for future cohorts? Please will you represent the needs of children and young people in the village if so, and oppose it? Thanks in advance for any advice, reassurance or support you can offer on this proposal.</p>
<p>8/4/24</p>	<p>Clerk to Muker Parish Council</p>	<p>Good Afternoon.</p> <p>Please find attached a report/letter from Muker parish Council with an Executive Summary concerning the proposal. Please circulate to the appropriate parties concerned with the proposal.</p> <p>Are you able to confirm that the Executive meeting will take place at 11am Monday 10th June 2024 at Scarborough? If so, we ask that you reconsider the venue for us this is a 100 mile 2hr 30 minute journey.</p> <p>Clerk Muker Parish Council.</p> <p>NYC School Proposals: Executive Summary from Muker Parish Council (MPC)</p> <p>Upper Swaledale has unique geography, topography and meteorology. The nearest school proposal compared to the current catchment area does not suit our uniqueness. MPC believes that NYC should retain its discretionary powers continuing with catchment area for Upper Swaledale.</p> <p>The consultation has been poor not reaching parents of children. The inconvenient meetings to parents have all been held outside Upper Swaledale! MPC has not been informed. The on-line survey is too restrictive. MPC could have assisted with communication and consultation. The DofE guidance 2024, at paragraph125 has not been followed. Communication has been disjointed and ineffective in reaching parents.</p> <p>The proposal to move children to Kirkby Stephen, Barnard Castle and Leyburn have one common dangerous feature. All involve transporting children over high moor, ungritted, ostensibly single-track roads. Diversion onto gritted roads in our case would involve a 60-mile detour impacting on education.</p> <p>The road to Kirkby Stephen is unsuitable and dangerous in Winter. It is not ideal at any time, poorly maintained with limited passing places. We consider the road a danger to childrens safety and well-being. Who will manage and monitor the extremes in weather deciding when children can and cannot travel to school or home? DofE paragraph 86 concerning Health and safety Law and risk assessment. MPC and parents wish to know how these risks will be permanently eliminated? Also relevant is NYC Draft for consultation February 2024, Section C</p>

,Suitability of Travel arrangements. 13, Considering the child's Needs. These **MUST** all be addressed individually.

The impact on families and children is unacceptable, causing anxiety having siblings attending different schools. And children from Reeth being moved to 3 different schools is damaging to their social interaction and well-being.

Financially we do not see how this is cost effective adding three new routes and continuing routes to Richmond transporting initially 12 children for four years will cost more than it does currently. From 2025 until 2035 a total of 27 children would be required to attend Kirkby Stephen. We have seen no costings to show this will save money in Upper Swaledale. These proposals are not considered environmentally friendly.

Richmond schools have been successfully used by Upper Swaledale children for over 70 years. The safest route to school for children.

The DofE Travel to School Guidance January 2024, Is **guidance**, it is not mandatory. We implore NYC to retain its discretionary power for Upper Swaledale and retain catchment area, recognising that Upper Swaledale is unique and should be treated as an exception to ensure the safety and well being of all of the children.

Clerk Muker Parish Council

NYC proposal for school placements.

North Yorkshire is the largest County in England and one of the most diverse when considering geography, topography and meteorology, particularly in Upper Swaledale. The North Yorkshire Council's (NYC) proposal to change where senior children attend school from Upper Swaledale based on the nearest school, instead of the current catchment area. Is unacceptable. The concept of moving children to their nearest school is understandable in urban areas where there is a greater choice of easily accessible schools. Muker Parish Council(MPC) recognises that policy change proposals concern removing the discretionary power to move from catchment to the nearest school. It does not agree with this proposal considering it unreasonable.

There are a number of areas which cause concern. Please see below.

Consultation:

The process has been poor and has failed to serve the needs of children and their parents.

The Parish Council has not been informed of this proposal.

Parents of current and future children have not received any correspondence from NYC.

The Consultation Meetings have been held in the wrong locations at the wrong times.

	<p>The Parish Council is aware of one parent who was able to go to one meeting. Richmond, Northallerton and Leyburn are not in Upper Swaledale or convenient to parents of children in Muker Parish.</p> <p>MPC is pleased to note that the closing date for comments has been extended to 26 April 2024, but is disappointed to see that no meetings are planned in Upper Swaledale. At least one of the meetings should have been held in Reeth which is a location central to all parents of Upper Swaledale and Arkengarthdale children. Reeth has a perfectly suitable Village Hall, as does Low Row, Gunnerside, Muker and Keld.</p> <p>Department of Education(DoE) Travel to School Guidance January 2024. Policy changes- Paragraph 125, Local Authorities, 'As a minimum this should include consulting parents whose children will or maybe affected by the proposed changes and those who may be affected in the future. Parent communication has been poor. The NYC, consultation FAQ page refers to Parish Councils being informed. We have not. MPC could have assisted considerably with consultation and communication.</p> <p>The on-line survey is restrictive, it is for parents and carers. There are many people including MPC of Upper Swaledale who have connections to children and local knowledge who cannot comment.</p> <p>Communication:</p> <p>What precisely is the communication strategy for this proposal? So far, it has been poor, in reaching and enabling parents. The use of social media would have been beneficial via the 'Upper Swaledale Community Forum' for example.</p> <p>It seems that some of the schools involved knew nothing of this proposal until they were informed by the parents!</p> <p>There must be full engagement and consultation with the parents at a time and a place convenient to them. All impacted Parish Councils should be informed of the proposal. Then having listened to the concerns of parents, NYC should provide a written response to each one allowing a response back from the parents.</p> <p>Common factors for the 3 proposed schools:</p> <p>There are many logistical problems to overcome for the proposal to move children to Kirkby Stephen, Barnard Castle and Leyburn each one has a common dangerous feature. All involve transporting children over high moor, ungritted, ostensibly single-track roads.</p> <p>The impacts of the winter months are clear and will lead to the disruption of childrens education. For 70 years children have travelled to Richmond for senior education without any issue. The reason is clear the journey to Richmond via the B6270 is the easiest, safest and most reliable route to school at all times of the year.</p>
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Travel to Kirkby Stephen from Upper Swaledale:

The road to Kirkby Stephen is a single track ungritted road over the moor, although a continuation of the B6270 it is equivalent to the unclassified routes to Barnard castle and Leyburn. The B6270 is in poor condition and has not been maintained to a suitable standard. The road is currently collapsing around its edges and shoulders, narrowing the road. This is caused by water erosion, vehicles passing each other and low maintenance.

Into Cumbria, Tail Brigg is a steep hill to negotiate. Cumbria Council do not grit this hill, due to a gritter leaving the road some years ago, they do not consider it safe!

In Winter the variation in weather can be extreme changing suddenly without warning, it can be fine in Kirkby Stephen, but snowing and blowing on the moor road making it dangerous, unsafe and possibly impassable. The same can be said of the routes to Leyburn and Barnard Castle.

It has been suggested that in poor weather, the school bus takes a route via gritted roads. This is likely to be down the B6270 to Richmond, then to Scotch Corner to the A66, if indeed that is open! A bizarre situation where the children could be travelling close to the school they should have gone to in order to get to Kirkby Stephen, a diversion of 60 miles each way, with a daily journey time of at least 3 hours plus. In excess of NYC 75 minutes per journey policy.

Who decides when children can or cannot travel to and from school? Will there be a system in place to monitor the weather on the top of the moor roads? Who can guarantee that children would be able to get home safely during a winter storm?

MPC has grave concerns for the safety of the children traversing this dangerous route in Winter.

DoE Travel to School Guidance January 2024. Para 86 states, 'Health and Safety law requires local authorities to put in place practicable control measures to protect their employees and others **(including the children for whom they arrange travel)** from harm' it continues.

'Identify hazards - things that could cause injury or illness;
assess the risk – how likely is it that someone could be harmed and how seriously; put in place proportionate measures to eliminate the hazard or control the risk;
record their findings;
regularly review and update their risk assessments.'

MPC and Parents would wish to see a risk assessment to see how the dangers are eliminated and comment on the risk assessment.

Financial Considerations:

MPC is not convinced that these proposals have been correctly costed, NYC available data shows Richmondshire as a whole, but it would be useful to see

	<p>what the current Upper Swaledale costs are compared with costs to Kirkby Stephen. For transparency what are the current transport costs compared to future costs?</p> <p>Of course, journeys to Richmond will continue for 4 years, plus we have 3 new additional routes. We consider that the first 4 years will cost more and are not convinced that any of the proposal is cost effective. Environmental impacts of 3 new routes should not be ignored.</p> <p>Children and their safety.</p> <p>In the NYC Draft for consultation February 2024, Section C, Suitability of Travel arrangements. 13, Considering the child’s Needs. ‘The Council will ensure that any travel arrangements will take account of the needs of the children concerned. Any travel arrangements should enable the child to travel in reasonable safety and comfort and without any stress, strain or difficulty, so that wherever possible they arrive at school ready to learn.</p> <p>MPC is of the opinion that the well-being, mental health and safety of the children is paramount and should override any other considerations. The prospect of attending a different school is causing anxiety for some of the children, compounded by travel along a dangerous road.</p> <p>MPC is aware of a family with 2 children already attending Richmond schools and their 2 younger ones would have to go to Kirkby Stephen, thus splitting the family. It is inconceivable that siblings should be separated.</p> <p>School holidays, do North Yorkshire, County Durham and Cumbria have the same holiday periods? If not, this could cause additional problems.</p> <p>Are the subjects and facilities at Kirkby Stephen equivalent to Richmond Schools?</p> <p>The disruption and inevitable anxiety for children is unacceptable. The children of Upper Swaledale have known that for generations that their families have travelled to Richmond for their senior education, and are being treated differently to their forebears, separated from some of their friends. Social interaction will reduce as children are dispersed to different schools. Note: Gunnerside children attend Reeth school socialising and making friends unlikely to see them in school again a result of this proposal. Any confusion and apprehension to children must be avoided. MPC considers that this will be a major impact to children with potential to damage their well-being, mental health and education.</p> <p>The danger caused by Winter weather facing driving sleet, snow, frost and ice on a dangerous exposed road is a major risk to their safety.</p> <p>Within Muker Parish at present a total of 12 senior children are and will be attending Richmond Schools, which will continue for 4 years until they have all left. From September 2025 the number of children requiring senior education if required to school in Kirkby Stephen will begin with 3 this will increase each</p>
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		<p>year and by 2035 a total of 27 children would have to attend Kirkby Stephen, this may change slightly up or down as circumstances change.</p> <p>Family:</p> <p>MPC recognises that in a rare case a family may by choice find the move acceptable, freedom of choice is important.</p> <p>The vast majority of parents would not choose or even consider Kirkby Stephen School because of their knowledge of the dangers along the route in Winters.</p> <p>Impacts for families will increase, they often have to manage work and other commitments around schooling. It is feasible that some may have to cease working or look for alternative employment to accommodate these proposals.</p> <p>Conclusion:</p> <p>There is no evidence of a cost benefit analysis to consider. The consultation process is poor and inadequate, it is not reaching the parents to allow open discussion to raise concerns and grievances.</p> <p>The safety, welfare and well-being of the children appears to be overlooked. The children and their safety are paramount. This proposal is understandably causing children and to a degree parents anxiety about their children’s future education.</p> <p>MPC rejects and opposes this proposal.</p> <p>This NYC proposal does not suit the unique circumstances of Upper Swaledale and there has to be an exception by using the discretion in the previous policy, which may have been correctly applied because of the unique circumstances of Upper Swaledale.</p> <p>Finally, the DofE Travel to School Guidance January 2024, Is <u>guidance</u>, it is not mandatory.</p> <p>Clerk to Muker Parish Council</p>
13/5/24	Clerk to Reeth Parish Council	<p>Hello All,</p> <p>I have just been told of a large bus (50 seater ish) which was full of kids going to Leyburn via Grinton top. Councillor Frankland and another vehicle met it where the old bridge collapsed and had to move off the road to let him pass. Then, when he got to the sharp bend, he had to stop to give three cars coming the opposite direction time to get right off the road before he was able to pass. This happened on Friday at about 3pm and I have the details of the bus company, if someone would like them, to investigate further.</p>

		<p>To think that someone is planning on sending school children this way on a regular basis seems terrifying.</p> <p>I went to the tip on Sunday and had to pull over a couple of times due to cars, so I am really glad I didn't meet a bus.</p>
22/4/24		<p>Please find attached a response from Clapham cum Newby Parish council to the consultation.</p> <p>Unfortunately, we found the online survey did not allow us to express our views and have thus had to write a response.</p> <p>Regards</p> <p><i>Parish Clerk</i> <i>Clapham cum Newby Parish Council</i></p> <p>Redacted Information Amanda Newbold Assistant Director, Education & Skills North Yorkshire Council County Hall Racecourse Lane Northallerton DL7 8AD Dear Ms Newbold, Clapham-cum-Newby Parish Council oppose the proposal to withdraw catchment as an eligibility criterion in the school transport policy for next year's admissions onwards. We do so on the following grounds • The proposal will deny some families to the north of Clapham their choice of school solely on the basis of transport costs should they opt to send their children to Settle College instead of across two county borders to Queen Elizabeth School (QES). Many families have a long history with Settle College and it has been the “in county” secondary school of choice for many. This is important. • The proposal will result in substantial costs for those families who have a family history at Settle College or feel Settle College's smaller size and inclusive ethos makes it the right school for their child. This will be especially tough for low-income families who will pay the price for North Yorkshire's alleged cost savings. • This argument is further compounded by a closer examination of the alleged savings to be made. The difference in distance to the two schools, for many residents of our parish, is negligible. The transport provider has publicly stated that the journey to Kirkby Lonsdale is no quicker than that to Settle. Thus, it is hard to accept such minimal variation as a substantive argument. • Crucially, the effect on SettleCollege will be very significant. The proposed transport policy is likely to result in a net loss of pupils for Settle College. The resultant loss of income would be serious at a time when all school budgets are stretched. The policy would take money out of education spending in North Yorkshire and put it into Cumbria. The ongoing effect of this is that the future of SettleCollege could look much bleaker; loss of income tends to result in larger class sizes, teacher redundancies and challenges in delivering an in-depth, diverse and fully-inclusive curriculum. Thus, the proposed transport policy would not only impact those children whose transport catchment means they have to go to QES, it would also</p>

		<p>negatively impact those students attending Settle College, both now and in the future. • Settle College is the traditional centre for secondary education in North Craven and, in particular, our own Parish. This policy will, in effect, divide our parish and we feel strongly that the proposed policy will serve our families and the education of their children poorly. We understand that finances are tight. The proposed transport policy change will not result in financial savings in many cases and, where it does, it is merely moving costs away from the council and onto families in North Yorkshire who can least afford it. In summary, we oppose the loss of catchment area as a criterion for eligibility for school transport for the reasons set out above and on the basis that Clapham-cum-Newby is affected by being in the Settle College catchment area. We ask that you withdraw the proposal and study other ways to make genuine efficiencies in transport provision rather than just pass the burden to families. We have no comment on the other proposals in the transport consultation. Yours sincerely Steven Culver Parish Clerk Clapham cum Newby Parish Council Cc: Cllr David Ireton Rt Hon. Julian Smith M</p>
28/4/24	Clerk to Ingleton Parish Council	<p>Good Morning</p> <p>On behalf of Ingleton Parish Council I would like to raise the following issues following our attendance at the extremely well attended public consultation meeting held at Ingleton Community Centre:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. We live in an area which is extremely close to the NYC boundary with Lancashire and indeed Cumbria CC, therefore the cross County relationships with schools is of significant importance and indeed relevance as far as your new policy is concerned due to the fact that Queen Elizabeth School at Kirkby Lonsdale enters the equation for secondary education. Have adjoining education authorities been consulted? Are they now going to adopt this strategy? We believe, for our area, this is extremely relevant and important. 2. The option of educating secondary age children from our area in North Yorkshire appears to be under threat. How can that be justified in terms of the future viability of Settle College. It is ironic that, in the past, parents have been refused the option of free transport to Queen Elizabeth School at Kirkby Lonsdale due to it being under the jurisdiction of a different education authority, If this new policy is implemented the only option, providing there are places available, is Queen Elizabeth School. This represents a total turnaround in our area. 3. Ingleton Primary School is, as we understand, almost up to capacity in terms of numbers. Could this new policy increase numbers? Have any plans to provide an extra classroom at Ingleton Primary to provide extra pupil accommodation? As an aside plans for additional housing in Ingleton could further exacerbate the situation. <p>Kind Regards</p>

14/6/24	Hartlington Parish Council	<p>Hartlington Parish Meeting : Junction of B6265 and Hartlington Raikes</p> <p>To Whom It may Concern</p> <p>Following yet another serious accident on the junction of the B6265 and Hartlington Raikes between a motorcycle and a car, which follows two previous fatalities and several serious injuries, we would dearly like you to look again at the safety remedies surrounding this junction. The parish of Hartlington submitted proposal plans in 2019.</p> <p>Thank you</p>
28/6/24	Clerk to Pateley Bridge Town Council	<p>Hello,</p> <p>Here is the statement that Pateley Bridge Town Council wishes to make.</p> <p><i>“The proposed charge for the transport which allows pupils to attend compulsory education is outrageous. People will be forced to make difficult financial choices, particularly poorer families, who will have to make other sacrifices in their lives to afford the transport. A pupil who wishes to go on a particular educational establishment may not be able to do so because their family is not able to afford the transport. This will lead to second rate educational options for that child.</i></p> <p><i>The charge is discriminatory, as people with protected characteristics will be more disadvantaged.”</i></p> <p>At our meeting on Tuesday, we will establish who wishes to attend the executive to make it.</p>

From: Councillors

Date	From	Message
19/02/24	Cllr Duckett	<p>I've had some enquiries about the proposed changes. It's the removal of the catchment school that has them puzzled.</p> <p>At present say for someone in Womesley the catchment secondary school is Brayton, but the nearest school is De Lacey in Knottingley. No one chooses to go to De Lacey so presumably any transport provided would be a taxi. Would they still have the choice of Brayton paying for a permit or have to attend De lacy. I'm using this example as I've had two cases from that area at Transport Appeals .</p>
19/02/24	Cllr Brown	<p>Could I ask for one piece of subtle change to avoid problems. Where there is a selective system as in Skipton can we please make the policy that we will pay for transport to the nearest non selective school. We also need the same subtle change with respect to religious schools</p> <p>We don't want to be in the awkward position of telling a parent we cannot give them any funding because they live next to a Roman Catholic school that won't admit them so they have to travel past it to the nearest comprehensive that will</p>
29/02/24	Cllr Murday	<p>A resident has contacted me regarding the arrangements for their son's transport to and from Nidderdale High School. Up until very recently the taxi provided was based in Ripon. Now the taxi comes all the way from Keighley.</p> <p>She has some concerns about the standard of the drivers of the Keighley-based taxis which is difficult, if not impossible, to substantiate. Of greater concern is the extra mileage involved, which she estimates is almost double. When she contacted NYC, she was told that environmental factors are not part of the decision making process when arranging contracts. But that, of course, is not the case.</p> <p>I would be very grateful if you could let me know the reasons for the change in contracting for the taxi service, or at least direct me to the relevant report and decision.</p>
7/03/24	Cllr Nathan Hull	<p>I am emailing you about some issues in respect of Home to School Transport (which I understand Councillor Andrew Murday has also recently contacted you about).</p> <p>I am aware that NYC transports a number of children within my Division, as well as Councillor Murday's neighbouring Division, to and from school by taxi (presumably because this has been viewed as being more cost effective than laying on a school bus or minibus).</p> <p>However, many parents, myself included, are concerned that the taxis being used to ferry our children around are travelling extremely long distances to pick children up and transport them relatively short distances.</p>

For example, I live in Burnt Yates with my wife and 5 children.

Our middle son, Huey, attends Springwater Special School in Starbeck, 8.4 miles from our home.

The Taxi Firm that takes Huey to and from School is located in Keighley, which is 27.8 miles from our home.

As such, whilst I appreciate that these calculations are not an exact science, the taxi that takes Huey to and from school each day undertakes the following journeys:-

Journey	Destination	Distance
1. am	Keighley to Burnt Yates	27.8 miles
2. am	Burnt Yates to Springwater School	8.4 miles
3. am	Springwater School back to Keighley	24.9 miles
4. pm	Keighley to Springwater School	24.9 miles
5. pm	Springwater School to Burnt Yates	8.4 miles
6. pm	Burnt Yates back to Keighley	27.8 miles
	Total Miles per day	122.2 miles
	Total Miles per week	611 miles
	Total Miles per annum (39 school weeks)	23,829. miles

Whilst I have no particular issue with the individual taxi firm (or driver) that transports Huey to and from his school, in my opinion, NYC needs to revisit this issue.

Indeed, I am aware from other parents in my Division, and other neighbouring Divisions (and therefore presumably throughout North Yorkshire) that many children are transported to and from their schools by taxis from Keighley.

Without knowing the finer details of the contracts entered into with taxi companies, I am struggling to see why it is a good thing to employ taxi firms that are located outside of the County, and many miles away, to take our children to and from school.

Indeed:-

1. In the first instance, whilst I do not know, I would have thought that it would be cheaper to employ local taxi drivers to do this work.

		<p>2. It surely goes against all of our “green” and “sustainability” policies to have taxis travelling hundreds of thousands, if not millions of miles, each year, with no passengers sat in them, only to pick up children and drop them off at school only a few miles away from their homes. Those taxis then have to make numerous return journeys, each day, with an empty taxi. This wastes time, money, causes damage to the environment, and unnecessarily clogs up our roads (and causes further wear and tear to our highways) during rush hour.</p> <p>3. Whilst I appreciate that you cannot force this issue, and that there are strict tendering rules that govern the awarding of NYC contracts, surely it would be preferable, from an economic standpoint, to award these contracts to North Yorkshire based taxi firms (thus supporting the local economy within North Yorkshire).</p> <p>I would appreciate your thoughts on the above as there are numerous local parents, myself included, who think that the current situation, as outlined above, is not ideal.</p>
17/3/24	Cllr Murday	<p>A resident has contacted me regarding the arrangements for their son’s transport to and from Nidderdale High School. Up until very recently the taxi provided was based in Ripon. Now the taxi comes all the way from Keighley.</p> <p>She has some concerns about the standard of the drivers of the Keighley-based taxis which is difficult, if not impossible, to substantiate. Of greater concern is the extra mileage involved, which she estimates is almost double. When she contacted NYC, she was told that environmental factors are not part of the decision making process when arranging contracts. But that, of course, is not the case.</p> <p>I would be very grateful if you could let me know the reasons for the change in contracting for the taxi service, or at least direct me to the relevant report and decision.</p>
18/03/24	Cllr Hull	<p>Thank you for getting back to me about this delicate subject.</p> <p>However, whilst I appreciate that NYC has to follow strict tendering guidelines and also seek best value for money, the concerns that local parents are raising with me are also in respect of the Department of Education’s guidance regarding Sustainable Modes of Travel Strategy published in January 2024.</p> <p>I am told, and I must confess I have not verified this personally, that the guidance on page 46 for 2024 and page 8 for 2014 states that local authorities are to promote sustainable modes of school transport and that NYC must publish our own Sustainable Modes of Travel Strategy on our website by 31st August each year as per The Education (school information) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2007 (S.I. 2007/1365).</p> <p>If this is correct, then we may have obligations that are potentially at loggerheads with each other.</p> <p>That is to say, we need to get best value for money, whilst promoting sustainable school transport.</p>

		<p>I am clearly not in possession of all the facts in respect of the tendering process, how much individual taxi companies are paid for their services and which taxi services actually tender to us for these contracts.</p> <p>However, I am struggling to see how employing taxi companies that are covering over 100 miles each day with an empty taxi is sustainable and it is this that I am struggling to explain to parents.</p> <p>Indeed, by my own back of a fag packet calculations, it could well be the case that NYC is employing taxi firms that are collectively driving hundreds of thousands, if not millions of miles each, from outside of the County with cars that, for the majority of the journey, have no children or passengers in them.</p> <p>If that is the case, so that we can balance off any obligations we have to provide Sustainable School Transport (which I take to mean not only value for money but environmentally friendly transport) is the tendering process something that needs to be revisited so that an increased importance is put on sustainability?</p>
28/03/24	Cllr Staveley	<p>I wanted to highlight a potential issue regarding the proposed changes to our home school transport policy, specifically how it might affect my own local school, but also others in similar peripheral border locations.</p> <p>Under the proposals there will be a substantial number of children who would currently head towards the local NYC school in Settle, but under the proposals would be pushed towards the “nearest” school in Kirkby Lonsdale, Cumbria. Which while this is the choice for some even now, is far from the default and if the numbers going to Settle were drastically reduced, would almost certainly undermine the sustainability of Settle College. An issue which has been raised by the College management, including the accuracy of our teams impact assessment on future enrolment numbers.</p> <p>I would also question if as is required when formulating a development plan, there is a duty to cooperate with neighbouring education authorities whose enrolment numbers might be affected by our change in policy? If there isn’t a statutory duty, has there been any consultation with such bodies? I’d be interested to know how many schools on the periphery of North Yorkshire in neighbouring counties will now become the default closest school for residents over existing NYC facilities, information I trust will be available as part of the consultation?</p> <p>So in essence while I support the broad principle of the proposals, I feel there must be recognition of the potential harm and ultimately increased transport costs NYC could incur from closures of schools like Settle College and suggest an amendment to the proposed policy stating that schools outside North Yorkshire should not be considered as the closest option for NYC residents. Thus avoiding the undermining of our own Schooling network and the longer term implications for sustainability and development of our communities as we seek to formulate our future County development plan.</p>

From: Individuals

Date	Message
21/02/24	<p>I was hoping to get an answer to a question regarding the proposed changes in the H2S transport policy.</p> <p>When my youngest child starts primary school (our catchment school but not the closest by distance in a car), I believe he will not qualify for free transport, is that correct? However, my 2nd child will continue to receive the free transport as she already attends the school and uses the service?</p> <p>Also, both schools, catchment or closest are inaccessible safely by foot as they require crossing the A64 or walking along a 60mph country road.</p> <p>Based on the fact that my youngest child would receive free transport for the closest school (not the catchment school he will likely attend) could he not access the same free transport my 2nd child will continue to access at the catchment school?</p> <p>I have read the policy several times but cannot find any examples of such a situation. I can only find information stating my 2nd will continue to access the transport to avoid disruption and my youngest would not apply. Seems bonkers to think a bus would be put on for one sibling and not the other.</p> <p>I will also have my eldest starting secondary school at the same time.</p>
26/02/24	<p>I have received the home to school policy consultation attached to my daughter's newsletter from her school today.</p> <p>I wanted to double check the detail of her eligibility regardless of whether the catchment area changes would go ahead or not.</p> <p>We have already put forward our choices for [REDACTED TEXT] secondary school (Upper Wharfedale) - a decision made knowing that the school transport would be provided for her. Now however, if this change goes ahead, we would be stuck with her attending a school that we can not get her to.</p> <p>The transport would be provided if she went to the school in Skipton however? (Not possible, since we have already submitted choices)</p> <p>Could you clarify for me, just to make sure I haven't read the detail incorrectly?</p>
26/02/24	<p>Please can I check if the information below that is being circulated on the local social media forum is correct?</p> <p>Currently, our pupils who live in Whitley and Eggborough villages have free transport to Brayton Academy & this secondary school has become a popular choice for our parents. At the opposite end of the scale, there is usually a maximum of 1 child per year that applies for admission to Campsmount (and historically that has been because they have lived in Askern, not the local villages).</p>

	<p>I can see that from Whitley & Eggborough school postcode, the closest seconodary school is still Brayton, however, Whitley is a long, linear village with some pupils living in a housing estate at the far end of the village which is over a mile away from the school & this then means Campsmount is closer.</p> <p>Does this mean that some children who live in the same village & attend the same school will be eligible for free transport to Brayton and some won't?</p> <p>If you could clarify the correct information it would be appreciated.</p> <hr/> <p>North Yorkshire Council are holding a consultation on a new Home to School Travel policy for children from reception to year 11 The proposals will impact on free school transport to high school in our area</p> <p>From 2025. a Child would only be eligible for free transport to school if they attend the “nearest” school, even if that “nearest” school is over the county border</p> <p>The “nearest” school to Whitley is the Campsmount Academy in Norton.</p> <p>If a child applies and gets a place at another school; Sherburn, Selby, Brayton or Snaith, and there are places available at the Campsmount school, then the child would not get free school transport. Currently free school transport is provided to Brayton, the catchment school.</p> <p>If there are no places at the Campsmount Academy, then the Council will look at whether the child would have got a place, if they had applied to the Campsmount Academy. And, if they would have got a place at the Campsmount Academy, then they will not get free school transport to the school of their choice.</p> <p>If a child applies for the Campsmount Academy and does not get in. then they will get free school transport to the next “nearest” school, which would be Brayton.</p> <p>These changes will come into force in September this year so their initial impact will be for children transitioning to high school in 2025.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">The consultation, which runs until 12 April, includes a survey</p> <hr/>
1/3/24	<p>I am seeking clarification on the proposal to force pupils away from Settle College due to school transport.</p> <p>As someone who lives in Ingleton (North Yorkshire) and has children who attend North Yorkshire schools, it would appear that the proposal suggests they will no longer be able to attend their catchment school. We are in Settle College's catchment, pay North Yorkshire Council Tax (and quite the council tax it is...) but are, as the crow flies, closer to QES (an academy) in Kirkby Lonsdale.</p> <p>I'm assuming this is an error and some wording needs to be altered to say transport will be for their catchment school - said catchment being controlled by North Yorkshire.</p> <p>If this isn't the case, I can only assume this is a direct attack on Settle College to force it to struggle enough financially to be forced into academisation and out of LA control. This would be</p>

	<p>somewhat scandalous, so I'm sure it's not the case. I know the official view is money and cost of transport etc, but there's always a back story and there are a growing number of us concerned about what it may be.</p>
6/3/24	<p>My daughter has just accepted a place at Skipton Girls' High School, which is on the same bus route as Skipton Academy. We live in Gargrave. She starts in Yr 7 this September.</p> <p>SGHS is technically further away than Skipton Academy (which is probably the closest suitable school for her), however they are on the same bus route - will she still qualify for a free bus pass?</p> <p>I hope that you can answer this, as it's causing me quite a lot of stress and worry. We are on Universal Credits but don't qualify for free school meals, so I don't think we would qualify for any assistance.</p>
09/03/24	<p>To follow up my response on the questionnaire I have a few photos which I would like to share with you! This is the B6270, the road in which we would have to travel on to go to our nearest school in a neighbouring county! Not the school in which we would chose in what would be in our catchment area and we would choose this due to the road conditions going west!! The B6279 is absolutely treacherous at the best of times and it's bonkers in thinking that you would want the children sending over such a road!! During a snow period along with a cold spell, the road could be closed for up to 2/3 weeks as it is that bad for a gritter to be able to access due to the snowdrifts nearly been up to the bonnet of a tractor!! Winter is not just a couple of days a year, for us winter could last from November and we could get snow as late as April!</p> <p>Within these pictures is a car which has attempted to descend down the hill but has got stuck and has had to walk nearly 5 miles to come and get help from us!</p> <p>There is also a picture of a van on a recovery truck which my husband had taken. This instance he had to rush to the vets and had to travel on his 4 wheeler quad bike as this was the only way of him been able to make it! This had crashed into another car which had got stuck going up the hill and ended up slipping down and doing a 360 turn and getting wedged into the barrier!!</p> <p>There is also a couple of photos which is actually only half a mile from our house at the neighbouring farm and again this did not get treated for a number of days!</p> <p>I really hope you do consider this part of the policy whether it be just for our area and send up an easterly direction to Richmond or Leyburn and this is on a road which gets gritted several times a day or just scrap it all together!</p> <p>We really do feel like we are getting punished for where we live! We aren't in a position to relocate to get a nearest school as we have been farming the same farm for 3 generations!</p> <p>Regards</p>
9/3/24	<p>I am emailing in regards to the school transport consultation, having now completed the survey, I thought I would email my comments instead of using the comments section on the survey.</p> <p>In this consultation document there is much focus and consideration on the "safety of walked routes", obviously aimed at those within the 2/3 miles of their school, but no mention of the safety of roads for buses.</p> <p>I assume this is completely obvious and therefore think it is unnecessary for me to comment, however I would just like to check that these proposed changes won't actually come into place</p>

for the children of Upper Swaledale, and their transport arrangements will remain the same, and they will travel down the dale - currently to Richmond School.

This consultation suggests that transport would be provided to 'nearest suitable school' but isn't very clear on what 'suitable' means. The nearest school for Upper Swaledale by road miles is Kirkby Stephen, in Cumbria, but I trust this won't actually be an option that NYCC are considering. The B6270 from Keld to Kirkby Stephen is not a suitable route at all in winter months, which often runs from November through to March. The road is sometimes not gritted at all, due to it being deemed not safe for a gritter. For anyone who lives at the top of Swaledale and experiences first hand how exposed the road is to the extreme weather conditions in winter, it is obvious just how many days school the children would miss if their school transport was over the country border. This would be of huge detriment to their education. The idea of children being transported over a road with a 14% gradient, at 530m altitude to school is simply ridiculous. It is just common sense to continue to take all children of Swaledale down the dale towards Richmond.

I understand the proposed changes are with the aim of saving costs. The current transport situation for the children of Swaledale are as follows:

- A Mini bus from Ravenseat to Gunnerside (10miles), then a coach from Gunnerside to Richmond (17miles). Currently 2 bus contracts, for the whole of Swaledale, with total mileage of 27 miles.

Under the proposed changes, the children of Swaledale would be split, around the Gunnerside area, with the children of Upper Swaledale (Gunnerside up to Ravenseat) being transported to Kirkby Stephen (their nearest school), so the situation for Swaledale would be:

- A Mini bus from Gunnerside to Kirkby Stephen (17miles), plus the existing bus from Gunnerside to Richmond(17miles), so 2 bus contracts, for the whole of Swaledale, with total mileage of 34 miles.

Therefore for this specific community, I cannot see how this would be a cost saving, instead it increases total miles between the 2 buses, as well as travelling over a very unsuitable road. I appreciate that I am sure there are many other areas in the whole of North Yorkshire where these changes will decrease costs and improve efficiencies, however I trust that the whole point of this being a consultation is to highlight/confirm any exceptions to these very simplistic changes, and Upper Swaledale must be one of them.

The communities living and working in the Dales already face many challenges both logistically and financially for school and work opportunities. Bringing in changes to transport policies like this would completely deter any young families from moving to the area, specifically Upper Swaledale, if their only school options where transport is provided is by travelling over a dangerously high route.

NYCC will surely agree that safety is paramount in defining which school is 'suitable'.

If parents had to transport their children to the school that is truly suitable (Richmond) then this would have a hugely negative impact on working parents. Many of these working parents have overcome the challenges of maintaining a career alongside raising young children, and if transporting their children from Upper Swaledale to Richmond, two times a day, was to become

	<p>the only option, this would take 2 hours out of every working day for all of those working parents. There could be almost 20 vehicles travelling 54 miles a day.</p> <p>I do hope NYCC is not aiming for the dales to become only a museum where tourists visit at weekends, and instead is going to support those who live, work and look after these rural areas.</p>
19/03/24	<p>Good morning,</p> <p>I hope you are well.</p> <p>Please can you send me all information you have regarding the proposal of a parent/carer funded school transport from Swaledale to Richmond school/Home to school transport to geographically the closest school .</p> <p>This should include but not be limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The outlining and detailed ideas of the proposal - The desired outcome of NYCC of the proposal - The minutes of any previous meetings held before todays date - The dates, times and locations of any future meetings after todays date - Findings from the previous meetings before todays date - The ongoing progress of the proposal - The names of the Council officials that are responsible for the proposal and its orchestration - Who is ultimately responsible for making the final decision - Any details of Cumbria council officials that NYCC are loading directly with - Minutes of any previous meetings held with Cumbria council officials - Dates, times and locations of any future meetings being held with Cumbria Council officials regarding any of the matters listed above <p>I hope to receive this at your earliest convenience. However, should I need to obtain this information via a subject access request please inform me ASAP and include details of how this may be obtained.</p> <p>Should you require any further information from myself please do not hesitate to get in touch.</p> <p>Best regards</p>
26/03/24	<p>My daughter has just accepted a place at Skipton Girls' High School, which is on the same bus route as Skipton Academy. We live in Gargrave. She starts in Yr 7 this September.</p> <p>SGHS is technically further away than Skipton Academy (which is probably the closest suitable school for her), however they are on the same bus route - will she still qualify for a free bus pass?</p> <p>I hope that you can answer this, as it's causing me quite a lot of stress and worry. We are on Universal Credits but don't qualify for free school meals, so I don't think we would qualify for any assistance.</p>
29/03/24	<p>I currently have to pay for a seat on a bus for my daughter who attends Campsmount Secondary School and we live in Womersley, at a cost of £750 for a seat on a morning only.</p>

	<p>The school is classed as out of catchment (despite being around 3 miles away). There is still a bus service running in our village that exists for the children that were entitled to transport before the changes in 2019, I can apply to pay for a place on an annual basis but its not guaranteed and at present they are only offering a seat on a morning.</p> <p>Would the proposed changes effect the current provision for my daughter already in year 8 currently and also how would they effect my daughter due to start Campsmount in September 2024?</p> <p>The current rules stipulate that my children would be entitled to transport to their catchment school (10 miles away); but not on a bus that already runs, 3 miles away, which seems a complete lack of common sense in terms of expenditure.</p> <p>If these queries could be clarified it would be much appreciated</p>
09/04/24	<p>I am emailing in regards to the school transport consultation, having now completed the survey, I thought I would email my comments instead of using the comments section on the survey.</p> <p>In this consultation document there is much focus and consideration on the "safety of walked routes", obviously aimed at those within the 2/3 miles of their school, but no mention of the safety of roads for buses.</p> <p>I assume this is completely obvious and therefore think it is unnecessary for me to comment, however I would just like to check that these proposed changes won't actually come into place for the children of Upper Swaledale, and their transport arrangements will remain the same, and they will travel down the dale - currently to Richmond School. This consultation suggests that transport would be provided to 'nearest suitable school' but isn't very clear on what 'suitable' means. The nearest school for Upper Swaledale by road miles is Kirkby Stephen, in Cumbria, but I trust this won't actually be an option that NYCC are considering. The B6270 from Keld to Kirkby Stephen is not a suitable route at all in winter months, which often runs from November through to March. The road is sometimes not gritted at all, due to it being deemed not safe for a gritter. For anyone who lives at the top of Swaledale and experiences first hand how exposed the road is to the extreme weather conditions in winter, it is obvious just how many days school the children would miss if their school transport was over the country border. This would be of huge detriment to their education. The idea of children being transported over a road with a 14% gradient, at 530m altitude to school is simply ridiculous. It is just common sense to continue to take all children of Swaledale down the dale towards Richmond. I understand the proposed changes are with the aim of saving costs. The current transport situation for the children of Swaledale are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Mini bus from Ravenseat to Gunnerside (10miles), then a coach from Gunnerside to Richmond (17miles). Currently 2 bus contracts, for the whole of Swaledale, with total mileage of 27 miles. <p>Under the proposed changes, the children of Swaledale would be split, around the Gunnerside area, with the children of Upper Swaledale (Gunnerside up to Ravenseat) being transported to Kirkby Stephen (their nearest school), so the situation for Swaledale would be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Mini bus from Gunnerside to Kirkby Stephen (17miles), plus the existing bus from Gunnerside to Richmond(17miles), so 2 bus contracts, for the whole of Swaledale, with total mileage of 34 miles. <p>Therefore for this specific community, I cannot see how this would be a cost saving, instead it increases total miles between the 2 buses, as well as travelling over a very unsuitable road.</p> <p>I appreciate that I am sure there are many other areas in the whole of North Yorkshire where these changes will decrease costs and improve efficiencies, however I trust that the whole point of this being a consultation is to highlight/confirm any exceptions to these very simplistic changes, and Upper Swaledale must be one of them.</p>

	<p>The communities living and working in the Dales already face many challenges both logistically and financially for school and work opportunities. Bringing in changes to transport policies like this would completely deter any young families from moving to the area, specifically Upper Swaledale, if their only school options where transport is provided is by travelling over a dangerously high route.</p> <p>NYCC will surely agree that safety is paramount in defining which school is 'suitable'. If parents had to transport their children to the school that is truly suitable (Richmond) then this would have a hugely negative impact on working parents. Many of these working parents have overcome the challenges of maintaining a career alongside raising young children, and if transporting their children from Upper Swaledale to Richmond, two times a day, was to become the only option, this would take 2 hours out of every working day for all of those working parents. There could be almost 20 vehicles travelling 54 miles a day.</p> <p>I do hope NYCC is not aiming for the dales to become only a museum where tourists visit at weekends, and instead is going to support those who live, work and look after these rural areas.</p> <p>I look forward to hearing back from you please.</p>
09/04/24	<p>I am emailing about the proposal that children will now only receive free transport to their nearest school.</p> <p>I live at Muker and have two pre school children. If what is being proposed becomes a reality then they will only receive free transport to Kirkby Stephen secondary school. This would take them over a hill top which would mean they would miss many days of schooling in winter, which would severely affect their education. Tailbridge hill, the descent in to Kirkby Stephen via Nateby does not get gritted as a priority. REDACTED TEXT states the "road is closed regularly in winter due to snow and also from ice on the upper sections forcing our customers to find alternative routes. We call the council to come and clear it but we are told it's not a priority road" please see his full letter attached.</p> <p>I would urge you to take this in to account and change the proposal to being the nearest school when using Priority 1 gritting routes. This would be Richmond school, which is the school that historically upper Swaledale children have attended. There is a reason for this as the route to Kirkby Stephen and those over other tops such as Leyburn are wholly unsuitable. In the 1950's when it was brought in that children from Swaledale had to receive secondary education there was only one child attended Kirkby Stephen and not Richmond, REDACTED TEXT</p> <p>You have a duty of care to provide transport for children to be educated, and if you proceed with this proposal that doesn't take in to account Priority 1 gritting routes then you will be failing in that duty of care to children within rural locations</p> <p>2 Enclosures:</p> <p>Enclosure 1: Redacted text After speaking to one of our customers who is a resident in Muker she was sharing her concerns about the road conditions in winter on the B6270 and her children potentially having to travel on it. We are well aware of this issue as the road is closed regularly in winter due to snow on Tailbrigg and also from ice on the upper sections forcing our customers to try and find alternative routes. We call the council to come and clear it but we are told its not a priority road and after a gritter crashed through the barrier and rolled over one year a gritter will not attempt to clear it without a digger alongside now.</p> <p>Enclosure 2 To whom it may concern: I have heard about taking children from Swaledale to Kirby Stephen School. In winter it is one of the worsed roads in the North of England. I my self many years ago attended that school had to board during the week and could not get home at the weekends in winter for snow many feet deep. Please think about the safety of the children and also the time they will be unable to attend school</p>

10/04/24	<p>As a parent of a child, who is due to start secondary school in September 2025, I need to share my concerns of the proposed transport consultation, and illustrate the impact this would have on my physically disabled son.</p> <p>My son has complex needs, including a physical disability, speech and language difficulties, and moderate learning difficulties.</p> <p>Currently, he attends a local mainstream primary school, and I drive him to school every day, as he is unable to walk independently, and uses a walker.</p> <p>We live in Harrogate, and there is currently only 1 school that is accessible to [REDACTED], but they can't meet his learning and communication needs.</p> <p>All 3 special schools, have a cohort of mainly Neuro Diverse pupils, with large class sizes, and not especially accessible to children using walkers, or who require calm and small classes, because of communication difficulties. My son isn't Neuro Diverse, or Autistic, so they're definitely not appropriate to him.</p> <p>As a result, I've been looking for the most appropriate school for over 18 months now. In total I've looked at over 20 schools in North and West Yorkshire, and have found the best school to meet his needs is in West Yorkshire. But going to school in West Yorkshire would require school transport from door to door.</p> <p>Being directed to the nearest local school wouldn't be appropriate for my son and certainly wouldn't meet his complex needs.</p> <p>My son's year group will be the first to be impacted by changes to school transport. My son is unable to travel to school independently, and having to be driven to school by family members would have a really negative impact on his emotional wellbeing. He desperately wants to be independent in getting to school, as does every high school student.</p> <p>[REDACTED] experiences enough exclusion in life, due to his physical disability, and to further exclude him, from transport, to travel from North Yorkshire, to school in West Yorkshire, that best meets his needs, is utterly unfair.</p> <p>Please take my concerns on board when you're finalising the new school transport policy.</p> <p>Redacted text</p>
12/04/24	<p>I am writing in response to the current Home to School Transport consultation, of which I have been made aware by a local Councillor.</p> <p>I am concerned that the proposal to change the current provision's criteria of what constitutes a 'nearest suitable school' will lead to the threat of siblings having to be split up in order to access free transport. As a parent and former teacher who lived in rural North Yorkshire for many years, I suspect that this will, in reality, lead to more families using private cars for Home to School Transport, rather than the free buses/pass system.</p> <p>I understand that this is entirely the aim of this cost-cutting exercise, but it is hardly commensurate with reducing emissions, traffic management and the County's strive for Net Zero. Unless this proposal sits alongside a raft of carbon-reducing initiatives such as electric buses, improved charge point provision, upscaling of the Active Transport Networks, it will be counterproductive aiming for a cleaner, greener North Yorkshire.</p> <p>I urge you to consider not only the financial hardship under which you will be placing families who want nothing more than the best education for their children, but also to adopt a wider, more holistic approach to the question of de-carbonising the overall public and private transport systems in our rural areas.</p>
15/04/24	<p>The council will not see any cost saying whatsoever as the transport companies will just raise their prices. ie, a bus has 10 kids on it, the company charges the council £1 per kid, that is £10 for the bus. The new policy makes 5 kids walk or go in the car, the bus company now needs to charge £2 per kid to pay for that bus to run. The council still pays</p>

	<p>£10, but now there potentially are 3 extra cars on the road & 2 kids walking & now in danger!</p> <p>I suppose the plan may work in areas where 2 busses are needed & it gets 1 off the run, or removes some taxis.</p> <p>Some services just need to be run better, bus companies usually run their old & knackered busses for the school runs anyway. Offer them less money, they need the school run just as much as the council does!(probably more, they are not the ones trying to cut it)</p> <p>The village & road situation in North Yorkshire is different to London, where everywhere has a footpath & street lighting, around here, were lucky if we have a verge to walk on.</p>
15/04/24	<p>The council will not see any cost saying whatsoever as the transport companies will just raise their prices. ie, a bus has 10 kids on it, the company charges the council £1 per kid, that is £10 for the bus. The new policy makes 5 kids walk or go in the car, the bus company now needs to charge £2 per kid to pay for that bus to run. The council still pays £10, but now there potentially are 3 extra cars on the road & 2 kids walking & now in danger!</p> <p>I suppose the plan may work in areas where 2 busses are needed & it gets 1 off the run, or removes some taxis.</p> <p>Some services just need to be run better, bus companies usually run their old & knackered busses for the school runs anyway. Offer them less money, they need the school run just as much as the council does!(probably more, they are not the ones trying to cut it)</p> <p>The village & road situation in North Yorkshire is different to London, where everywhere has a footpath & street lighting, around here, were lucky if we have a verge to walk on.</p> <p>While I'm on, recently the bus from Tollerton to Alne primary has had a different driver to usual, my child has pointed out that he always triggers the 30mph speed warning & still doesn't slow down when it lights up.</p> <p>Also, there is a female driver on the Tollerton to Easingwold outwood run that my son points out she brakes dangerously hard if anyone is standing up in the isles causing them to fall over, but that may be a police matter?.</p>
18/04/24	<p>How is it determined where the nearest suitable school is...is this determined at policy setting or is it annually, how do parents find out which is their nearest suitable school for transport under the new plan. For example we live in Castleton, my children attend caedmon college whitby, the nearest suitable school is guisborough or brotton, but surely we cannot be expected to send out children to either school? But how would we fins this out.</p> <p>How can it be more financially viable to change the plan to nearest suitable school, including out of county. This would result in financial loss in the county paying other counties for school places, less children in ny schools. Therefore less funding, less staff, less everything in ny schools. And you're still paying the transport costs to get them to a school out of county. It doesn't make sense?!</p> <p>How does this actually save any money at all when rural areas have bus routes that pick up, the bus always runs be there 20 or 40 kids. Does the bus company charge per head? Perhaps you need to adjust the way the bus companies are paid. One flat rate to provide x number of seats transport indefinitely.</p> <p>I would like to be doubly sure I am correct in assuming that my child already in secondary education. Will still receive their free transport, have I understood that any child already</p>

	<p>with a bus pass will keep that and we will not be expected to pay. Can this change at any point.</p> <p>What is the transport fee, from Castleton to caedmon, be? How is this determined?</p> <p>Also, why am I only finding out about this AFTER the meetings have taken place.</p> <p>Why have schools not been consulted on this when it could have a massive effect on projected intake, on the assumption that those living near county borders will essentially have school options stripped from them based on distance to a school out of county.</p>
16/4/23	<p>I am writing in response to the current Home to School Transport consultation, of which I have been made aware by a local Councillor.</p> <p>I am concerned that the proposal to change the current provision's criteria of what constitutes a 'nearest suitable school' will lead to the threat of siblings having to be split up in order to access free transport. As a parent and former teacher who lived in rural North Yorkshire for many years, I suspect that this will, in reality, lead to more families using private cars for Home to School Transport, rather than the free buses/pass system.</p> <p>I understand that this is entirely the aim of this cost-cutting exercise, but it is hardly commensurate with reducing emissions, traffic management and the County's strive for Net Zero. Unless this proposal sits alongside a raft of carbon-reducing initiatives such as electric buses, improved charge point provision, upscaling of the Active Transport Networks, it is will be counterproductive aiming for a cleaner, greener North Yorkshire.</p> <p>I urge you to consider not only the financial hardship under which you will be placing families who want nothing more than the best education for their children, but also to adopt a wider, more holistic approach to the question of de-carbonising the overall public and private transport systems in our rural areas.</p> <p>Yours sincerely, Parliamentary Candidate for the Green Party , Selby District</p>
21/04/24	<p>I have been given these contact details by my eldest child's secondary school (King James, Knaresborough), to contact if I have any questions regarding the Home to School Transport Consultation.</p> <p>I have many questions, but listed below are ones that I would like answering if possible. I have a child in Y3 at present, so it will potentially affect her once she reaches Y7. I live in a village called Cowthorpe - my eldest child attends King James in Knaresborough in Y8 and my youngest attends Tockwith C of E Primary Academy in Y3.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. It seems that there will no longer be a choice, as there is currently, for the school to go to if you want to receive H2S transport. Is this the case? 2. There will no longer be catchment schools as such. Everything will be based on the nearest suitable school. Is this the case? 3. "Nearest suitable school" - according to the draft policy this will be regarded as the nearest school to my home address, regardless of whether it is in the same Local Authority or not. Is this correct? 4. Assuming it is correct, then hypothetically, (and the distances might be wrong, and I realise NYC will be releasing a tool to determine where the nearest school is in

September);

Cowthorpe to school distances (in miles):

Wetherby High - 4.3

King James' - 6.5

Boston Spa - 7.4

...various schools...

Tadcaster Grammar - 11.3

If these mileages are correct, then the nearest school is in a neighbouring LA.

Will free H2S transport therefore be made available to the school if in a neighbouring LA?

5. Does the neighbouring LA know about the consultation and the potential effects it will have on their school population?

6. For my child already at KJS, will they be OK and will we still receive free H2S transport and an available bus for their time there, through to Y11?

7. If I have a child in Y6 due to go to KJS in September 2024 will they still receive the free H2S transport through to Y11?

8. If I have a child in Y7 at KJS and another in Y4, will I have to pay for child 2 when the time comes? And then will the bus cease to run after a certain length of time - i.e. after my child in Y7 finishes Y11?

9. Will a pupil who lives in Tockwith and already attends Wetherby High school start to get free H2S transport?

10. Will a bus still go from Tockwith/Cowthorpe to KJS if there are eligible students eg on an EHC plan? And if so, will my child be able to use the bus, albeit having to pay for using it?

11. If due to the changes, most children from one year at Tockwith decide to go to Wetherby High and there are not enough places for one year, will they then get free travel to KJS (or the 2nd school on the mileage list) for the duration of their time there? If in the following year, there are enough places at Wetherby, these children will not be eligible for H2S transport to KJS. If in the following year, there aren't enough places at Wetherby, will there then be Hs2 transport available to KJS, and so on. So potential there will always be a bus running to KJS but each year will be under different criteria.

12. If the above is the case, will there be a bus running to Wetherby and KJS potentially every year? If so, obviously there will be no savings.

13. How much does it cost to provide school transport from Tockwith to King James currently? And also how much does it cost to provide the bus from Cowthorpe to King James (that goes via Arkendale, Coneythorpe and Flaxby (756H route))?

14. How much will it cost to provide transport to Wetherby High School for all these children?

15. What is the estimated total of secondary children it will affect per year, and which area(s) in North Yorkshire will be most affected?

I hope you can answer these questions and put my mind at ease (or not!)

25/04/24

Please find attached a substantive response to the consultation. I would be grateful if you could acknowledge receipt. I have also completed the online form, which did not provide enough space for this response.

A response to the North Yorkshire Council draft "Home to School Travel Policy - for children from Reception to Year 11" (February 2024) policy.

1. Introduction
2. Children under compulsory school age
3. Accompaniment
4. The Equality Impact Assessment
5. The Equality Act 2010
6. Exceptionality is not the legal test
7. The Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act 1970
8. Applying for transport
9. Recommendations

1 Introduction

About the LEaP Project

1. The LEaP Project is part of Cerebra, a research charity that supports families of children with brain conditions. It is an innovative problem-solving project that works in conjunction with the School of Law at the University of Leeds. We listen to and understand families and help them to overcome the legal barriers they face to access social care and other support. We do this by providing resources and expertise to enable families to solve problems themselves, and through direct casework. We identify common legal issues that prevent families getting access to services and we develop innovative ways of solving those issues. We aim to reach as many families as we can by sharing our solutions as widely as possible. More information about the LEaP Project is available [here](#).

The Law on School Transport

2. The law underpinning the provision of school transport has not changed. Local authorities have a legal duty under Section 508B and Schedule 35B Education Act 1996 to make school transport arrangements for 'eligible' children, which includes children who cannot reasonably be expected to walk to school because of their special educational needs, disability or mobility problems. The January 2024 statutory guidance produced by the Department for Education, "Travel to school for children of compulsory school age" ("the DfE guidance") does not change this legal duty, nor does it change a local authority's discretionary powers under s508A and s508C. Where guidance departs from the law, the law always takes precedence.

2 Children under compulsory school age

3. The local authority has a discretionary power to provide transport from home to an educational establishment (including a nursery or pre-school ("Early Years")) under s509A Education Act 1996 and for children under compulsory school age attending a school under s508C Education Act 1996.

The current policy

4. The current "Home to school and college transport policy" includes children under compulsory school age, as there is a qualified discretionary arrangement for reception age children attending a school. There is no reference to children under compulsory school age attending

an Early Years setting. It appears the policy ("the Early Years policy") for these children can be found on the web page "SEND transport - frequently asked questions"¹:

"What is the transport policy for children attending school or nursery before they turn five?"

...

Transport assistance is not provided to children attending nurseries or playgroups, including nursery provision in special school or primary school in which your child will be receiving statutory education in the future."

The proposed policy

5. The consultation document "Home to School Travel Policy - for children from Reception to Year 11" ("the proposed policy") deals with children under compulsory school age in the same way as the current policy - with the same qualified exception for reception age children attending a school (page 4, proposed policy). There is no reference to a separate Early Years policy for children under compulsory school age attending an Early Years setting as there is for post-16 travel.
6. The local authority has adapted the list of qualifying schools set out at s15(2) Schedule 35B Education Act 1996 by removing children below compulsory school age who attend maintained nurseries from consideration (page 6, proposed policy). Similarly, the discretionary powers that cover children below compulsory school age are omitted from the list of "Discretionary Arrangements" on page 10. This implies the local authority will continue to rely on the Early Years policy as set out on the SEND transport FAQs web page.
7. The local authority appears to be operating a blanket Early Years policy, which is unlawful following well-established public law principles. The local authority is fettering its discretion and is susceptible to challenge by judicial review and/or criticism from the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) as a result. All applications for transport must be considered on a case-by-case basis.
8. This blanket policy is likely to mean some families have lost out on free transport to an Early Years setting in the past and will continue to do so in the future, should the policy remain in place. As well as being contrary to public law principles, the Early Years policy is likely to be

¹ <https://www.northyorks.gov.uk/children-and-families/send-local-offer/send-information-parents-and-carers/send-transport-parents-guide/send-transport-frequently-asked-questions>

having a disproportionate effect on families with disabled children, which would be a form of indirect discrimination.

3 Accompaniment

(i) Expecting parents to accompany children of all ages

9. The current policy at section 4.0 makes explicit that, in accordance with the DfE statutory guidance from 2014, local authorities have a duty to provide transport for certain eligible children. That guidance required local authorities to take into account a range of factors, including a child's age and "whether one would ordinarily expect a child of that age to be accompanied".
10. The proposed policy does not require the local authority to consider a child's age or the age appropriateness of accompanying a child. Accompaniment is treated as a matter of ordinary parental responsibility. Essentially the proposed policy says that the daily pressures of fitting work and family commitments around the school run apply to all parents in the same way and it's up to parents to 'fulfil their various responsibilities'.
11. We don't dispute that parents may be expected to accompany their child to and from school where it's age appropriate, whether the child has a disability or not. But the pressures on parents of disabled children are different because their children will need to be accompanied to a much higher age than their non-disabled peers. This shift towards expecting parents to accompany all children, with no regard for a child's age, will therefore have a disproportionate and discriminatory impact on parents of disabled children. It demonstrates a marked failure to understand the very well-documented inequalities faced by parents of disabled children in terms of income, employment, health, well-being and more.²
12. In particular, it seems likely that employment opportunities for parents of disabled children, predominantly mothers, will be adversely affected. We hear from parents who have had to reduce their working hours or consider giving up work altogether simply to make themselves available for the school run. In its response to the 2019 DfE draft consultation "Home to school travel and transport for children of compulsory school age Statutory guidance for local authorities", the LGSCO shared our concerns about securing the rights of children with disabilities and their parents and the "undue pressure on parents to accompany their children to school which disproportionately affects children with SEND".³

² See for example Contact's various research reports at <https://contact.org.uk/help-for-families/campaigns-and-research/research/>

³ See Ombudsman's [response to the consultation on home to school travel and transport](#), p10, 29 October 2019

13. A parent's requirement to accompany a child should be determined by the child's age, not by his or her disability. In our view, expecting parents to accompany disabled children of all ages breaches the prohibition on disability discrimination in the Equality Act 2010. Infantilising disabled young people by expecting their parents to accompany them, whatever their age, amounts to indirect (and arguably direct) disability discrimination and requiring parents to act as escorts in these circumstances constitutes direct discrimination by association. The opening pages of the DfE guidance says that the public sector equality duty ("PSED") is likely to be 'particularly relevant' when local authorities are deciding whether it's reasonable to expect a parent to accompany their child, but the proposed policy fails to have regard to this duty.

14. In Herefordshire Council (18 017 909) - a decision concerning the Equality Act 2010 and discretionary transport for a child in the Early Years, the LGSCO said:

"63 The Council's new early years / exceptional circumstances transport policy says 'work commitments or arrangements for transporting siblings to other schools are not reasons that can be taken into consideration'. I am not persuaded this approach is compatible with the statutory guidance or the Equality Act. Where a disabled child has to be educated outside their local area due to a need for specialist education this may have an adverse impact on parent's ability to work or care for other siblings. The 2004 guidance is clear that Councils do have to take any adverse impact into account. Councils should not have blanket policies, this would be fettering their discretion, they must look at each case on its individual facts."

15. We believe that treating parents of disabled children in the same way as all other parents may also infringe the prohibition on disability discrimination in the Human Rights Act, which requires public bodies to treat differently persons whose circumstances are significantly different.⁴

16. Failure to ensure that disabled children have access to adequate school transport has also been held to infringe a child's right to an education under the Human Rights Act.⁵

17. The DfE guidance contains a section on promoting independence for eligible children with special educational needs (from para 55), stating that local authorities may take into account how best to support children to develop independence. It appears that requiring parents to accompany children with SEN of any age runs counter to this concept.

⁴ See for example *Thlimmenos v Greece* (2001) 31 EHRR 15 and *Gorry v. Wiltshire Council and others* [2012] EWCA Civ 629.

⁵ Article 2 of the First Protocol, incorporated in the First Schedule to the Act, provides that 'No person shall be denied the right to education'. See Luke Clements, 'School transport as a human right' (2 April 2023) https://www.lukeclements.co.uk/school-transport-as-a-human-right/#_ftn2 accessed 23 April 2024. See also age as "another status" in para 14 in *R (Drexler) v Leicestershire County Council* [2019] EWHC 1934 (Admin), [2020] EWCA Civ 502

(ii) Whether it's reasonable to expect a parent to accompany a child

18. The 'Accompaniment' section of the proposed policy begins by reproducing para 49 of the DfE guidance, missing out the final clause, which states "local authorities must act reasonably in the performance of their functions."
19. The proposed policy appears to set a test which requires a parent to provide, minimally, "good reasons" why transport should be provided, which would not normally include a parent's working pattern or the fact that parents have children and more than one school.
20. The High Court, citing the House of Lords in *Devon County Council v George* [1989] 1 AC 573 set out that, "the general standard in this area is that "the parent must do those things which are reasonably practicable to be done and which an ordinary prudent parent would do.""⁶ In *R (on the application of S) v Education Ltd (Waltham Forest)* and another [2006] EWHC 3144 the High Court – in a post-16 claim - said, "There is no absolute rule that the parents of children over 16 who cannot travel to school on their own are expected to take them. What parents can be expected to do will depend on their circumstances. There will be cases where it is not reasonable to expect them to drive a child to school. Each case will turn on its facts." (para 33).
21. The test is therefore one of reasonableness, and must take into account the different circumstances parents of disabled children face compared to families without disabled children, otherwise the local authority will disproportionately disadvantage disabled children and their families.
22. Further, the proposed policy does not give examples of what a 'good reason' might be. As previously mentioned, there is a presumption that work commitments, caring responsibilities or taking other children to different schools will not 'normally' be considered good reasons for being unable to accompany a child. While the word 'normally' allows for flexibility in principle, we have already seen in practice that other local authorities are adopting a fixed approach.

(iii) Expecting parents to make 'other suitable arrangements'

23. The proposed policy expects parents not only to accompany disabled children of all ages on the walk to school, but also to 'make other suitable arrangements for their journey to and from school. It's not clear what 'other suitable arrangements' means.
24. Once it has been decided that a child isn't eligible for transport, then it is obviously up to their parents to decide how to take them to school – there's no expectation that all children must walk to school. But the problem here is that the proposed policy has made the availability of 'other arrangements' part of the eligibility decision itself – i.e. the local authority can now

⁶ *R. (on the application of M) v Hounslow LBC* [2013] EWHC 579 (Admin)

consider whether a parent can accompany or make 'other arrangements' for a child before deciding whether the child is eligible. In our view, this is inconsistent with the law on school transport⁷, which refers only to 'walking' routes and does not provide any legal basis for expecting a parent to drive a child who needs to be accompanied to school. Explanatory notes to the school transport legislation state that

"a local education authority cannot conclude that, merely because a parent has a car and could drive his or her child to school, the local education authority will not be under a duty to make arrangements..."⁸

25. We also believe that placing the onus on parents to 'make other suitable arrangements' is inconsistent with the Equality Act 2010 as it will have a disproportionate impact on disabled children, who are more likely to need support to travel to school. Relatives and friends may not have the time, commitment or skills needed to support a disabled child on the journey to school. Breakfast clubs may be unaffordable or unable to meet a child's needs.

4 The Equality Act 2010

26. There is no mention of the Equality Act 2010 in the proposed policy, save for a definition of disability which appears in the glossary. The local authority must have due regard to the PSED under s149 Equality Act 2010, and the application of a transport policy engages the Act. Local Authorities are required to have regard to the need to advance equality of opportunity to access education between persons with a disability and those without. The LGSCO has previously criticised a local authority for a lack of reference to the Act⁹:

80...The policy also makes no reference to the Equality Act that I can see but, if I am wrong, the Council can tell me. The Equality Act is a key piece of legislation designed to protect disabled people and ensure parity of service between them and their able-bodied peers. And a key aspect of the Equality Act is to ensure that a council does not discriminate against those with a protected characteristic, in this case disability.

...

85. We expect councils to consider their Equality Act duties when considering the transport needs of children and young adults with special educational needs and disability. They should not be treated less favourably than children and young adults of the same age.

⁷ Section 508B and Schedule 35B of the Education Act 1996

⁸ Explanatory notes to the Education and Inspections Act 2006, para 353 (which inserted school transport provisions into the Education Act 1996)

⁹ London Borough of Harrow (19 017 779)

86. So, I consider that there is fault because the Council's transport policy appears silent on its Equality Act duties. But that is not to say officers and the Panel are not aware of these duties.

...

88. Accordingly, I consider that the Council has acted with fault because its transport policy does not make reference to its Equality Act duties and I also consider the Panel's decision did not give sufficient thought to B's disability and whether it was necessary to provide transport to enable her to have the same options as her able-bodied peers and to attend the College of her choice.

27. This omission, in combination with the totality of the documents comprising this consultation, suggests the local authority has not adequately considered its duties under the Equality Act 2010 and the impact the proposed policy will have on disabled children and their families.

5 Exceptionality is not the legal test

28. The local authority refers to providing transport in exceptional cases throughout the proposed policy:

- In the 'Exceptional Circumstances' section itself (page 10);
- 'Facilitating Attendance' (page 12);
- 'Residential Children' (page 12) and;
- Stage 2 appeals' (page 21).

29. In all references, the wording is incorrect. For children of compulsory school age, the legal test is not one of exceptionality, but necessity. For non-eligible children of statutory school age, the relevant legislation is set out as follows:

508C Local authorities in England: travel arrangements etc for other children

(1)A local authority in England may make such school travel arrangements as they consider necessary, in relation to any child in the authority's area to whom this section applies, for the purpose of facilitating the child's attendance at any relevant educational establishment in relation to the child.

(2)This section applies to a child who is not an eligible child for the purposes of section 508B.

(emphasis added)

30. 'Exceptional' puts the presumptive bar significantly higher than 'necessary', which is likely to be unlawful and susceptible to legal challenge.¹⁰ The LGSCO has found fault with local authorities that use an exceptionality test.¹¹ In LB Lewisham (16 009 458) the LGSCO referred to the Post-19 case of Staffordshire County Council v JM (UKUT) 0246 (AAC) 2016 in which the Court said "although the question of what is necessary is a matter for [the council] in deciding that question they must exercise their judgment judiciously and in good faith". The LGSCO concluded that as "there is no evidence the Council has considered what is necessary, rather than if there are exceptional circumstances, this was fault."

31. For children attending 52-week residential schools, the legal test is not exceptionality but, again, one of necessity, this time stemming from s2 Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act 1970. The enforceable duty is triggered by the local authority being satisfied the services are necessary.¹²

6 Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act 1970

32. Where a child is not eligible under one of the four categories set out in Section A of the proposed policy, and the local authority decides not to exercise its powers to provide discretionary transport, there may be a duty on the local authority to provide transport under the Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act 1970.

33. This duty is not explained within the proposed policy, and as such is an omission. In our view it is not acceptable to state that transport for social care purposes is not covered by the policy. The LGSCO has previously criticised local authorities for failing to publicise or consider its duties to provide free transport under s2 CDPA 1970. See for example Herefordshire Council (21 004 629), in particular the following paragraphs:

"23. The Council's school transport policy includes reference to the relevant legislation and statutory guidance that underpins the Council's decision making in this area. It is disappointing the Council did not use its latest review of that policy to include a reference to CSDPA and its discretionary powers under this legislation. The Council has agreed to my recommendation to take further action to address this issue below."

24. I am satisfied with the action the Council has taken to remedy the personal injustice Mrs X experienced. However, I recommend the Council should, within one month of the final

¹⁰ See, by analogy, R (Ross) v West Sussex PCT [2008] EWHC 2252 (Admin), (2008) 11 CCLR 787; and R (M) (Claimant) v Independent Appeal Panel of Haringey [2009] EWHC 2427 (Admin) at para 27.

¹¹ For example, para 38 LGSCO decision: Leeds City Council (19 019 971)

¹² See R v Gloucestershire CC ex p Barry [1997] AC 584; (1997-98) 1 CCLR 40.

decision, include reference to its discretionary powers under s.2(1)(c) Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act 1970 to its school transport policy and reminds relevant staff, including independent review panel members, of this duty. The Council has agreed to take this action.

25. The Council should provide us with evidence when it has completed the above action." (emphasis added)

34. Without referring to these duties under the CSDPA 1970 the local authority may not be considering its discretionary duties fully and as a result may be unlawfully denying families home to school transport and may be subject to legal challenge or be similarly criticised by the LGSCO.

7 Equality impact assessment ("EIA")

35. The EIA comes to the wrong conclusion about the impact on disabled children and their families, contains faulty analysis and is misleading. The proposed changes will make things worse for disabled children and their families.

36. The EIA states [A] "The requirement for individual assessment under SEN may increase the number of pupil [sic] eligible for assistance' and, [B] 'Individual assessment will ensure children with disability [sic] needs are met on transport.' It goes on to conclude, [C] 'No adverse impact - no major change needed to the proposal. There is no potential for discrimination or adverse impact identified."

37. With respect to statement A, it is not clear how the proposed assessment process for children with special educational needs, disability and mobility issues will be materially different to the current process, which already requires an individual assessment - parents have to make an application and a decision is made based on the evidence that they supply. The local authority, if not satisfied with that evidence, must seek out further evidence until it has enough in order to make a decision in each individual case. The current process already takes into account the factors outlined in the proposed policy on page 7. It is not clear what additional steps an "individual assessment" include over and above the current process. As the proposed eligibility criteria - in particular those around accompaniment - are being made more stringent, the application of the proposed policy' will mean fewer families with disabled children will qualify for home to school transport. Further, the law has not been changed and so it is unclear how a greater number of children could be eligible.

38. Statement B is poorly phrased and can be interpreted in two ways. If the intended meaning is that individual assessments will lawfully identify children who will qualify for free home to school transport, then, as per the totality of this response, we do not agree. The proposed policy will

restrict transport for disabled children because there is a much broader expectation that parents will make arrangements for their children, no matter what their age, absent of a "good reason". If the intended meaning is concerned with the suitability of the transport the local authority will provide, the law already requires the local authority to make suitable home to school travel arrangements (s508B EA1996, SEND Code of Practice para 4.49) and for a "child to reach school without undue stress, strain or difficulty" (R v Hereford and Worcester County Council, ex parte P 2 [1992] 2 FCR 732). A child's disability needs must already be considered when transport is provided. Proposal B, in this interpretation, represents no change.

39. With respect to statement C, it has been demonstrated that the proposed policy will disproportionately affect disabled children and their families and result in an increased chance of discrimination against them.

40. The EIA fails to consider the impact of discrimination by association. The proposed section on accompaniment will have a disproportionate, negative impact on the parents of disabled children and potentially any siblings of disabled children.

8 Applying for transport

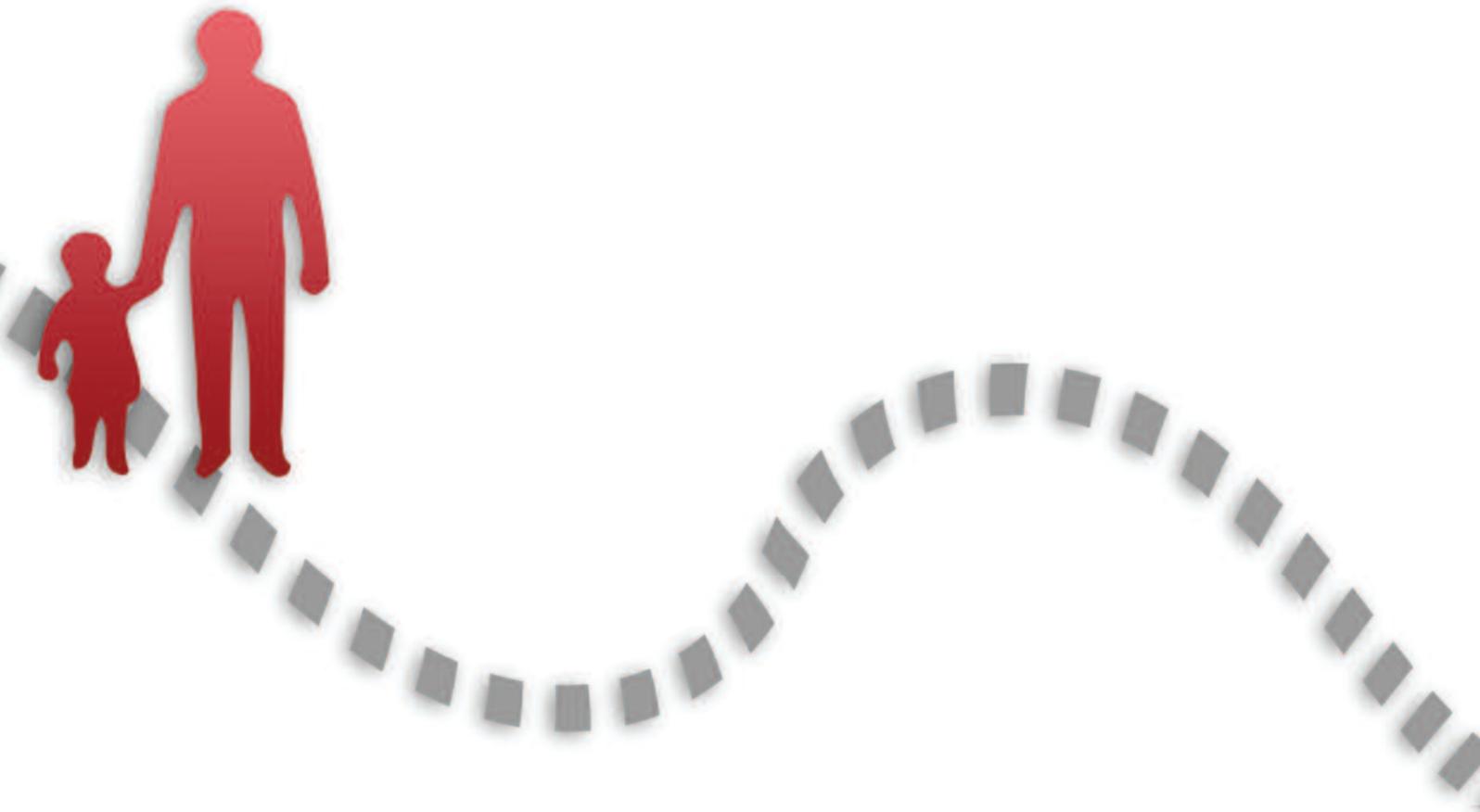
41. We could not find an online application form or any information about how to apply for home to school transport. A link on the web page "[School transport for reception to year 11 children](#)", titled "Get in Touch", is available at the very bottom of the page. Once that tab has been clicked, a link is revealed titled "Please contact us" along with a postal address. The link leads to a page called "[School and college transport](#)". There is a button on that page called "Apply for school transport for reception to year 11 children" which sends the reader back to the original page "[School transport for reception to year 11 children](#)", making this a circular process.

42. By making the application process unavailable online, either through deliberate action or otherwise, families may be put off applying and exercising their legal rights.

9 Recommendations

- i. Early Years - amend the scope of the proposed policy to include all children below compulsory school age. Replace the blanket Early Years policy, making explicit that the local authority has a power to provide transport, and that each application will be considered on a case by case basis. In the alternative, write a separate, legally compliant, Early Years policy and cross refer to it in the proposed policy.
- ii. Amend the wording on the [SEND transport - frequently asked questions](#) page to reflect the law (the Early Years policy).

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> iii. In the section "What legislation does this policy adhere to?" list the Equality Act 2010 and the Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act 1970. iv. Accompaniment – re-write this section to be legally compliant, having due regard to the Equality Act 2010, case law and LGSCO decisions. v. Equality Act 2010 – add a section that explains the local authority's duties under the Equality Act 2010 and how the Act has informed the proposed policy. vi. Exceptionality – re-write this section to reflect the correct, lower legal bar, that of necessity. vii. CSDPA 1970 - add a section that explains the transport duties the local authority has under the CSDPA 1970 and how the local authority will consider whether it is necessary to provide transport under the CSDPA 1970. viii. Acknowledge the Equality Impact Assessment comes to the wrong conclusion with respect to disabled children and consider the impact of discrimination by association on family members. Revise the EIA. ix. Ensure there is a working online transport application process as well as a paper version available. <p style="text-align: center;">Leap Project, Cerebra</p> <p style="text-align: center;">24 April 2024.</p>
26/04/24	<p>Please could I ask for clarification of one of the points on the new proposed changes for free school transport - what is meant by the county boundaries. I longer matter? Does this mean that a child with a home address in North Yorkshire could be made to go to a school that is in County Durham?</p> <p>Thank you in advance for your time in answering this matter.</p>



Assessment of Walked Routes to School

Guidelines
Revised April 2021

Preface

These Guidelines were produced on behalf of Road Safety GB by:

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This version was published in 2012. Latest update - April 2021.

The working group thanks everyone who contributed to the Guideline's development.

The Guidelines comprise three sections:

- Introduction and the Principles used in the Guidelines
- Route Assessment Procedure
- Appendices giving legislation and case law

These Guidelines have been compiled based on existing legislation, best practice, health and safety and case law. They refer to various statutory regulations. These were correct at publication, but officers should check for amendments that may have been issued since this document was published.

The advice given in these Guidelines is believed to be correct at the time of publication. While every care has been taken to ensure accuracy within this document, Road Safety GB or its advisors accept no liability whatever for the information given.

Authorities should consider seeking elected Members' approval if they propose to deviate from these Guidelines.

Road Safety GB



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Section 1

Introduction and Principles

These guidelines are to help officers carry out assessments on walked routes to school where the journey is below the statutory distance. The assessments are normally required where it is claimed that the route is not acceptable and therefore the Local Authority should provide free transport.

The document contains a method of assessing walked routes to school and relevant extracts from Acts of Parliament and case law relating to transport to school. These guidelines should be taken as a basis from which each local authority can develop their own policy that includes what other factors, if any, are taken into account when offering free transport to those children that live within the statutory distance.

The law relating to schools transport and walked routes to school apply in England and Wales, but may differ in Scotland and Northern Ireland.

Scope of these guidelines

When making a report on your assessment using these guidelines it should be made clear that only the relationship between pedestrians and traffic has been assessed; the local authority may also wish to consider and assess a number of other factors in regard to specific individual routes.

The Duty of the Local Authority to provide transport

The legal situation regarding school transport is based on a combination of Education Acts going back over 60 years. The relevant section of each Act is included in the appendices to this document. The most recent legislation states that Local Authorities should make “such travel arrangements as they consider necessary in order to secure that suitable home to school travel arrangements ... are made and provided free of charge ... to the child.” (Education & Inspections Act 2006 s508B (Appendix 1))

Parents must make sure all registered pupils regularly attend school. If they do not, court action may be taken against them unless they can prove that the child’s non-attendance is because the pupil is not within walking distance and the LEA has failed to provide transport. Walking distance is defined as up to 2 miles for a child under 8 and up to 3 miles for older children. The walking route must be measured by the “nearest available route” from where their home property meets the highway to the nearest school gate.

The Education and Inspections Act 2006 means that since September 2007, the right to receive free school transport has been extended:

- Children aged between 8 and 11 from low income families are also entitled to free transport if they attend their nearest school even if this is more than two miles away.
- In September 2008, the right was extended again to include Secondary aged pupils (age 11-16) from low income families who attend one of the nearest three schools to their home and this is between 2 and 6 miles away, or
- they attend the nearest school preferred on the grounds of religion or belief that is between 2 and 15 miles from their home. Details of the regulations surrounding religion and belief are included in Appendix 8.

Section 1

Introduction and Principles (cont)

Principles used in these guidelines

Nearest Available Route

The question of what is the nearest available route has been disputed since the beginning of this legislation. Case law has found that distance and not safety is the appropriate test (*Shaxted v Ward* 1954 (Appendix 4)) and that a child should be “accompanied as necessary” (*Rogers and another v Essex CC* 1986 (Appendix 6)).

Case law has found that assessments must look at the relationship between pedestrians and traffic only. Personal safety issues of children travelling alone are not considered. Local authorities are not legally obliged to provide free transport just because parents perceive the route to be unsafe on the grounds of personal safety and security. The case law regarding this issue, which is detailed in the appendices, is still relevant despite its creation some decades ago, and will remain so until such time precedents are changed by the courts.

Accompaniment of Children

In the case of *Regina v Rogers and another* (Appendix 5), the judgement by the House of Lords supported the line consistently taken by Essex County Council that for a route to be available, it must be a route along which a child, accompanied as necessary, can walk with reasonable safety to school. A route would not fail to qualify as “available” because of dangers which would arise if the child was unaccompanied (in this case the route was across common land).

The decision on whether or not a child is accompanied has to remain with the parent / carer and is not necessarily age dependant but will depend on the individual route and the child’s ability and maturity.

Age of Pupil and Nature of Route

Section 509 (4) of the 1996 Education Act declares that the local education authority should take into account the age of the pupil and nature of the route (or alternative routes) they are reasonably expected to take when considering whether arrangements for travel are required (Appendix 2).

This is covered in a DfE document “Home to school travel and transport guidance” published in July 2014 (paragraphs 17 to 22). Whilst this guidance states that local education authorities should take a range of factors into consideration when conducting walking route assessments neither the Act nor the guidance provides further information on how these factors should be taken into account. In Wales the Learner Travel (Wales) Measure 2008 will apply.

Although they are broadly in line with this Road Safety GB document local authorities will need to decide for themselves how to apply the DfE guidance, also considering earlier Acts and case law.

The officer carrying out the assessment will need to use their professional judgement when applying these guidelines.

Behaviour of the road user

It is presumed that all road users will behave reasonably and responsibly.

Section 1

Introduction and Principles (cont)

Street lighting

On its own the absence of street lighting does not make a route unsafe.

Road Accident Record

The accident record for the route over a minimum period of 3 years should be taken into consideration. The existence of an accident record does not necessarily indicate that the route is unsafe for the journey to school, this would depend on the type, nature and relevance of the incidents. Advice from colleagues working with road casualty data may need to be taken.

Traffic flow

Where the two way (one way of a dual carriageway) traffic flow is below 240 vehicles per hour the road is assessed as safe to cross. This is based on the original County Road Safety Officers Association criteria and is equivalent to 1 vehicle every 15 seconds and allows a reasonable gap time to cross a 7m wide road at a walking speed of 0.91 metres per second. A written record of any vehicle counts should be kept.

If the site assessment shows that traffic flow is greater than 240 vehicles per hour and limits the opportunities to cross, then a gap count assessment could also be carried out.

Definitions

Available Route

An available route is any highway or public right of way that is maintained by the Local Authority. Maintained in this sense means a responsibility to keep open to the public and includes any highway, public right of way or other path or track over which public access is permitted and the use of which does not constitute a trespass. This includes roads, surfaced or un-surfaced, footpaths, bridleways or public land.

Footway

A footway or roadside strip is one that is of adequate usable walking width for the circumstances. To be usable it should be clear of overgrowth, ie shrubs and trees obstructing the footway. The road or side roads may need to be crossed to maintain access to the footway.

It may be more cost effective to clear and maintain a footway than to provide free transport.

Highways

Highways include all public rights of way and public roads.

Public bridleway

Bridleways are highways over which the right of way is on foot, bicycle or on horseback.

Public byway

Byways are open to all traffic, however they are primarily used for walking and riding.

Section 1

Introduction and Principles (cont)

Public footpath

Footpaths are highways over which the right of way is on foot only.

Public Right of Way

Public Rights of Way are public footpaths, bridleways and byways open to all traffic.

Public roads

Roads include motorways, trunk roads, A, B and C class roads as well as other unclassified roads that may or may not be surfaced.

Pupil

A child of compulsory school age (that is between 5 and 16 years old). Local Authorities may have their own policies on help with transport for young people over the age of 16.

Sight Lines

A sight line is important when crossing the road or walking along the roadway. For a route to be non-hazardous:

- lines of sight for a pedestrian must be enough for them to see oncoming vehicles and have sufficient time to safely take avoiding action. Vehicle speeds on individual roads would need to be taken into account.
- lines of sight for a driver (measured from a height of 1.05m) must be enough for them to see pedestrians walking along the carriageway and have sufficient time to safely take avoiding action at whatever speed they are travelling. As an absolute minimum this must be the overall minimum stopping distance for traffic at the recorded 85%ile speed of traffic on that road. (85%ile speed is the speed below which 85% of vehicles travel in normal free flow conditions – a speed survey may need to be carried out to find this information).

Note: Mean speeds may be used as an alternative to the 85%ile.

Visibility

The unobstructed distance you can see when measured from the viewpoint of a driver, measured at 1.05m from the road surface.

The unobstructed distance a pedestrian can see from the point at which they have to cross the road or can see traffic when walking on the roadway.

Step off

A “step off” is where pedestrians can step clear of the roadway onto a reasonably even and firm surface such as a roadside verge.

Traffic Interrupter

Any feature in the highway or environment that create gaps in the traffic flow eg traffic lights, roundabouts etc.

Section 2

Route Assessment Procedure

Points to Consider

The whole route from the child's home to the school should be assessed at a time children would normally be travelling to and from school.

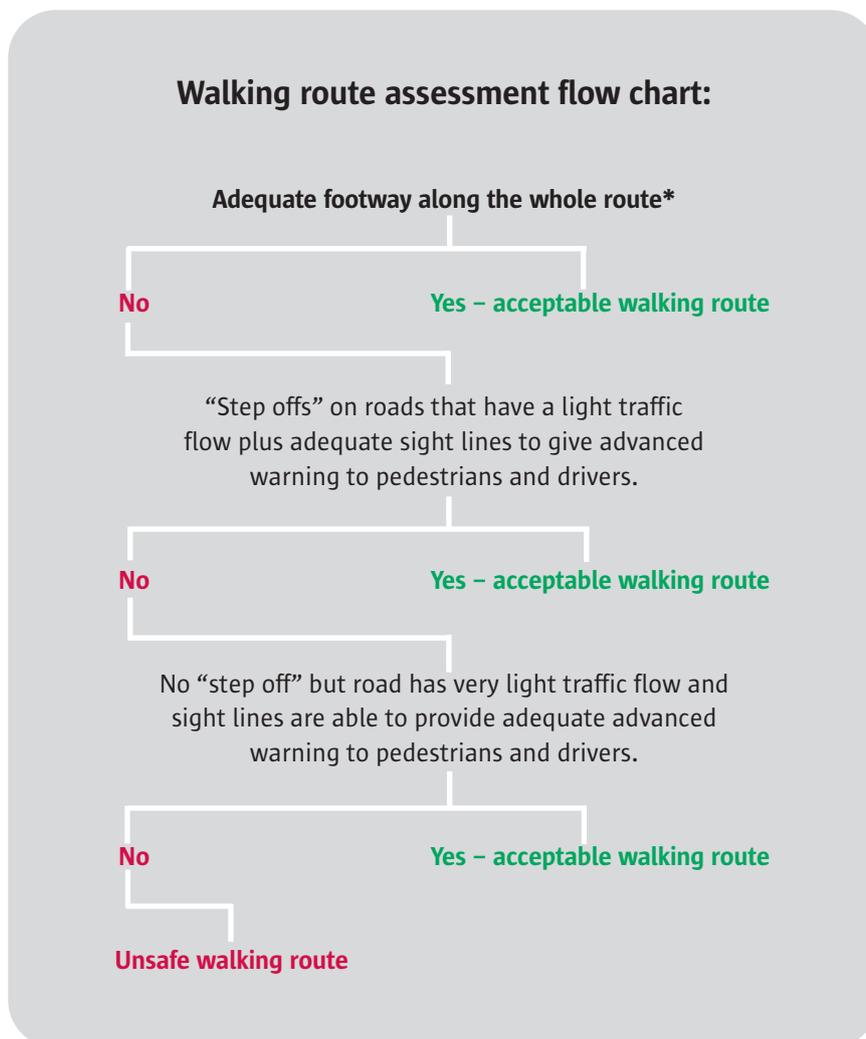
When assessing the safety of a potential walking route, the following points should be considered.

- When assessing the safety of an “available route”, only the potential risk created by traffic, the highway and topographical conditions should be considered (1).
- Each case must be considered on its own merits. Where possible the assessment should be carried out on foot.
Using on-line street imagery may indicate a route is hazardous, however a site survey may also be necessary. Even if it suggests a route is **not** hazardous a site survey must still be carried out.
Note: you should be aware of how old the imagery is as it may not show recent changes to the route.
- It is assumed that children are accompanied as necessary by a responsible parent or carer (2).
- A footway, roadside strip of reasonable width and condition, a public footpath or bridleway will all normally be assumed to provide an available route for that part of the journey (3).
- On a road with light traffic flow a verge that can be stepped on by a child and accompanying parent when traffic is passing can normally be assumed to provide an available route.
This is known as a “step off” (4).
- It is assumed that the road or side roads will be crossed to use a footway or road side strip (5).
- Many available routes may lie along roads that have neither a footway nor verge. On these roads the width of the carriageway, traffic speed and type of traffic (e.g. frequent long or heavy goods vehicles) as well as visibility/sight lines that may be affected by sharp bends, high hedgerows or other obstructions must be considered. It is likely that if a route is found to be lacking in ‘step offs’ then it is also likely to have issues with adequate visibility – the features that affect the availability of ‘step offs’ often impact on visibility – hedges, gradients etc. However, there may be exceptions to this.
- Where roads need to be crossed, the availability of crossing facilities such as central refuges, pedestrian crossings or traffic signals should be taken into consideration. Where no crossing facilities exist the risk assessment of the route should include consideration of each road crossing, bearing in mind traffic speed and flows, sight lines etc.
- The road casualty record along the route.
- A written record of the assessment should be kept.

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Route Assessment Procedure

- A plan showing the route should be attached to each assessment.
- These guidelines cannot cover every eventuality and situation as there are many subtle variations in the features of routes.



- (1) Available route – see definitions, page 6.
- (2) Case law – Regina v Devon County Council refers to “accompanied as necessary” (see appendix 7).
- (3) Case law – Rogers and another v Essex County Council 1986 refers to available route (see appendix 6).
- (4) Step-off – see definitions, page 7.
- (5) Footway or roadside strip – see definitions, page 6.

*The road or side roads may need to be crossed to maintain access to the footway.

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Route Assessment Procedure

If there is a need to cross roads there must also be:

- sufficient gaps in the traffic flow and sight lines to allow enough opportunities to cross safely. The gap time analysis should be used where necessary (see page 11)

or

- Crossing facilities eg, zebra, pelican, puffin crossing etc
- Pedestrian phase at traffic lights
- School Crossing Patrol
- pedestrians refuges

If a road needs to be crossed the visibility at the location should allow a vehicle to stop, given the 85%ile speed (the speed at which 85% of the vehicles travel below) of the traffic flow. Vehicle stopping distances should be taken as those given in the Highway Code.

The presumption is made that all road users follow the highway code and drive to the conditions of the road.

In many rural areas, the exercise of continuous judgement is likely to be required. No criteria can provide all the guidance or answers to every situation that may be encountered.

If there is an adequate footway throughout the whole length of the journey, and there is no need to cross the road, then the route is “safe”. (Informed judgement by the professional may be necessary depending on traffic flows and the nature of the route).

If roads have to be crossed to use a footway or to improve sight lines then it may be necessary to give advice about safe crossing places.

On some country roads the footway may not be continuous. Informed judgement will have to be made about the availability of “step off” points.

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Non-hazardous Route Definition

For a route to be classed as non-hazardous there needs to be:-

Both

A

A continuous adequate footway on roads which carry normal to heavy traffic

or

“Step offs” on roads which have light traffic flow but adequate sight lines to provide sufficient advance warning to drivers and pedestrians.

or

on roads with very light traffic flow, no “step offs”, but sufficiently good sight lines to provide adequate advance warning.

And

B

If there is a need to cross roads there must be:-

Sufficient gaps in the traffic flow and sight lines to allow enough opportunities to cross safely.

or

Crossing facilities (eg zebra, pelican crossings)

Pedestrian phase at traffic lights (including necessary refuges)

School Crossing Patrol

Pedestrian refuges

Road Crossing Assessments

The difficulty of crossing at a site can be assessed by considering the number of gaps in the traffic flow that are acceptable to pedestrians. Free flowing traffic may provide gaps randomly and fairly frequently but speeds tend to be higher and gaps would need to be longer in order to cross the road safely.

An acceptable gap to cross from kerb to kerb varies with each person. We recommend that a walking speed of 0.91m per second is used when assessing.

Gap Time

The survey should record the number of gaps in each 5 minute period that are longer than the road crossing time, using 0.91m per second as the walking speed. Four gaps in each 5 minute period indicate a road that can be crossed without too much delay. Longer gaps could be classified as multiple gaps rather than as just one gap. Transport Note 1/95 (Department for Transport) gives further information on assessing gaps in traffic flow for road crossings.

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Route Assessment Procedure

Site Surveys

Site surveys should usually take place during the period before schools starts in the morning as this is when traffic flow is generally heaviest, unless it can be shown that the afternoon flow is heavier. Further surveys should take place at the end of the school day and again at whichever period has the heaviest traffic flow, giving a minimum of three surveys. Data should be recorded in 5 minute consecutive periods.

Where there is an obstacle such as a narrow bridge along the route, professional judgement will have to be used to assess the relative risk of passing it. The gap criteria given above may be useful and assist in this type of situation.

Traffic Counts

The traffic flow can vary from very low on some country roads to very heavy in urban areas. It will also vary on individual stretches of road depending on the time of day and in some cases time of year and day of the week.

Suggested flow levels:

Low traffic flow – up to 400 vehicles per hour

Medium traffic flow – 400 to 840 vehicles per hour

Heavy traffic flow – over 840 vehicles per hour

It is difficult to define a figure for ‘light’ and ‘very light’ traffic flows as its suitability for these assessments depends on the road environment, ‘platooning’ of traffic and the gaps between ‘platoons’. The assessor should use their professional judgement.

It is recommended that traffic counts are recorded as “passenger car” equivalent values (PCUs), by using the following factors:

Passenger Car Units

3 pedal cycles	= 1 PCU
2 motorcycles	= 1 PCU
1 Car	= 1 PCU
1 light goods vehicle (up to 3.5 tonnes gross weight)	= 1 PCU
1 Bus/Coach (over 3.5 tonnes)	= 2 PCUs
Goods Vehicles (over 3.5 tonnes)	= 2 PCUs
Goods Vehicles (over 7.5 tonnes/multi axle lorries)	= 3 PCUs

All vehicle counts are two way except on one way systems. Dual carriageways are counted as one way on each side.

Where the two way (one way of a dual carriageway) traffic flow is below 240 vehicles per hour the road is assessed as safe to cross. This is based on the original County Road Safety Officers Association criteria and is equivalent to 1 vehicle every 15 seconds and allows a reasonable gap time to cross a 7m wide road at a walking speed of 0.91m per second. Where traffic flow is greater than 240 vehicles per hour a local authority may wish to consider a gap count analysis.

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Education and Inspections Act 2006

Part 6 School travel and school food

Travel to schools etc

After section 508 of EA 1996 insert—

“508A LEAs in England: duty to promote sustainable modes of travel etc

(1) A local education authority in England must—

(a) prepare for each academic year a document containing their strategy to promote the use of sustainable modes of travel to meet the school travel needs of their area (“a sustainable modes of travel strategy”),

(b) publish the strategy in such manner and by such time as may be prescribed, and

(c) promote the use of sustainable modes of travel to meet the school travel needs of their area.

(2) Before preparing a sustainable modes of travel strategy, an authority must in particular—

(a) assess the school travel needs of their area, and

(b) assess the facilities and services for sustainable modes of travel to, from and within their area.

(3) “Sustainable modes of travel” are modes of travel which the authority consider may improve either or both of the following—

(a) the physical well-being of those who use them;

(b) the environmental well-being of the whole or a part of their area.

(4) The “school travel needs” of a local education authority’s area are—

(a) the needs of children and persons of sixth form age in the authority’s area as regards travel mentioned in subsection (5), and

(b) the needs of other children and persons of sixth form age as regards travel mentioned in subsection (6).

(5) The needs of children and persons of sixth form age in the authority’s area as regards travel referred to in subsection (4)(a) are their needs as regards travel to and from—

(a) schools at which they receive or are to receive education or training,

(b) institutions within the further education sector at which they receive or are to receive education or training, or

(c) any other places where they receive or are to receive education by virtue of arrangements made in pursuance of section 19(1).

(6) The needs of other children and persons of sixth form age as regards travel referred to in subsection (4)(b) are their needs as regards travel to and from—

(a) schools at which they receive or are to receive education or training,

(b) institutions within the further education sector at which they receive or are to receive education or training, or

(c) any other places where they receive or are to receive education by virtue of arrangements made in pursuance of section 19(1), in so far as that travel relates to travel within the authority’s area.

(7) The Secretary of State must issue, and may from time to time revise, guidance in relation to the discharge by a local education authority of their duties under this section.

(8) Before issuing or revising guidance under subsection (7), the Secretary of State must consult such persons as he considers appropriate.

(9) In discharging their duties under this section an authority must—

(a) consult such persons as they consider appropriate, and

(b) have regard to any guidance given from time to time by the Secretary of State under subsection (7).

(10) References in this section to persons of sixth form age are to be construed in accordance with subsection (1) of section 509AC.

(11) In this section, “academic year” has the same meaning as in section 509AC in the case of local education authorities in England.”

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(1) After section 508A of EA 1996 insert—

“508B LEAs in England: travel arrangements for eligible children

(1) A local education authority in England must make, in the case of an eligible child in the authority’s area to whom subsection (2) applies, such travel arrangements as they consider necessary in order to secure that suitable home to school travel arrangements, for the purpose of facilitating the child’s attendance at the relevant educational establishment in relation to him, are made and provided free of charge in relation to the child.

(2) This subsection applies to an eligible child if—

(a) no travel arrangements relating to travel in either direction between his home and the relevant educational establishment in relation to him, or in both directions, are provided free of charge in relation to him by any person who is not the authority, or

(b) such travel arrangements are provided free of charge in relation to him by any person who is not the authority but those arrangements, taken together with any other such travel arrangements which are so provided, do not provide suitable home to school travel arrangements for the purpose of facilitating his attendance at the relevant educational establishment in relation to him.

(3) “Home to school travel arrangements”, in relation to an eligible child, are travel arrangements relating to travel in both directions between the child’s home and the relevant educational establishment in question in relation to that child.

(4) “Travel arrangements”, in relation to an eligible child, are travel arrangements of any description and include—

(a) arrangements for the provision of transport, and

(b) any of the following arrangements only if they are made with the consent of a parent of the child—

(i) arrangements for the provision of one or more persons to escort the child (whether alone or together with other children) when travelling to or from the relevant educational establishment in relation to the child;

(ii) arrangements for the payment of the whole or any part of a person’s reasonable travelling expenses;

(iii) arrangements for the payment of allowances in respect of the use of particular modes of travel.

(5) “Travel arrangements”, in relation to an eligible child, include travel arrangements of any description made by any parent of the child only if those arrangements are made by the parent voluntarily.

(6) “Travel arrangements”, in relation to an eligible child, do not comprise or include travel arrangements which give rise to additional costs and do not include appropriate protection against those costs.

(7) For the purposes of subsection (6)—

(a) travel arrangements give rise to additional costs only if they give rise to any need to incur expenditure in order for the child to take advantage of anything provided for him in pursuance of the arrangements, and

(b) travel arrangements include appropriate protection against those costs only if they include provision for any expenditure that needs to be incurred for the purpose mentioned in paragraph (a) in the case of the child to be met by the person by whom the arrangements are made.

(8) Travel arrangements are provided free of charge if there is no charge for anything provided in pursuance of the arrangements.

(9) Schedule 35B has effect for the purposes of defining “eligible child” for the purposes of this section.

(10) References to a “relevant educational establishment”, in relation to an eligible child, are references to—

(a) in the case of a child who is an eligible child by virtue of falling within any of paragraphs 2, 4, 6, 9, 11 and 12 of Schedule 35B, the qualifying school (within the meaning of that Schedule) at which the child is a registered pupil referred to in the paragraph in question, and

(b) in the case of a child who is an eligible child by virtue of falling within any of paragraphs 3, 5, 7, 10 and 13 of Schedule 35B, the place other than a school, where the child is receiving education by virtue of arrangements made in pursuance of section 19(1), referred to in the paragraph in question.

(11) Regulations may modify subsections (1) and (2) to provide for their application in cases where there is more than one relevant educational establishment in relation to a child.

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508C LEAs in England: travel arrangements etc for other children

- (1) A local education authority in England may make such school travel arrangements as they consider necessary, in relation to any child in the authority's area to whom this section applies, for the purpose of facilitating the child's attendance at any relevant educational establishment in relation to the child.
- (2) This section applies to a child who is not an eligible child for the purposes of section 508B.
- (3) "School travel arrangements", in relation to such a child, are travel arrangements relating to travel in either direction between his home and any relevant educational establishment in relation to the child, or in both directions.
- (4) "Travel arrangements", in relation to such a child, are travel arrangements of any description and include—
 - (a) arrangements for the provision of transport, and
 - (b) any of the following arrangements only if they are made with the consent of a parent of the child—
 - (i) arrangements for the provision of one or more persons to escort the child (whether alone or together with other children) when travelling to or from any relevant educational establishment in relation to the child;
 - (ii) arrangements for the payment of the whole or any part of a person's reasonable travelling expenses;
 - (iii) arrangements for the payment of allowances in respect of the use of particular modes of travel.
- (5) A local education authority in England may pay, in the case of a child in the authority's area to whom this section applies and in relation to whom no arrangements are made by the authority under subsection (1), the whole or any part, as they think fit, of a person's reasonable travelling expenses in relation to that child's travel in either direction between his home and any relevant educational establishment in relation to the child, or in both directions.
- (6) References to a "relevant educational establishment", in relation to a child to whom this section applies, are references to—
 - (a) any school at which he is a registered pupil,
 - (b) any institution within the further education sector at which he is receiving education, or
 - (c) any place other than a school where he is receiving education by virtue of arrangements made in pursuance of section 19(1).

508D Guidance etc in relation to sections 508B and 508C

- (1) The Secretary of State must issue, and may from time to time revise, guidance in relation to the discharge by a local education authority of their functions under sections 508B and 508C.
- (2) Before issuing or revising guidance under subsection (1), the Secretary of State must consult such persons as he considers appropriate.
- (3) In discharging their functions under sections 508B and 508C an authority must have regard to any guidance given from time to time by the Secretary of State under subsection (1).
- (4) Regulations may require a local education authority to publish, at such times and in such manner as may be prescribed, such information as may be prescribed with respect to the authority's policy and arrangements relating to the discharge of their functions under section 508B or 508C."
- (2) Schedule 8 (which inserts Schedule 35B to EA 1996) has effect.

(1) After section 508D of EA 1996 insert—

"508E LEAs in England: school travel schemes

- (1) Schedule 35C has effect in relation to school travel schemes.
- (2) Where a school travel scheme is in force under Schedule 35C, the local education authority in England by which the scheme is made must give effect to the scheme by—
 - (a) making the arrangements which are set out in the scheme as described in paragraph 2(1) of that Schedule as arrangements to be made by the authority,
 - (b) complying with the requirement of the scheme described in paragraph 2(5) of that Schedule (requirement to

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make suitable alternative arrangements),

(c) complying with the requirement of the scheme described in paragraph 3 of that Schedule (travel arrangements for eligible children), and

(d) complying with the scheme's policy applicable to charging and any other requirements of the scheme.

(3) Where a school travel scheme is in force under Schedule 35C, the local education authority in England by which the scheme is made do not have any functions under section 508B or 508C in relation to children in their area.

(4) The Secretary of State must issue, and may from time to time revise, guidance in relation to the discharge by a local education authority in England of any duty under subsection (2) or of any functions under Schedule 35C.

(5) Before issuing or revising guidance under subsection (4), the Secretary of State must consult such persons as he considers appropriate.

(6) In discharging any duty under subsection (2) and in exercising any functions under Schedule 35C, a local education authority in England must have regard to any guidance given from time to time by the Secretary of State under subsection (4)."

(2) Schedule 9 (which inserts Schedule 35C to EA 1996) has effect.

79 Piloting of school travel scheme provisions

(1) The school travel scheme provisions are to be piloted in accordance with regulations made by the Secretary of State.

(2) Regulations under subsection (1) may, in particular, provide for there to be a limit on the number of school travel schemes which may be in force while the school travel scheme provisions are being piloted.

(3) In this section, "the school travel scheme provisions" means section 508E of, and Schedule 35C to, EA 1996.

80 Power to repeal school travel scheme provisions etc

(1) The Secretary of State must prepare and publish, before 1st January 2012, an evaluation of the operation and effect of school travel schemes approved under Schedule 35C to EA 1996.

(2) The Secretary of State may by order provide for the school travel scheme provisions to cease to have effect in relation to local education authorities with effect from such date as may be specified in the order.

(3) The earliest date which may be specified under subsection (2) is 1st August 2012.

(4) The latest date which may be specified under subsection (2) is 1st August 2015.

(5) Power to make an order under this section includes power to make consequential amendments and repeals in any enactment, including this Act and enactments passed or made after the passing of this Act.

(6) In this section, "the school travel scheme provisions" means section 508E of, and Schedule 35C to, EA 1996.

After section 508E of EA 1996 insert—

"508F LEAs in England: provision of transport etc for certain adult learners

(1) A local education authority in England must make such arrangements for the provision of transport and otherwise as they consider necessary, or as the Secretary of State may direct, for the purpose of facilitating the attendance of qualifying adult learners receiving education or training at an institution outside both the further education and higher education sectors.

(2) "Qualifying adult learners" means adult learners for whom the Learning and Skills Council for England has secured—

(a) the provision of education or training at the institution in question, and

(b) the provision of boarding accommodation under section 13 of the Learning and Skills Act 2000 (persons with learning difficulties).

(3) Any transport provided in pursuance of arrangements under subsection (1) must be provided free of charge.

(4) A local education authority in England may pay the whole or any part, as they think fit, of the reasonable travelling expenses of any adult learner receiving education or training at an institution outside both the further education and higher education sectors for whose transport no arrangements are made under subsection (1).

(5) In considering whether or not they are required by subsection (1) to make arrangements in relation to a

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particular person, a local education authority must have regard, amongst other things, to the age of the person and the nature of the routes which he could reasonably be expected to take.

(6) Arrangements made by a local education authority under subsection (1) must make provision for persons receiving full-time education or training at institutions mentioned in subsection (1) which is no less favourable than the provision made in pursuance of the arrangements for persons of the same age with learning difficulties (within the meaning of section 13 of the Learning and Skills Act 2000) for whom the authority secure the provision of education at any other institution.

(7) “Adult learner” means a person who is neither a child nor a person of sixth form age.

(8) The reference in subsection (7) to a person of sixth form age is to be construed in accordance with subsection (1) of section 509AC.”

82 Amendments of section 444 of EA 1996 in relation to school travel

(1) Section 444 of EA 1996 (offence of failing to secure regular attendance at school of registered pupil) is amended as follows.

(2) After subsection (3) insert—

“(3A) Subsections (3B) and (3D) apply where the child’s home is in England.

(3B) The child shall not be taken to have failed to attend regularly at the school if the parent proves that—

(a) the local education authority have a duty to make travel arrangements in relation to the child under section 508B(1) for the purpose of facilitating the child’s attendance at the school and have failed to discharge that duty, or

(b) the local education authority have a duty to make travel arrangements in relation to the child by virtue of subsection (2)(c) of section 508E (school travel schemes) for the purpose of facilitating the child’s attendance at the school and have failed to discharge that duty.

(3C) For the purposes of subsection (3B)—

(a) the reference to “travel arrangements” in paragraph (a) has the same meaning as in section 508B, and

(b) the reference to “travel arrangements” in paragraph (b) has the same meaning as in paragraph 3 of Schedule 35C.

(3D) Where the school is an independent school which is not a qualifying school, the child shall not be taken to have failed to attend regularly at the school if the parent proves—

(a) that the school is not within walking distance of the child’s home,

(b) that no suitable arrangements have been made by the local education authority for boarding accommodation for him at or near the school, and

(c) that no suitable arrangements have been made by the local education authority for enabling him to become a registered pupil at a qualifying school nearer to his home.

(3E) For the purposes of subsection (3D), “qualifying school” has the same meaning as it has for the purposes of Schedule 35B (meaning of “eligible child” for the purposes of section 508B).

(3F) Subsection (4) applies where the child’s home is in Wales.”

(3) In subsection (5) for “subsection (4)” substitute “subsections (3D) and (4)”.

(4) In subsection (6) for “subsection (4)” substitute “subsections (3B), (3D) and (4)”.

(5) The amendments made by this section do not apply in relation to any failure of a child to attend at a school or other place in relation to which section 444 of EA 1996 applies which occurs on a day before this section comes into force.

(1) In section 509AA of EA 1996 (provision of transport etc for persons of sixth form age)—

(a) in subsection (9)—

(i) for “Secretary of State” substitute “appropriate authority”, and

(ii) for “he” substitute “it”,

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(b) after subsection (9) insert—

“(9A) The “appropriate authority” means—

(a) in the case of a local education authority in England, the Secretary of State, and

(b) in the case of a local education authority in Wales, the National Assembly for Wales.”, and

(c) in subsection (10), after “Secretary of State” insert “(in relation to local education authorities in England) or the National Assembly for Wales (in relation to local education authorities in Wales)”.

(2) In section 509AB of EA 1996 (further provision about transport policy statements)—

(a) in subsection (5), for the words from “by the Secretary” to the end substitute “under this section—

(a) by the Learning and Skills Council for England (in the case of an authority in England), or

(b) by the National Assembly for Wales (in the case of an authority in Wales).”,

(b) in subsection (6)(d), for the words from “by the Secretary” to the end substitute “for the purposes of this section by the Learning and Skills Council for England (in the case of an authority in England) or the National Assembly for Wales (in the case of an authority in Wales).”, and

(c) after subsection (7) insert—

“(8) Any guidance issued by the Learning and Skills Council for England under this section must be published in such manner as the Council thinks fit.”

(3) In section 509AC of EA 1996 (interpretation of sections 509AA and 509AB)—

(a) in subsection (6), after “subsection (5)” insert “in relation to its application in the case of local education authorities in England”, and

(b) after subsection (6) insert—

“(7) The National Assembly for Wales may by order amend the definition of “academic year” in subsection (5) in relation to its application in the case of local education authorities in Wales.”

(4) In section 18 of the Learning and Skills Act 2000 (c. 21) (supplementary functions of Learning and Skills Council for England), after subsection (5) insert—

“(6) The Secretary of State may by order confer or impose on the Council such powers or duties falling within subsection (7) as he thinks fit.

(7) A power or duty falls within this subsection if it is exercisable in connection with—

(a) the Secretary of State’s function under section 509AA(9) of the Education Act 1996 (power to direct LEA to make arrangements additional to those specified in transport policy statement), or

(b) any function of the Secretary of State under any of sections 496 to 497B of the Education Act 1996 as regards anything done, proposed to be done or omitted to be done by a local education authority in England under section 509AA or 509AB of that Act.”

After section 509AC of EA 1996 insert—

“509AD LEAs in England: duty to have regard to religion or belief in exercise of travel functions

(1) A local education authority in England must have regard, amongst other things, in exercising any of their travel functions in relation to or in connection with the travel of a person or persons to or from a school, institution or other place, to any wish of a parent of such a person for him to be provided with education or training at a particular school, institution or other place where that wish is based on the parent’s religion or belief.

(2) The “travel functions” of a local education authority in England are their functions under any of the following provisions—

- section 508A (duty to promote sustainable modes of travel etc);
- section 508B (travel arrangements for eligible children);
- section 508C (travel arrangements etc for other children);
- section 508E and Schedule 35C (school travel schemes);
- section 508F (transport etc for certain adult learners);
- section 509AA (transport etc for persons of sixth form age).

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(3) For the purposes of this section—

(a) “religion” means any religion,

(b) “belief” means any religious or philosophical belief,

(c) a reference to religion includes a reference to lack of religion, and

(d) a reference to belief includes a reference to lack of belief.”

85 Further amendments relating to travel to schools etc

Schedule 10 contains further amendments relating to travel to schools and other places where education or training is received.

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EDUCATION ACT 1996 Section 509

Provision of Transport etc:

(1) A local education authority shall make such arrangements for the provision of transport and otherwise as they consider necessary, or as the Secretary of State may direct, for the purpose of facilitating the attendance of persons receiving education:-

- (a) at schools;
- (b) at any institution maintained or assisted by the authority which provides further education or higher education (or both);
- (c) at any institution within the further education sector; or
- (d) at any institution outside both the further education sector and the higher education sectors, where a further education funding council has secured provision for those persons at the institution under section 4(3) or (5) of the Further and Higher Education Act 1992.

(2) Any transport provided in pursuance of arrangements under subsection (1) shall be provided free of charge.

(3) A local education authority may pay the whole or any part, as they see fit, of the reasonable travelling expenses of any person receiving education:-

- (a) at a school, or
- (b) at any such institution as is mentioned in subsection (1), for whose transport no arrangements are made under that subsection.

(4) In considering whether or not they are required by subsection (1) to make arrangements in relation to a particular person, a local education authority shall have regard (amongst other things):-

- (a) to the age of the person and the nature of the route, or alternative routes, which he could reasonably be expected to take; and
- (b) to any wish of his parent for him to be provided with education at a school or institution in which the religious education provided is that of the religion or denomination to which his parent adheres.

(5) Arrangements made by a local education authority under subsection (1) shall:-

- (a) make provision for pupils at grant-maintained schools which is no less favourable than the provision made in pursuance of the arrangements for pupils at schools maintained by a local education authority;
- (b) make provision for persons receiving full-time education at any institution within the further education sector which is no less favourable than the provision made in pursuance of the arrangements for pupils of the same age at schools maintained by a local education authority; and
- (c) make provision for persons receiving full-time education at institutions mentioned in subsection (1)(d) which is no less favourable than:-

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(i) the provision made in pursuance of the arrangements for persons of the same age with learning difficulties (within the meaning of section 15(5) at schools maintained by a local education authority, or

(ii) where there are no such arrangements, the provision made in pursuance of such arrangements for such persons for whom the authority secures the provision of education at any other institution.

(6) Regulations under section 414(6) may require publication (within the meaning of that section) by every local education authority of such information as may be required by the regulations with respect to the authority's policy and arrangements for provision under this section for persons attending institutions mentioned in subsection (1) (c) or (d) who are over compulsory school age and who have not attained the age of 19.

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EDUCATION ACT 1996 Section 444

Offence: failure to secure regular attendance at school of registered pupil.

(1) If a child of compulsory school age who is a registered pupil at a school fails to attend regularly at the school, his parent is guilty of an offence.

(2) Subsections (3) to (6) below apply in proceedings for an offence under this section in respect of a child who is not a boarder at the school in which he is a registered pupil.

(3) The child shall not be taken to have failed to attend regularly at the school if he is...

- (a) with leave,
- (b) at any time when he was prevented from attending by reason of sickness or any unavoidable cause, or
- (c) on any day exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which his parent belongs.

(4) The child shall not be taken to have failed to attend regularly at the school if the parent proves:-

- (a) that the school at which the child is a registered pupil is not within walking distance of the child's home, and
- (b) that no suitable arrangements have been made by the local education authority or the funding authority for any of the following:-

- (i) his transport to and from the school
- (ii) boarding accommodation for him at or near the school, or
- (ii) enabling him to become a registered pupil at a school nearer to his home.

(5) In subsection (4) 'walking distance':-

- (a) in relation to a child who is under the age of eight, means 3.218688 kilometres (two miles), and
- (b) in relation to a child who has attained the age of eight, means 4.828032 kilometres (three miles),

in each case measured by the nearest available route.

(6) If it is proved that the child has no fixed abode, subsection (4) shall not apply, but the parent shall be acquitted if he proves:-

- (a) that he is engaged in a trade or business of such a nature as to require him to travel from place to place,
- (b) that the child has attended at a school as a registered pupil as regularly as the nature of that trade or business permits, and
- (c) if the child has attained the age of six, that he has made at least 200 attendances during the period of 12 months ending with the date on which the proceedings were instituted.

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(7) In proceedings for an offence under this section in respect of a child who is a boarder at the school at which he is a registered pupil, the child shall be taken to have failed to attend regularly at the school if he is absent from it without leave during any part of the school term at a time when he was not prevented from being present by reason of sickness or any unavoidable cause.

(8) A person guilty of an offence under this section is liable on summary conviction to a fine not exceeding level 3 on the standard scale.

(9) In this section 'leave', in relation to a school, means leave granted by any person authorised to do so by the governing body or proprietor of the school.

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The Weekly Law Reports – Shaxted v. Ward Feb. 1954

SHAXTED v. WARD

[QUEEN'S BENCH DIVISION (Lord Goddard, C.J. Byrne and Parker, J.J.), January 25 1954.]

Education – School attendance – Duty of parent to secure regular attendance of pupil – ‘available route’ – Road unsafe for unescorted children – Dangerous crossing – Education Act, 1944 (S31), S39(5).

By the Education Act, 1944 S39(2)(c), a child shall not be deemed to have failed to attend regularly at school if the school at which the child is a registered pupil is not within ‘walking distance’ of the child’s home. By S39(5) walking distance means, according to the age of the child, two or three miles measured by ‘the nearest available route’.

The appellant, the father of the child, aged six years, who failed to attend school regularly, being charged with an offence under S39(1) of the Act (which provides that, if a child of compulsory school age fails regularly to attend school, the parent of the child shall be guilty of an offence), contended that, although the direct route from the child’s home to the school was within the distance laid down in S39(5) part of the road was unsafe for unescorted children as it included a dangerous crossing, and, therefore, was not an ‘available route’; that the nearest available safe route was more than the distance laid down in S39(5); and therefore, there was a reasonable excuse for non-attendance.

Held: Distance, not safety, was the test for determining ‘the nearest available route’, and, therefore, the school was within walking distance of the child’s home, and the appellant was guilty of an offence.

FOR THE EDUCATION ACT, 1944, S39, SEE HALSBURY’S STATUTES Second Edition, Vol. 8, p.183.

Cases referred to:

(1)Hares v. Curtin, [1913] 2 K.B. 328; 82 L.J.K.B. 707; 108 L.T. 974;

76 J.P. 313; 19 Digest 568, 89.

Cases Stated by Kent Justices.

At a court of summary jurisdiction, sitting at Canterbury on Aug. 13, 1953, the respondent, Francis George Ward, an education welfare officer, preferred informations against each of the appellants, Bertie Herbert Harold Shaxted and Albert George Farrier, charging that each, being the parent of a child of compulsory school age, was guilty of an offence against S39(1) of the Education Act, 1944, in that the child, who was a registered pupil at Preston County Primary School, failed to attend regularly thereat between April 21 and June 26, 1953.

It was proved or admitted that each of the appellants was the parent of a child of compulsory school age who was a registered pupil at the said school and failed to attend that school during the period mentioned in the information: that each child lived in the hamlet of West Stourmouth and within the distance from the school laid down in S39(5) of the Act as ‘walking distance’ in relation to each such child respectively by the direct route; that this route was safe for the children to use if escorted, the bit of road near the school where, owing to the presence

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of a dangerous crossing, an escort would be desirable for small children being common to both the children in question; that it was usual, and the duty of parents, to provide escort for their children to and from school, when necessary; that the education authority, nevertheless, arranged for an omnibus taking the children from Stourmouth to and from a secondary school at Sandwich to take the children of the appellants to and from school during the period in question; that on the return journey the omnibus reached the school at 4.45 p.m. to pick up these children there, they having finished their lessons at 3.45 p.m. ; that the appellants wanted a special omnibus from the school and would not provide an escort for their children; that another Stourmouth resident, a Mr S., who was a co-defendant with the appellants and gave evidence, admitted that his son could have attended the school regularly, but he 'had to stand by the other parents'.

On behalf of the appellants it was contended: (i) that the direct routes were not safe for their children to use when returning from school in a party; (ii) that the afternoon bus from school was not suitable transport for the return journey and, (iii) that, therefore, they were prevented by unavoidable cause within the meaning of S39(2)(a) of the Education Act, 1944, from sending their children to school; (iv) that the words 'in relation to a child' of the ages specified in S39(5) referred not merely to the words 'walking distance', but that those words also governed the later words 'nearest available route', limiting those words to such routes only as were safe for a child to use, that the direct routes were not safe for the children and the nearest available safe route was more than the distances specified in the section, and so the children were entitled to transport, but no suitable arrangements had been made for their transport to school. On behalf of the respondent it was contended that 'available route' meant a route which could be followed without committing trespass.

The justices were of the opinion that no defence had been made out because (i) the direct routes were safe for children when escorted; (ii) there was no unavoidable cause, because the direct routes were safe if the parents had escorted their children or arranged for their escort, and also the omnibus provided was suitable in the circumstances; (iii) the suggested interpretation of the words 'available route' was irrelevant because the justices held (a) that the direct routes were, in fact, safe for the children in question, and (b) that the omnibus provided from school was a 'suitable arrangement' for the transport of the said children; (iv) and, further, the suggested interpretation of the words 'available route' was strained and unnatural. The justices held that the school was within walking distance of the home of each appellant so that the appellants were not entitled to transport for their children, and they convicted the appellants. The second appellant withdrew his appeal.

Van Oss for the appellant, Shaxted.

Thesiger, Q.C., and Jupp for the respondent.

LORD GODDARD, C.J., stated the facts and continued: The question is whether or not the school is within walking distance of the child's home. By the Education Act, 1944 S39(1), a parent is guilty of an offence if his child fails to attend regularly at the school where he is a registered pupil, but by S39(2): "...the child shall not be deemed to have failed to attend regularly at school (c) if the parent proves that the school at which the child is a registered pupil is not within walking distance of the child's home, and that no suitable arrangements have been made by the local education authority either for his transport to and from the school or for boarding accommodation..."

We need not deal with suitable accommodation if the school is within walking distance, which by S39(5)

"...means in relation to a child who has not attained the age of eight years two miles, and in the case of any other child three miles, measured by the nearest available route."

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What the justices had to decide was whether or not the school was within walking distance, and it is said that the route which the child took, and which is under two miles, is not the nearest available route because part of it is said to be dangerous for children to walk alone unescorted. I cannot read the word 'available' as meaning necessarily safe, because we can see how that word got into the Act. By the Elementary Education Act, 1870, S74(3), it was a reasonable excuse:

"That there is no public elementary school open which the child can attend within such distance, not exceeding three miles, measured according to the nearest road from the residence of such child, as the by-laws may prescribe."

The Education Act, 1921, S49(b) provided an identical "reasonable excuse". Before the Act of 1921, in *Hares v. Curtin (1)*, in which it was suggested that a cart track could not be a road and that the walking distance had not been measured according to, "the nearest road".

LORD ALVERSTONE, C.J., giving judgement, said (1913 2 K.B. 331):

"It does not mean a road of any particular class, but simply a route from the residence of the child to the nearest school".

In the Act of 1944 the words used in S39(5) are "two miles... measured by the nearest available route". I do not think that they were meant to make any change in the law, except that a number of somewhat unnecessary words were cut out and there was substituted in the expression which has been used in this court in *Hares v. Curtin (1)*.

To some extent I sympathise with the views of the appellant in the present case. It may be that the parents would like to bring pressure on the Kent County Council to have someone to see that this 'bit of road', as the justices call it, is safe for the children to cross - someone, for example, as is seen in London, wearing a white smock and holding a board with the words "Children Crossing, Stop". That, however, is a matter for the education authority to consider and put into operation if it thinks fit. I can only say, speaking for myself, that a route along which a child can walk and which measures not more than two miles is "the nearest available route". It may sometimes be unsafe. Sometimes the route might be flooded and the child could not walk along it, that might be a reasonable excuse for not using it on that particular day. We are not dealing with that sort of question. We are dealing with the question where the parents think it is not safe. Parliament has not substituted safety for distance as the test. Any question with regard to safety must, and I have no doubt, will, be taken into consideration by the education authority. I think in this case the justices came to a right decision and the appeal fails.

BYRNE, J.:

I agree. Counsel for the appellant contended that the meaning of the word 'available' in the Education Act, 1944 S39(5), is that there is no sound reason why that route should not be used by children. I am bound to say that I cannot read that meaning into that word. The 'nearest available route' means the method by which the two miles are measured from the child's house to the school in order to ascertain whether or not it is a walking distance."

PARKER, J.:

I agree.

Solicitors: Jaques & Co., agents for Girling, Wilson & Bailey, Margate (for the appellant); Sharpe, Pritchard & Co., agents for Gerald Birship, Maidstone (for the respondent).

[Reported by F. GUTTMAN, ESQ., Barrister-at-Law.

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The Weekly Law Reports – Farrier v Ward Feb. 12, 1954

[QUEEN’S BENCH DIVISION]

* FARRIER v. WARD

1954 Jan. 25 – Lord Goddard C.J. Byrne and Parker JJ.

Education – School – Attendance – ‘Walking Distance’ – Direct route nor safe for children unless escorted – Meaning of ‘nearest available route’ – Question of safety – Education Act, 1944 (7 & 8 Geo. 6, c.31), s.39(5).

Section 39(2) of the Education Act, 1944, provides that a child under eight years of age shall not be deemed to have failed to attend school regularly if his parent proves that the school is not within walking distance of the child’s home. By subsection (5): the expression ‘walking distance’ means, in relation to a child who has not attained the age of eight years two miles, measured ‘by the nearest available route’.

The words ‘nearest available route’ in section 39(5) of the Act refer only to measurement of the distance between the child’s home and the school; if a route fulfils the requirements of that section as to distance, the fact that it may be unsafe is not material.

CASE STATED by Kent justices sitting at Canterbury.

On July 13, 1953, informations were preferred by Francis George Ward, the County Education Welfare officer, against Bertie Herbert Harold Shaxted and Albert George Farrier, charging that each, being the parent of a child of compulsory school age, was guilty of an offence in that the child was guilty of an offence in that the child who was a registered pupil at Preston County Primary School failed to attend regularly thereat between April 21 and August 26, contrary to section 39(1) of the Education Act, 1944.

At the hearing of the informations the following facts were proved or admitted. Each defendant was the parent of a child of compulsory school age who was under eight years of age and a registered pupil at the Preston school and who failed to attend during the material period. Each child lived in the hamlet of West Stourmouth and the route from his home to the school was under two miles. These routes were safe for the children to use, if escorted. Both children had to travel by a bit of road near the school where an escort would be desirable for small children. It was usual and the duty of parents to provide escort for their children but nevertheless the education authority arranged for an omnibus which took the children from Stourmouth to and from Preston School during the period in question. On the return journey the bus reached Preston School at 4.45 p.m. to collect the children, the children at that school having finished their lessons at 3.45 p.m. The defendants wanted a special omnibus from school and would not provide any escort for their children.

It was contended for the defendants (a) that the direct routes were not safe for their children to use when returning from work in a party; (b) that the afternoon bus provided by the education authority was not suitable transport for the return journey; and (c) that for those reasons they were prevented by unavoidable cause within the meaning of Section 39(2)(c) of the Act from sending their children to school. They also contend that the words “in relation to a child” in Section 39(5) referred not merely to the words ‘walking distance’ appropriate to the respective ages specified in the subsection but to the later words ‘nearest available route’, limiting them to such

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routes only as were safe for a child of the ages specified to use and that the nearest available safe route was more than the distance specified in the section.

The prosecutor contended that ‘available route’ meant a route which could be followed without committing trespass.

The justices were of the opinion that the direct routes were safe for children when escorted; that there was no unavoidable cause within the meaning of section 39(2)(c) because the direct routes were safe if the children had escorted the children or arranged for their escort; and that in the circumstances the bus provided was suitable. They considered, therefore, that the suggested interpretation of the words ‘available route’ was irrelevant, but that if it were relevant the defendants’ interpretation of the words ‘available route’ would be strained and unnatural. Accordingly, they held that the Preston school was within ‘walking distance’ of the home of both appellants, who were not entitled to transport for their children. The justices convicted the defendants.

The defendant Farrier appealed.

M.D. Van Oss for the appellant

Gerald A. Thesiger Q.C. and K. Jupp for the prosecutor.

Hares v. Curtin was cited in argument [1913] 2 K.B. 328.

LORD GODDARD C.J.

The short point that arises is this: The justices found that the route which these children had to travel was ‘safe for these children to use if escorted. The bit of road near the school where an escort would be desirable for small children was common to both the children in question.’ I think that the justices recognized that it would be desirable for children to be escorted or in some way conducted along or across a certain piece of road where there was probably a good deal of traffic. They found that it was usual for parents to provide escort for their children to and from school, when necessary.

The real question is whether the school is within walking distance of the children’s home because section 39 of the Education Act, 1944, provides that it is a reasonable excuse for the parent to prove ‘that the school at which the child is a registered pupil is not within walking distance of the child’s home, and that no suitable arrangements have been made by the local education authority either for this transport to and from the school or for boarding. By section 39(5); ‘walking distance’ means in relation to a child who has not attained the age of 8 years two miles, measured by the nearest available route. The justices have to find whether the school is within walking distance; and it is said that the route which the children took, which was under two miles, was not the ‘nearest available route’ because part of it was said to be dangerous for children to walk along unescorted. I cannot read the word ‘available’ as meaning necessarily safe, because we can see how these words came to be included in the Act.

By section 74 of the Elementary Education Act, 1870, the excuse was if ‘there is no public elementary school open which the child can attend within such distance, not exceeding three miles, measured according to the nearest road from the residence of such child, as the by-laws may prescribe’. In section 49(6) of the Education Act, 1921, the reason was ‘that there is no public elementary school open which the child can attend within such distance, not exceeding three miles, measured according to the nearest road from the residence of the child, as the by-laws may prescribe’. There is no difference in the words in those Acts.

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Before the Act of 1921, it was suggested in *Hares v. Curtin* which was decided in 1913, that a cart track could not be the nearest road because the walking distance had not been measured according to the nearest road; and Lord Alverstone, giving judgement, said “It does not mean a road of any particular class, but simply a route from the residence of a child to the nearest school.”

In the Education Act, 1944, the words used are “two miles measured by the nearest available route.” I do not think that it was meant to make any change in the law at all, except that it omits a number of somewhat unnecessary words and substitutes the expression which was used in the court in *Hares v. Curtin*.

To some extent I sympathize with the views of the parents in this case, and it may be that they would like to bring pressure upon the Kent County Council to have a person on the road to see that ‘this bit of the road’, as the justices call it, is safe for the children to cross. Those, however, are matters for the education authority to consider and to put into operation if they think fit. I can only say that, if there is a road which measures not more than two miles or a route along which a child can walk and its measurement does not exceed two miles, that is the nearest available route. It may sometimes be unsafe; sometimes the route might be flooded, and, if that happened and the person could not walk along the road, that might be a reasonable excuse for not using it on that particular day, but we are not concerned with that but with a case where the parents think the route is not safe. Parliament has not substituted safety as a test but the distance. Any question with regard to safety must be, and I have no doubt will be, taken into consideration by the education authority. In my opinion, therefore, the justices came to a right decision and the appeal fails.

BYRNE J.

I agree. Mr Van Oss contends that the meaning of the word ‘available’ is that there is no sound reason why that route should not be used by children. I am bound to say that I cannot read that meaning into the word but, as it appears in the Act of 1944, all that is meant by the ‘nearest available route’ is the method by which the two miles are to be measured from the child’s house to the school in order to ascertain whether it is a walking distance.

PARKER J.

I agree with both judgements which have been delivered.

Appeal dismissed.

Solicitors: Jaques & Co. for *Girling, Wilson & Bailey*, Margate; *Sharpe, Prichard & Co.* for *Gerald Bishop*, Maidstone.

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House of Lords Judgement 16.10.86

All England Law Reports

7 November 1986

Rogers and another v Essex County Council

HOUSE OF LORDS

LORD BRIDGE OF HARWICH, LORD BRANDON OF OAKBROOK, LORD MACKAY OF CLASHFERN, LORD ACKNER AND LORD OLIVER OF AYLWERTON

28 July, 16 October 1986

Education – School attendance – Duty of parent to secure regular attendance of pupil – Failure to secure regular attendance – Proceedings against parent – Defence – Distance of home from school – Nearest available route – Shortest route dangerous to unaccompanied child – Whether route “available” – Education Act 1944 S39 (2)(c)(5).

The distance of the shortest public route between a house where a 12 year old child lived and the school where she was registered was 2.94 miles. Part of that route consisted of an isolated, unmade and unlit track which, particularly in winter, would be both difficult and dangerous for a young girl to cross on her own. The child failed to attend school regularly and her parents were convicted of failing to ensure her regular attendance, contrary to S39(2)(c) of the Education Act 1944. The parents appealed, relying on S39(2)(c) of the Act which provided that it was a good defence to show that the school was not within walking distance of the child’s home and the local authority had not provided transport or alternative schooling arrangements. In the case of a child over eight years old, “walking distance” was defined by S39(5) as “three miles, measured by the nearest available route.” The Crown Court dismissed the appeal but the parent’s appeal to the Divisional Court was upheld on the grounds that the nearest available route was that route which the child could safely use unaccompanied. The local authority appealed to the House of Lords, contending that the nearest available route usable without trespassing.

Held:

For the purpose of deciding under S39 of the 1944 Act whether a school was within walking distance of a child’s home, the nearest route between the child’s home and his or her school was the nearest route along which the child could walk to school with reasonable safety when accompanied by an adult and a route did not fail to qualify as the nearest available route because of dangers which would arise if the child was unaccompanied. The local authority’s appeal would therefore be allowed.

Notes:

For the duty of parents to secure attendance of pupils and for statutory defences to proceedings against parent s for non-attendance of registered pupils see 15 Halsbury’s Laws (4th Edition) Paras32-33, and for cases on the subject see 19 Digest (Reissue) 499, 503, 3885, 3902.

Case referred to in options

Shaxted v Ward (1954) Farrier v Ward (1954)

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Appeal:

Essex County Council appealed, with leave of the Divisional Court of the Queen's Division given on 10 May 1985, against the decision of that court (Parker LJ and Tudor Evans J) on 19 February 1985 allowing an appeal by the respondents, Peter Albert Rogers and Violet Rogers (the parents), by way of case stated against a decision of the Crown Court at Chelmsford (His Honour Judge Ward and justices) on 13 July 1984 dismissing the parents appeal from their conviction by the justices for the county of Essex acting in and for the petty sessional division of Colchester on 23 May 1984 for an offence under SS39 and 40(i) of the Education Act 1944 by reason of the failure of the parents daughter to attend regularly at the Stanway Comprehensive School where she was a registered pupil. The Divisional Court certified that a point of law of general public importance was involved in its decision.

The facts are set out in the opinion of Lord Ackner.

Conrad Dehn QC and David Mellor for the local authority.

Gavin Lightman QC and Edward Irving for the parents.

Their Lordships took time for consideration.

16 October. The following opinions were delivered.

LORD BRIDGE OF HARWICH.

My Lords, for the reasons given in the speech of my noble and learned friend Lord Ackner, with which I agree, I would allow the appeal and answer the certified question in the negative.

LORD BRANDON OF OAKBROOK.

My Lords, I have had the advantage of reading in draft the speech prepared by my noble and learned friend Lord Ackner. I agree with it and for the reasons which he gives I would allow the appeal and make no order as to costs.

LORD MACKAY OF CLASHFERN.

My Lords. I have had the opportunity of reading in draft the speech prepared by Lord Ackner. I agree with it and concur in the order which he proposes.

LORD ACKNER.

My Lords, the short question raised by this appeal is: who is to pay for the transport to the Stanway comprehensive school of Shirley Rogers, a schoolgirl aged 12 at the material time? Should it be the appellants, the Essex County Council, which is the local education authority or the respondents, Shirley's parents? The local authority have offered Shirley the use of the school bus but subject to payment of the concessionary fare of £20 a term, the parents not qualifying for free transport on a means test basis. The parents, in principle, have refused to make any payment for school transport. The answer to the question is provided by the Education Act 1944 of which only a few sections need to be referred to.

Education Act 1944 Section 36 imposes on parents the duty to secure the education of their children. It provides:

“It shall be the duty of the parent of every child of compulsory school age to cause him to receive efficient full-time education suitable to his age, ability and aptitude and to any special educational needs he may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.”

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Section 39 imposes the duty on parents to secure regular attendance of registered pupils. Shirley was registered at the Stanway School. This section provides:

- (1) If any child of compulsory school age who is a registered pupil at a school fails to attend regularly thereat, the parent of the child shall be guilty of an offence against this section.
- (2) In any proceedings for an offence against this section in respect of a child who is not a boarder at the school at which he is not a registered pupil, the child shall not be deemed to have failed to attend regularly at the school be reason of his absence therefrom with leave or – (a) at any time when he was prevented from attending by reason of sickness or any unavoidable cause: (b) on any day exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which his parent belongs: (c) if the parent proves that the school at which the child is a registered pupil is not within walking distance of the child’s home and that no suitable arrangements have been made by the local education authority either for his transport to and from the school or for boarding accommodation for him at or near the school or for enabling him to become a registered pupil at a school nearer to his home...
- (5) In this section the expression... “walking distance” means, in relation to a child who has not attained the age of eight years two miles and in the case of any other child three miles, measured by the nearest available route”.

Section 55 relates to the provision of transport and other facilities. As amended, it provides:

- (1) A local education authority shall make such arrangements for the provision of transport and otherwise as they consider necessary for as the Secretary of State may direct for the purpose of facilitating the attendance of pupils at schools or country colleges or at any course or class provided in pursuance of a scheme of further education in force for their area and any transport provided in pursuance of such arrangements shall be provided free of charge.
- (2) A local education authority may pay the whole, or any part, as the authority think fit, of the reasonable travelling expenses of any pupil in attendance at any school or county college or at such course or class as aforesaid for whose transport no arrangements are made under this section.

This appeal is concerned with the “walking distance” from Shirley’s home to her school and in particular whether the nearest available route exceeded three miles, she being in the older age group referred to in S39(5), quoted above. The dispute arises in the following circumstances.

The facts:

The distance from Shirley’s home to the school by the shortest route is 2.94 miles. That route involves crossing Copford Plains by an isolated and partly unmade track which is entirely unlighted. In winter this route is one of considerable danger for a young girl who would have to walk over Copford Plains in darkness.

Copford Plains are also extremely difficult to cross in winter and may be passable on foot in the morning but impassable by the evening. There is an alternative route by metalled roads but this is 3.2 miles in length.

The parents quite reasonably regard the Copford Plains route as unsuitable for use by Shirley, if unaccompanied. Thus, since as stated above, the local authority were only prepared to make the school bus available on payment of

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the concessionary fare, which the parents were not willing to pay, Shirley stayed away from school during the period from 13 December 1983 until 17 April 1984. Informations were then preferred against the parents by the local authority alleging that the parents were guilty of an offence against S39. On 23 May 1984 the justices for the county of Essex, sitting at Colchester, convicted the parents and ordered that they both be conditionally discharged for a period of 12 months. The parents appealed to the Crown Court at Chelmsford and on 13 July 1984 the appeal against conviction was dismissed.

The appeal against sentence was allowed to the extent of substituting absolute discharges for the conditional discharges imposed by the magistrates. The Crown Court expressed considerable sympathy for the parents but concluded that they were bound by the decision of the Divisional Court in *Shaxted v Ward* [1954].

The parents appealed by the case stated to the Divisional Court. I have already set out the material facts which the Crown Court found. There was no finding that the route was impassable on any day that Shirley failed to attend or that the route was unsuitable, if she was accompanied. At the hearing of the appeal by the Divisional Court on 4 February 1985 the parents repeated their contention that the nearest available route of which the walking distance from a child's home to his school is measured for the purpose of the 1944 Act, must be, not merely the nearest route which a child can lawfully walk, but a route which a responsible parent would allow a child to use unaccompanied. In a reserved judgement Parker LJ, with whom Tudor Evans J agreed, accepted this and distinguished *Shaxted v Ward*. On 10 May 1985 the divisional Court gave leave to appeal to your Lordships' House on terms that the local authority would not seek to disturb the order for costs in the Divisional Court and would pay the parents cost of this appeal in any event. The certified point of law of general public importance is in these terms:

"Whether the nearest available route by which the walking distance of a school from a child's home is to be measured for the purposes of the Education Act 1944 must be not merely the nearest route which a child can walk without trespassing but a route which a responsible parent could allow a child to use unaccompanied."

Shaxted v Ward

This decision is, of course, not binding on your Lordships' House and whether or not the Divisional Court was entitled to distinguish it, as it purported to do, is not an issue which need concern your Lordships. Nevertheless, it was a decision of a strong court which has stood unchallenged for over 30 years and has been relied on over that period by local education authorities. It involved considering the crucial S39(5) of the 1944 Act and the facts of the case were similar to the facts in this appeal. It concerned two young children who were under eight years of age and the route from their home to the school, at which they were registered pupils, was under two miles. The route was safe for the children to use, if escorted, but there was a particular portion of the road near the school where for small children, an escort would be desirable. The prosecutor contended that "available route" meant a route which could be followed without committing a trespass. The justices accepted this submission and the parents were convicted. They accordingly appealed by case stated.

At the outset of his judgement Lord Goddard CJ said:

"The short point that arises is this: The Justices found that the route which these children had to travel was "safe for these children to use, if escorted. The bit of road near the school, where an escort would be desirable for small children, was common to both the children in question." I think that the justices recognised that it would be desirable for children to be escorted or in some way conducted along or across a certain piece of road where there was probable a good deal of traffic. They found that it was usual for parents to provide escort for their children to and from school, where necessary".

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Having referred to S39 of the 1944 Act Lord Goddard CJ continued;

“The justices have to find whether the school is within walking distance; and it is that the route which the children took, which was under two miles, was not the “nearest available route” because part of it was said to be dangerous for children to walk along unescorted. I cannot read the word “available” as meaning necessarily safe, because we can see how these words came to be included in the Act.”

Lord Goddard CJ then considered the earlier Education Acts where the words “measured according to the nearest road” were used and concluded that the words in the 1944 Act “measured by the nearest available route” were not intended to make any change in the law. He then stated:

“To some extent I sympathize with the views of the parents in this case and it may be that they would like to bring pressure upon the Kent County Council to have a person on the road to see that “this bit of the road”, as the justices call it, is safe for the children to cross. Those, however, are matters for the education authority to consider and to put into operation if they think fit. I can only say that, if there is a road which measures not more than two miles or a route along which a child can walk and its measurement does not exceed two miles, that is the nearest available route. It may sometimes be unsafe; sometimes the route may be flooded, and, if that happened and the person could not walk along the road, that might be a reasonable excuse for not using it on that particular day, but we are not concerned with that but with a case where the parents think that the route is not safe. Parliament has not substituted safety as the test but the distance. Any question with regard to safety must be and I have no doubt, will be taken into consideration by the education authority. In my opinion, therefore, the justices came to a right decision and the appeal fails.”

Byrne and Parker JJ both agreed.

It has been urged before us that in his judgement Lord Goddard CJ, when considering whether a route was available, was discounting all safety considerations. I cannot accept this submission. In the context in which the Lord Chief Justice made his observations he was concerned with a route which was said to be dangerous only if the children walked along it unescorted.

The true meaning of ‘availability’ in S39(5) of the Act

In the submissions made to your Lordships it was common ground that available in the context of S39(5) means capable of being used. During the course of the argument counsel for the local authority appeared reluctant to accept that for a route to be available it must be reasonably capable of being used. His reluctance seemed to stem from an anxiety on behalf of his clients not to accept the responsibility from time to time of deciding whether or not the route which is the nearest route is reasonably capable of being used by a child of the relevant age not withstanding that under S39(2) the onus is clearly on the parent to prove that the school is not within walking distance of the child’s home. It is clear that the word available qualifies the word route. The availability of the route cannot be determined by the mere study of a map. That it must be reasonably practicable for a child to walk a long it to school does not, to my mind, admit of any argument. Of course it must be free from obstructions or obstacles which would make its use impracticable. Dangers inherent in a particular use are factors that must be taken into account when considering its availability. A route which involved crossing a river by means of a footbridge would, other things being equal, qualify as an available route. However, if as a result, for example, of recent severe flooding, the bridge became unstable and unsafe to use, that route would cease to be available.

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The short issue in this appeal is whether ‘availability’ is to be measured by what is reasonable for an unaccompanied child to use? Counsel for the parents was constrained to concede that in a case of a very young school child, certainly a child of five, six or seven. Parliament must have assumed that the child would be accompanied, however short the distance, if there existed any real hazard, e.g. crossing a busy road. Accordingly, there would be few, if any routes in the first category provided for in S39(5) (the two-mile route) which any responsible parent would allow an unaccompanied child to use. If the availability of the route was to be measured by what is reasonable for an unaccompanied child who had not attained the age of eight years, there would have been no point in prescribing in the subsection the two mile route requirement. Any such child with very few exceptions would have to be provided with free transport, although in practice, as Parliament must have appreciated, such a child would almost always be accompanied, so the transport would not, in fact have been necessary at all. The crucial point appears not to have been considered by the Divisional Court. It is certainly not referred to in the judgement of Parker LJ.

What then was the purpose of defining ‘walking distance’ in relation to a child who had not attained the age of eight years? The answer, to my mind, is clear: it was simply to provide that where the nearest route from home to school was reasonably capable of being used by a child along or (in the majority of cases) with an escort and did not exceed two miles, the school was within ‘walking distance’ of the child’s home. If, as is rightly conceded, the route does not in that situation fail to qualify as ‘available’ because of the dangers which would be consequent on the child being unaccompanied, when, if at all, would this route thus fail to qualify? Counsel for the parents submits that once the child is of sufficient age to go out on a street alone, then if the route is not reasonably safe for the child to walk along it unaccompanied the route is not ‘available’. Quite apart from the fact that there are no words in the section to support such a submission, the test suggested is hopelessly vague. What sort of street is one to have in mind, what sort of traffic is it to carry, what time of day, indeed what weather or season is to be assumed etc? Further, is the test an objective test applicable to all children of a given age or is it to be applied subjectively to the particular child whose parents have raised the issue? The complete impracticability of such a test in itself persuades me that it was never in the contemplation of Parliament. In my judgement a route to be ‘available’ within the meaning of S39(5) must be a route along which a child accompanied can walk and walk with reasonable safety to school. It does not fail to qualify as ‘available’ because of dangers which would arise if the child is unaccompanied.

It has been argued that unless your Lordships decide that availability has to be measured by what is reasonable for an unaccompanied child, then parents who normally accompany their children, but who fail to do so temporarily because of some crisis such as illness and as a result the child fails regularly to attend school, will have committed a criminal offence. In my judgement this submission overlooks S39(2)(a) which provides that the child shall not be deemed to have failed to attend regularly if he was prevented from attending by reason of ‘any unavoidable cause’.

There is a final point which I would wish to stress. Under S55 of the Act, which is set out in extensor above, the local education authority has a discretion to provide free transport where the relevant walking distance is less than three miles (or, as the case may be, two miles). The local authority in their written case fully accepted that if a local education authority failed unreasonably to exercise this discretion, it would be liable, on an application for judicial review to be ordered to carry out its statutory duty. In fact, in pursuance of their powers under S55(2) the local authority, having been satisfied that the parents did not qualify for free transport on a means test basis, in the exercise of this discretion offered the use of the school bus at the concessionary fare referred to above.

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I would accordingly allow this appeal, discharge the order of the Divisional Court and would answer the certified point of law in the negative. In view of the local authority's undertaking not to disturb the order for costs made by the Divisional Court and to pay the costs of the parents of this appeal. I would make no order as to costs.

LORD OLIVER OF AYLMEYTON.

My Lords. I have had the opportunity of reading in draft the speech delivered by my noble and learned friend Lord Ackner. I agree with it and concur in the order which he proposes.

Appeal allowed. No order as to costs.

Solicitors: RW Adcock, Chelmsford (for the local authority): Ellison & Co. Colchester (for the parents).

Mary Rose Plummer Barrister.

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Article: 'The Times' House of Lords – Law Report December 2nd 1988

Reasonable to expect child to be accompanied

Regina v Devon County Council, Ex parte George

Before Lord Keith of Kinkel, Lord Bradon of Oakbrook, Lord Oliver of Aylmerton, Lord Goff of Chieveley and Lord Lowry [Speeches December 1]

A local education authority has been entitled to refuse free transport to and from school for a boy aged nine who lived 2.8 miles away. The authority had been entitled to conclude that it was reasonably practicable for the boy to be accompanied and to take that into account in reaching its decision.

The House of Lords allowed an appeal by the authority from the Court of Appeal (Lord Donaldson of Lymington, Master of the Rolls, Lord Justice Parker and Lord Justice Taylor) (The Times March 22; [1988] 3 WLR49) who had reversed the decision of Me Justice Mann dismissing an application by the boy, Christopher Noel George (by his stepfather and next friend Mr Paul George), for judicial review of the authority's decision.

The Education Act 1944 provides by Section 36: "It shall be the duty of the parent of every child of compulsory school age to cause him to receive efficient full time education, by regular attendance at school or otherwise".

By Section 39:

(1) If any child of compulsory school age who is a registered pupil at a school fails to attend regularly, the parent shall be guilty of an offence.

(2) the child shall not be deemed to have failed to attend regularly if the parent proves that the school is not within walking distance of the child's home and that no suitable arrangements have been made by the local education authority for his transport to and from the school.

(5) 'walking distance' means, in relation to a child who has not attained the age of eight years, two miles and in the case of any other child three miles measured by the nearest available route.

By Section 55:

(1) A local education authority shall make such arrangements for the provision of transport and otherwise as they consider necessary, for the purpose of facilitating the attendance of pupils at schools, and the transport provided in pursuance of such arrangements shall be provided free of charge.

(2) A local education authority may pay the whole or any part, as the authority think fit, of the reasonable travelling expenses of any pupil for whose transport no arrangements are made under this section.

(3) In considering whether or not they are required by sub-section (1) above to make arrangements in relation to a particular pupil, the local education authority shall have regard (amongst other things) to the age of the pupil and the nature of the route, or alternative routes, which he could reasonably be expected to take.

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(Section 55(2) was amended by section 11 of Schedule 1, Part 1 to the Education (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1984. Subsection (3) was added by amendment under section 53 of the Education Act (No. 2) Act 1986, which came into force on January 7, 1987.)

Mr Conrad Dehn, QC and Mr Raymond Cox for the authority: Lord Campbell of Alloway, QC and Mr John Friel for the Boy.

LORD KEITH said that the boy's route to the school was rural, unlit and without a footpath and used to some extent by tractors, milk tankers and cattle wagons.

The council's policy on school transport was set out in a document including a paragraph 3(d) revised on March 12, 1987: "Transport to be provided without charge to children within the statutory walking distance where (i) having regard amongst other things to the age of the child and the nature of the route or alternative route which he could reasonably be expected to take, they consider it necessary for the purpose of facilitating his attendance at school; (ii) an authorised officer of the school health service certifies that transport is required for the child on medical grounds; (iii) the director of social services advises that there are overriding social needs that make the provision of transport essential; (iv) the education committee decides on the merits of a particular case that special arrangements should be made."

The minutes of the council's school transport panel's decision of March 18, 1987, read:

"We have had regard amongst other things to Christopher's age (nine) and the nature of the route which he could reasonably be expected to take. We are satisfied that the route in question which is 2.8 miles long and therefore within the statutory walking distance for a child of that age is one which an accompanied child can walk with reasonable safety and that the council is not required by section 55(1) ... to make arrangements in relation to him.

"Further, in our opinion, this is not a case where, in the council's discretion, transport should be provided free of charge. None of the circumstances set out in paragraphs 3(d)(i)-(iv) of the council's policy exist.

"There is no suggestion that Christopher is not a normal healthy boy for his age. We would expect a child of Christopher's age walking this route to be accompanied but are not satisfied that it would not be reasonably practicable for one of Christopher's parents to accompany him or otherwise secure his regular attendance at school."

The reference to the child being accompanied clearly had an eye to the decision of the house in *Rogers v Essex County Council* (1987 AC 66, 78) where Lord Ackner had said:

"A route to be 'available' within the meaning of section 39(5) must be a route along which a child accompanied as necessary can walk and walk with reasonable safety to school. It does not fail to qualify as 'available' because of dangers which would arise if the child is unaccompanied."

To 'facilitate' section 55(1) meant to "make easy, promote, help forward," (Concise Oxford Dictionary). In an Inquiry under the Company Securities (Insider Dealings) Act 1985 (1988 AC 660, 704), Lord Griffiths, in a different context, had paraphrased "necessary" as "really needed", which was a helpful way of expressing the concept.

The question under section 55(1) regarding pupils living within the statutory walking distance was whether the authority considered arrangements for free transport to be necessary for the purpose of facilitating their attendance.

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Obviously free transport would make the attendance of every such pupil easier, however close to school he or she happened to live, but that could not determine the matter. It was for the authority, and no one else, to decide whether free transport was really needed for the purpose of promoting the attendance at school of a particular pupil.

That must depend on the authority's view of the circumstances of the particular case, to which it was directed by section 55(3) to have regard. Its function in that respect could be described as a 'discretion', although it was not, of course, an unfettered discretion but rather in the nature of an exercise of judgement.

The intention of Parliament clearly, was that pupils living outside the statutory walking distance would in all cases be provide with free transport and that pupils within that distance would normally walk to school but would be provided with free transport if the authority considered it necessary for the purpose for facilitating their attendance.

His Lordship could find nothing in the council's policy document inconsistent with that intention.

It was apparent that the school transport panel had taken into account Christopher's age and the nature of the route, in particular its length. The senior assistant education officer had inspected it.

There had been material on which the panel might properly have concluded that it was reasonably practicable for the boy to be accompanied, in respect that his stepfather had stated in an affidavit that he was unemployed and available for the purpose.

There was nothing to suggest that the panel had not been exercising a judgement as to whether free transport was necessary for the purpose of facilitating Christopher's attendance at school.

It had been argued on his behalf that the matter of the accompaniment of a child was relevant only to the availability of a route under section 39(5) and that an authority was not entitled to take into account under section 55(1) even the possibility of a child being accompanied.

So, if a route, however short, was unsafe for an unaccompanied child, the authority was obliged to provide free transport. That argument had to be rejected. By section 39, the parent was under a legal duty to bring about the child's attendance at school. There were various things that a parent might have to do to that end, such as seeing that the child got up in the morning and set out in reasonable time. In the case of an unwilling child, it might be necessary for the parent to take the child to school.

In general, the parent had to do those things that were reasonably practicable to be done and that an ordinary prudent parent would do. That might include accompanying the child where it would be unsafe for it to go unaccompanied.

If a child lived 100 yards from school but the route involved crossing a busy trunk route and the parent, although available to do so, refused to accompany the child and refused to allow the child to go to school on the ground that it would be dangerous, the parent would be guilty of an offence under section 39(1); neither paragraph (a) nor paragraph (b) would avail him.

It followed that parliament had contemplated that in appropriate cases a child would be accompanied to school.

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So a local education authority was fully entitled, when making a decision under section 55(1), to take into account whether or not there were any circumstances that prevented its being reasonably practicable for the child to be accompanied to school over a route that would fail to be treated as not available to an unaccompanied child.

It had not been demonstrated that the council had made any mistake in law as to the nature and extent of its duties and powers, nor had its decision in the present case been unreasonable. Lord Brandon, Lord Oliver, Lord Goff and Lord Lowry agreed.

Solicitors: Sharpe Pritchard for Mr. W. A. Burkinshaw, Exeter; Teacher Stern Selby.

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Guidance on Religion and Belief from DCSF 2006

Section 509AD of the 1996 Act (inserted by the Education and Inspections Act 2006) places a duty on local authorities in fulfilling their duties and exercising their powers relating to travel to have regard to, amongst other things, any wish of a parent for their child to be provided with education or training at a particular school or institution on grounds of the parent's religion or belief. This duty is in addition to the duty on local authorities to make travel arrangements for children of parents on low incomes who attend the nearest suitable school preferred on grounds of religion or belief, where they live more than 2 miles, but not more than 15 miles from that school considered (see paras 99 to 101). The definition of "religion or belief" follows that of the Equality Act 2006.

Under this Act, "religion" means any religion, and "belief" means any belief. References to "religion or belief" include references to a lack of religion or belief. It therefore follows that this duty covers all religions and denominations, as well as philosophical beliefs.

It should be noted that "religion" and "belief" are not opposites, and there may be considerable overlaps in the coverage of the two terms.

The definition of "religion" includes those religions widely recognised in this country such as Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, Judaism, Buddhism, Sikhism, Rastafarianism, Baha'is, Zoroastrians and Jains. Equally, denominations or sects within a religion can be considered as a religion or religious belief, such as Catholicism or Protestantism within Christianity. The Department believes that the main limitation on what constitutes a "religion" is that it must have a clear structure and belief system.

For a "belief" to be worthy of protection, it must attain a certain level of cogency, seriousness, cohesion and importance; be worthy of respect in a democratic society; and not be incompatible with human dignity or the fundamental rights of the child.

Case law suggests that "belief" equates to "conviction", and based on European case law, it has to be more than an opinion or idea. A belief must be genuinely held and the parent bears a heavy burden of showing that it is the real reason for whatever it is they are doing.

Based on case law, the Department considers that the following may be considered as philosophical beliefs in the educational context:

- parental objections to the use of corporal punishment in school;
- belief in single sex education, where that belief is based on the parent's religious views.

"Beliefs" which have been considered as not meeting the requirements of cogency, seriousness, coherence, and so on – and are not therefore included in this duty, include:

- a wish for a child to attend a particular category of school. The case law concerned a grant maintained school, but the Department would consider a specific wish to attend, for example, a grammar school as fitting this category. In the view of the Department, a local authority would not have to have regard to such a wish when determining whether or not to make transport arrangements for a particular child;
- preference for a particular type of management or governance which does not affect the curricula or teaching at the school;

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- a belief that a child should be educated privately;
- a wish for child to attend school where they will be taught in a particular language;
- objection to rules requiring that a school uniform must be worn;
- content of school curriculum (sex education) provided that the curriculum did not amount to indoctrination in compatible with a parent’s religious or philosophical convictions;
- objections to the curriculum, where special arrangements made by the school or authorities (such as allowing children to be withdrawn from class) ensure the curriculum is not forced on them contrary to their convictions; and
- belief that a child should receive a particular type of educational provision.

This guidance deals with the implications of this duty in relation to the duty to promote sustainable travel, and the duties and powers relating to the provision of travel arrangements to schools and other places.

“Religion or belief” and the duty to promote sustainable travel

The duty to promote sustainable travel includes assessments of the travel needs of children and young people, and of the infrastructure supporting those needs. Travel needs include travel to and from school, further education institutions, and other places where education or training might be delivered, and travel between schools, and between schools and other educational institutions (including further education institutions and all other places where education or training may be delivered).

In fulfilling this duty, local authorities must consider the travel needs of pupils whose parents express a wish, based on religion or belief, for their children to attend a particular institution, and how the existing sustainable travel infrastructure might support travel to such schools and institutions. They must also consider how the infrastructure might be improved so it better meets the needs of children and young people, and how to promote sustainable travel on such journeys.

“Religion or belief” and the provision of school travel arrangements

Many parents will choose to send their children to a school as near as possible to their home. However, some parents choose to send their children to a school with a particular ethos because they adhere to a particular faith, or philosophy. In many cases these schools may be more distant, and many local authorities adopt home to school travel policies that facilitate attendance at such schools. The Act places a duty on local authorities to make arrangements for pupils from low income backgrounds to attend the nearest school preferred on grounds of “religion or belief”, where that school is between 2 and 15 miles from their home.

Whilst under the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR), parents do not enjoy any right to have their children educated at a faith or a secular school, or to have transport arrangements made by their local authority to and from any such school, the Secretary of State hopes that local authorities will continue to think it right not to disturb well established arrangements, some of which have been associated with local agreements or understandings about the siting of such schools.

The Secretary of State continues to attach importance to the opportunity that many parents have to choose a school or college in accordance with their religious or philosophical beliefs, and believes that wherever possible, local authorities should ensure that transport arrangements support the religious or philosophical preference parents express.

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Although the provisions of the Equality Act 2006 (which places a duty on local authorities not to discriminate against a person on the grounds of their religion or belief), do not apply to the exercise of an authority's functions in relation to transport, local authorities will need to be aware of their obligations under human rights legislation.

In exercising their functions, local authorities will therefore need to respect parents' religious and philosophical convictions as to the education to be provided for their children in so far as this is compatible with the provision of efficient instruction and training, and the avoidance of unreasonable public expenditure. It may be incompatible, for example, on grounds of excessive journey length, or where the journey may have a detrimental impact on the child's education. Local authorities should also ensure that they do not discriminate contrary to Article 14 of the ECHR. For example, where transport arrangements are made for pupils travelling to denominational schools to facilitate parents' wishes for their child to attend on religious grounds, travel arrangements should also be made for pupils travelling to non-denominational schools, where attendance at those schools enables the children to be educated in accordance with their parents' philosophical convictions, and vice versa.

Children from low income backgrounds are eligible for free travel arrangements to the nearest school preferred on grounds of "religion or belief" (see paras. 99 to 101). However, local authorities may wish to use their discretionary powers to extend transport arrangements beyond this statutory requirement. Where local authorities make arrangements under their discretionary powers (section 508C), and have policies of levying charges for such transport, the Secretary of State believes that local authorities should pay careful attention to the potential impact of any charges on low income families whose parents adhere to a particular faith or philosophy, and who have expressed a preference for a particular school as a result of their religious or their philosophical beliefs. In the Secretary of State's opinion, where local authorities make travel arrangements for such children, these should be provided free of charge in the case of pupils from low income families (pupils entitled to free school meals or whose parents are entitled to their maximum level of Working Tax Credit).

Local authorities should give careful consideration to discrimination issues, and seek legal opinion if they are unsure about the effect of their policies, before publishing them each year.

Case Law referred to in this guidance:

Campbell and Cosans v UK (1982) 4 EHRR 293
Warwick v UK (1989) 60 37 DR 96
R (ota K) v Newham LBC ([2002] EWHC 405 (Admin)
Dove and Dove [2001] ScotCS 291
CB v Merton [2002] EWHC 877 (Admin); R v Department for Education and Employment ex p Begbie [1999] ELR;
and W and DM v UK ((1984) 37 DR 96).
Stevens v UK 46 DR 245 (1986)
Alonso and Merino v Spain
Kjedsen, Bus, Madsen and Pedersen v Denmark (1976) I EHRR 711
T v SENT and Wiltshire CC [2002] EWHC 1474 (Admin).



DRAFT Equality impact assessment (EIA) form: evidencing paying due regard to protected characteristics

(Form updated May 2015)

Home to School Transport Review

If you would like this information in another language or format such as Braille, large print or audio, please contact the Communications Unit on 01609 53 2013 or email communications@northyorks.gov.uk.



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 如欲索取以另一語文印製或另一格式製作的資料，請與我們聯絡。
 اگر آپ کو معلومات کسی دیگر زبان یا دیگر شکل میں درکار ہوں تو برائے مہربانی ہم سے پوچھئے۔

Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs) are public documents. EIAs accompanying reports going to County Councillors for decisions are published with the committee papers on our website and are available in hard copy at the relevant meeting. To help people to find completed EIAs we also publish them in the Equality and Diversity section of our website. This will help people to see for themselves how we have paid due regard in order to meet statutory requirements.

Name of Directorate and Service Area	CYPS, Education and Skills and Inclusion service
Lead Officer and contact details	Amanda Newbold, AD Education & Skills
Names and roles of other people involved in carrying out the EIA	Jon Holden – Strategic Planning Manager
How will you pay due regard? e.g. working group, individual officer	Consideration of the EIA by the officers involved in the implementation of the policy, and subsequent assessment of applications
When did the due regard process start?	The original project initially started in September 2023 following revised DfE guidance Updated July 2024 post consultation

Section 1. Please describe briefly what this EIA is about. (e.g. are you starting a new service, changing how you do something, stopping doing something?)

This EIA is about the proposed changes to the current Home to School Transport Policy following the new statutory guidance.

The Council has a statutory duty to provide home to school travel for eligible children of compulsory school age in accordance with statutory guidance issued by the Department for Education (DfE).

The aim of the changes is to ensure the proposed home to school travel policy is compliant with the legislation and guidance.

Section 2. Why is this being proposed? What are the aims? What does the authority hope to achieve by it? (e.g. to save money, meet increased demand, do things in a better way.)

The proposed changes are due to the current home to school transport policy not meeting the requirement of the checklist produced in the revised statutory guidance.

The overall cost to the Council of the provision of home to school travel is significant and rising at pace. The current policy makes provision for eligibility above and beyond statutory requirements that have associated costs, and the consultation provided opportunity to review these 'discretionary' elements.

The policy publication is linked to the school admissions round, therefore any changes to the travel policy would apply to new admissions and/or travel applications received on or after 1 September 2024 and would affect new entrants to schools (REC and Y7) with effect from September 2025.

Pupils in the current admissions round (starting Reception and Year 7 on 1 Sept 24) and those who apply for a school place prior to September 2024 would not be impacted.

Transport eligibility awarded prior to September 2024 would be honoured (effectively protected from subsequent policy changes) under the current policy, unless there was a change of circumstance for a pupil which required a reassessment of eligibility.

Section 3. What will change? What will be different for customers and/or staff?

Six discretionary areas within home to school transport policy have been considered:

- Extended eligibility in the Reception Year
- Extended eligibility in Year 3
- 50/50 second address
- Primary phase denominational transport
- Two days of transition, where possible, for pupils with SEND
- The main eligibility criteria – nearest school / catchment school

Census data from May 2023 showed that in North Yorkshire there were c.75,000 school aged children (reception to year 11) children and c.10,000 pupils accessing home to school transport.

Section 4. Involvement and consultation (What involvement and consultation has been done regarding the proposal and what are the results? What consultation will be needed and how will it be done?)

A consultation exercise was undertaken between February and April 2024 in accordance with DfE requirements and which included: -

- schools whose pupils will be affected by the proposed changes, including those located in other

local authority areas;

- parents whose children will (or may) be affected by the proposed changes, including those whose children attend school in a neighbouring authority, and those whose children may be affected in the future – for example, because they live in the catchment area of, or attend the feeder school of, a school affected by the proposed changes; and
- the local Parent Carer Forum

The consultation was publicised to a broad range of other stakeholders including early years providers and their parents, NYC councillors, parish councils in North Yorkshire and neighbouring local authorities. Throughout the consultation a weekly breakdown was provided for the policy owners to review and reflect any issues arising. A total of 16 face to face consultation events were held across North Yorkshire, 70 people attended these events. 1,299 people responded to the online survey.

The consultation events were held at different times to allow those with childcare and working arrangements to opportunity to attend and engage at times which are more convenient. These events were widely published on social media and within local media and community groups as well as on the council's own media: Schools E-red bag, NYC website, corporate Facebook and Twitter accounts.

The consultation was also promoted through SEND parent and community group networks.

A model was created in order to allow officers to consider the possible impacts of the proposed policy revisions on small and rural schools as it was important to avoid any unintended consequences including risk to small school viability, where a small reduction in pupil numbers can be a significant factor. The initial data set which contained indicative school level analysis was presented to the Executive Member for Education, Learning and Skills so she could consider the indicative school level data confidentiality prior to agreeing the consultation. This was the purpose for creating a school level data set. Since the model had been developed, indicative school level information was offered to school leaders and governors so they could consider the potential impacts of the proposed policy changes on their school setting to support them in fulfilling their management responsibilities.

During the consultation, a small number of schools approached the Council asking officers to check the data modelling as the schools estimates of how many children in their catchment may live closer to another school and therefore may not be eligible to travel in the same way as the current cohort were different to those initially provided by Council officers.

The Council checked and revised the modelling tool. This led to revised indicative school data being provided to individual schools, and the consultation being extended by two weeks, to allow further dialogue with interested schools.

The indicative school level data is not essential for the consultation but was added in order to provide a management indicator for schools in relation to any planning they may wish to do should the policy be implemented from September 2024 (with early impacts expected from Sept 2025).

The model is an estimate of future pupil eligibility, using recent pupil census information but with the proposed policy being applied. The model has many variables including: parental preference for admissions, school popularity/place availability, decisions made by families with siblings under two policies, Free School Meals eligibility over time, family life eg parent job location/other childcare arrangements. This is why an estimate savings range has been created from 20% to 100%.

The estimate shows the possible impacts over a seven-year implementation period (eg possible reduction and possible increase in eligibility over time). Some schools may experience both

reductions and increases of pupils with eligibility with an unknown net effect. Any changes to admission numbers in one school has a direct effect on the neighbouring schools and the Council has statutory responsibility to ensure sufficient school places across the whole county. The Council must also ensure efficient use of resources fulfilling its responsibilities.

The Council does not consider this indicative school level data set essential to the consultation process, this information has been treated confidentially as we believe sharing it would prejudice the effective conduct of public affairs in the Council's discussions with schools.

Section 5. What impact will this proposal have on council budgets? Will it be cost neutral, have increased cost, or reduce costs?

The current financial projection for Home to School Transport is demonstrating a continuous growth which is applying budgetary pressures on the Council to meet its statutory duties.

These proposals will not impact on the current or immediate expenditure as the Council's offer is based on the policy in place at the time of allocation and will be phased out as the current cohort reaches the end of their current placement unless there is substantial change to their eligibility.

If the proposals are implemented it will ensure the Council is meeting its statutory duties. The new policy requirements in the guidance are likely to increase the number of pupils with medical and mobility needs who meet eligibility criteria and potentially lead to increased expenditure.

Whilst some aspects of the policy review may reduce additional travel provision above statutory minimum – the financial benefits of this proposal will not be fully achieved for a seven year period. Analysis prior to and throughout the consultation being undertaken using a large sample of currently eligible travellers suggests that the annual saving at the end of the transition period (when the new policy applies to all) on a like for like basis could be approximately £4m. This figure is based on a number of assumptions, and much will depend on the extent to which the change in the transport arrangements influences future parental preference for schools, and that is difficult to predict with any certainty.

Following the consultation, the 73% of responders indicated that eligibility to transport assistance is a factor in choosing a school place.

Section 6. How will this proposal affect people with protected characteristics?	No impact	Make things better	Make things worse	Why will it have this effect? Provide evidence from engagement, consultation and/or service user data or demographic information etc.
Age	✓	✓	✓	<p>It is anticipated there would be no identifiable impact on pupils attending mainstream or specialist provision because of their age.</p> <p>In the event that discretionary eligibility for assistance for those children prior to reaching compulsory school age and pupils in year 3 (i.e. from reaching the age of 8 until then end of the school year) then this will have a positive impact for affected pupils.</p> <p>The consultation exercise identified a potential</p>

				<p>negative impact for those households who have one or more children with eligibility for catchment schools under the current policy, but who have younger children whose possible eligibility will be to another (nearer) school. Parents have identified potential logistical difficulties arising from this, including the potential for different school holiday periods where the nearer school is out of county. This issue may only arise during the implementation of the policy.</p> <p>The council's admissions policy, and those of schools / academies where relevant, are not impacted by these proposals and so access to school places is not affected.</p>
Disability		✓		<p>The requirement for individual assessment under SEN may increase the number of pupil eligible for assistance as it no longer relies upon an EHC Plan to identify those pupils eligible, which may lead to more pupils being eligible where they live under the statutory walking distance.</p> <p>Individual assessment will also ensure children with disability needs are met on transport.</p> <p>The responses to the consultation suggested that there would be a negative impact on those with disability. Officers consider that no negative impacts will arise as a result of disability from the six proposed amendments to the discretionary powers.</p>
Sex	✓			<p>It is anticipated there would be no identifiable impact on pupils attending mainstream or specialist provision because of their sex.</p>
Race	✓			<p>It is anticipated there would be no identifiable impact on specific ethnic groups because of the proposals.</p>
Gender reassignment	✓			<p>It is anticipated there would be no identifiable impact on specific groups in relation to gender reassignment as a result of the proposals.</p>
Sexual orientation	✓			<p>It is anticipated there would be no identifiable impact on specific groups in relation to sexual orientation as a result of the proposals.</p>
Religion or belief			✓	<p>The proposed removal of transport for primary age pupils attending schools with designated religious character will have an adverse impact, it is anticipated these number are less than 0.01% of the population and the requests are minimal each year</p> <p>The proposed change to the policy is compliant with the statutory guidance and individual applications will be considered on</p>

				their merit in line with the Guidance.
Pregnancy or maternity	✓			It is anticipated there would be no identifiable impact on specific groups in relation to pregnancy or maternity as a result of the proposals.
Marriage or civil partnership	✓			It is anticipated there would be no identifiable impact on specific groups in relation to marriage or civil partnership as a result of the proposals.

Section 7. How will this proposal affect people who...	No impact	Make things better	Make things worse	Why will it have this effect? Provide evidence from engagement, consultation and/or service user data or demographic information etc.
Live in a rural area?	✓		✓	<p>The proposed amendment to the main eligibility criterion to nearest school only will only impact upon eligibility to assistance with transport. The admissions policies of the Council and of individual academies / schools where relevant are not impacted by the proposals.</p> <p>The proposals will potentially reduce eligibility for assistance with home to school transport to the catchment school in rural communities in which the catchment school is not the nearest school, however eligibility to the nearest school, e.g. when the distance is in excess of the statutory walking distance, remains in place.</p> <p>A large number of consultation responses received from rural and sparse rural areas were concerned about potential health and safety issues arising from the use of rural roads specifically during periods of adverse weather conditions.</p> <p>The home to school transport commissioning arrangements ensure that providers utilise only suitable vehicles in the provision of transport, including suitability of size for specific routes. Furthermore, all providers are required to assess any risks arising from, for example, weather conditions and to not undertake journeys which they consider cannot be completed safely.</p>
...have a low income?		✓	✓	<p>There remains statutory provision for low income families for children aged 8 and above.</p> <p>Consultation responses indicated concern from families who receive a low income about the impact of the proposed change to the main eligibility criterion to being the nearest school only, identifying that this change would limit</p>

				<p>choice for those families not able to pay for transport in the event that their child did not attend the nearest school.</p> <p>The consultation responses demonstrated that the proposed change to removal of eligibility to catchment would have an adverse impact upon low income families ability to preference a school of choice, as eligibility to transport is a factor here.</p> <p>As a result of the consultation, officers are recommending the provision of an additional discretionary element for secondary age that enables low income families to exercise preferencing to school admissions to up to three schools across a wider area. The cost if approved of this further discretionary provision is approximately £170k per year based on current contract costs. This could allow greater school choice for 96.5% of children, within the sample cohort, receiving Free School Meals who could, had this amendment not been proposed, be affected by the removal of catchment.</p>
Forces families?	✓			It is anticipated there would be no identifiable impact on specific groups in relation to being in the Armed Forces.
Carers			✓	<p>Some consultation responses indicated that the proposed change to the main eligibility criterion to being to the nearest school only would have a negative impact to some people with caring responsibilities, specifically where they have children with eligibility to different schools (as noted above).</p> <p>Any impact would be greatest during the course of the transition / implementation period of the policy.</p>

Section 8. Will the proposal affect anyone more because of a combination of protected characteristics? (e.g. older women or young gay men) State what you think the effect may be and why, providing evidence from engagement, consultation and/or service user data or demographic information etc.

Following the consultation and the responses that were received, there is possibility that pupils may be impacted by having combined protected characteristics of age, religion or belief, live in a rural area, receive a low income and families that are carers.

The consultation responses suggest that some families who live in rural area where the nearest and catchment school are not the same school (and who therefore may have current eligibility for

more than one school) but receive low income may be more adversely impacted than those living in an urban area where this may also be the case. The limited alternative transport options in rural areas could force families of low income to attend their nearest school, potentially removing admissions choice.

The admissions policy of both the Council and individual academies / schools where relevant will not be affected by the proposed policy changes and parents will continue to be able to preference different schools as part of the admissions process.

Eligible children will continue to receive assistance with home to school transport, albeit their eligibility will be to the nearest school (with available places) in the event that the proposal is agreed.

Pupils in receipt of free school meals will have additional choice in the event that the proposed policy is agreed.

Section 9. Next steps to address the anticipated impact. Select one of the following options and explain why this has been chosen. (Remember: we have an anticipatory duty to make reasonable adjustments so that disabled people can access services and work for us)	Tick option chosen
1. No adverse impact - no major change needed to the proposal. There is no potential for discrimination or adverse impact identified.	
2. Adverse impact - adjust the proposal - The EIA identifies potential problems or missed opportunities. We will change our proposal to reduce or remove these adverse impacts, or we will achieve our aim in another way which will not make things worse for people.	x
3. Adverse impact - continue the proposal - The EIA identifies potential problems or missed opportunities. We cannot change our proposal to reduce or remove these adverse impacts, nor can we achieve our aim in another way which will not make things worse for people. (There must be compelling reasons for continuing with proposals which will have the most adverse impacts. Get advice from Legal Services)	x
4. Actual or potential unlawful discrimination - stop and remove the proposal – The EIA identifies actual or potential unlawful discrimination. It must be stopped.	
<p>Explanation of why option has been chosen. (Include any advice given by Legal Services.)</p> <p>Continue the proposal for five of the six criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • proposals to retain extended eligibility for reception and • proposal to retain extended eligibility for Year 3 • proposal to remove discretionary eligibility for second home; • proposal to remove discretionary element for primary children attending designated religious character schools • proposal to remove discretionary element for children with SEN for 2 days <p>Continue and adjust the proposal to amend the main eligibility criteria to being the nearest suitable school. The adjustment in light of consultation feedback, Officers are recommending the provision of an additional discretionary element for secondary age pupils that enables low income families living in rural areas to exercise preferencing to school admissions to up to three schools across a wider area.</p> <p>The Council's finances are such that difficult decisions are having to be made, demand outstrips resources and both nationally & the Council's home to school transport budget is growing rapidly and has been significantly overspent for several years. The Council's proposals will remove</p>	

further discretionary elements of the policy whilst ensuring that it is in line with its statutory duties.

Section 10. If the proposal is to be implemented, how will you find out how it is really affecting people? (How will you monitor and review the changes?)

Subject to decision being made to implement the proposals the effect of the changes will be phased over 7 years as the Council has the opportunity to protect those who transport arrangements were awarded on the previous policies.

Following the consultation it is clear from those who responded how the proposals will impact upon them. Given the amount of variables, including parental behaviour, we will not see any significant change until after the next round of admissions in summer of 2025.

Following implementation there will be a 24-month Post Implementation Review.

Section 11. Action plan. List any actions you need to take which have been identified in this EIA, including post implementation review to find out how the outcomes have been achieved in practice and what impacts there have actually been on people with protected characteristics.

Action	Lead	By when	Progress	Monitoring arrangements
28-day public consultation to commence	Amanda Newbold	19 February 2024	Complete	
Public events to be held across localities	Amanda Newbold / Chris Reynolds	Throughout February and March 2024	Complete	Public events and feedback from these events were monitored through a working group
Public consultation to end.	Amanda Newbold	26 April 2024	Complete	Consultation extended to 26 April
All responses and feedback to be collated and reviewed following consultation.	Jon Holden /Chris Reynolds	Throughout the consultation period & from 26 April to mid May 2024	Complete	Reviewed by lead officers
Options to be revised (if required), EIA to be revised and draft Policy to be updated.	Amanda Newbold	May 2024	Complete	Revised draft policy
Sign-off of revised proposals and updated Home to School Travel Policy	Amanda Newbold	8 July 2024 (Executive Committee)	Complete	
Adoption of	Amanda	24 July 2024		

Home to School Transport Policy	Newbold	(Full Council)		
Publish updated Home to School Travel policy	Amanda Newbold	31 st July 2024		
Development and sign-off of implementation and transition plan	Amanda Newbold	1 st August – 31 st August 2024		This will be completed by a working group
Implementation and transition arrangements commence	Amanda Newbold	1 st September 2024 onwards for up to seven years.		
Post implementation evaluation	Amanda Newbold	Spring 2025		
Post implementation review	Amanda Newbold	July 2025		
Post implementation review	Amanda Newbold	July 2027		

Section 12. Summary (Summarise the findings of your EIA, including impacts, recommendation in relation to addressing impacts, including any legal advice, and next steps. This summary should be used as part of the report to the decision maker.)

The paying due regard prior to the consultation highlighted that there may be some adverse impacts to those with protected characteristics of age. However, the consultation showed that there are multiple impacts for more pupils as a result of wider range of protected characteristics such as low income, and rurality especially those with combined protected characteristics.

Officers are recommending the provision of an additional discretionary element for secondary age that enables low income families living in rural areas to exercise preferencing to school admissions to up to three schools across a wider area.

This is a further extension to the extended rights currently within the policy and would mean that: A child is eligible for free travel to school if they are eligible for free school meals or a parent with whom they live receives maximum Working Tax Credit and they are aged 11 to 16 years, and attend one of their three nearest suitable schools provided it is more than 2 miles but not more than 12 miles from their home

Section 13. Sign off section

This revised EIA was completed by: Jon Holden

Name: Jon Holden

Job title: Strategic Planning Manager

Directorate: Children and Young People's Services

Signature: J Holden

Completion date: 08/07/24

Authorised by relevant Assistant Director (signature): A Newbold

Date: 08/07/24

Climate change impact assessment

The purpose of this assessment is to help us understand the likely impacts of our decisions on the environment of North Yorkshire and on our aspiration to achieve net carbon neutrality by 2030, or as close to that date as possible. The intention is to mitigate negative effects and identify projects which will have positive effects.

This document should be completed in consultation with the supporting guidance. The final document will be published as part of the decision making process and should be written in Plain English.

If you have any additional queries which are not covered by the guidance please email climatechange@northyorks.gov.uk

Version 2: amended 11 August 2021

Please note: You may not need to undertake this assessment if your proposal will be subject to any of the following:

Planning Permission
Environmental Impact Assessment
Strategic Environmental Assessment

However, you will still need to summarise your findings in the summary section of the form below.

Please contact climatechange@northyorks.gov.uk for advice.

Title of proposal	Proposed amendments to the Home to School Transport Policy
Brief description of proposal	Proposed amendments to the Home to School Transport Policy that was adopted by the council in 2019. The most significant proposed amendment is change one of the eligibility criteria from the nearest or catchment schools to the nearest school only
Directorate	CYPS
Service area	Strategic Planning
Lead officer	Jon Holden
Names and roles of other people involved in carrying out the impact assessment	None
Date impact assessment started	July 2024

Options appraisal

Were any other options considered in trying to achieve the aim of this project? If so, please give brief details and explain why alternative options were not progressed.

The Council has a statutory duty to provide home to school transport for eligible children in accordance with its own published policy.

The proposals in this report are made following a consideration of the savings that would arise from changes to the existing policy to ensure that it has a greater alignment with statutory guidance published by the Department for Education in June 23 (subsequently amended in January 2024).

What impact will this proposal have on council budgets? Will it be cost neutral, have increased cost or reduce costs?

Please explain briefly why this will be the result, detailing estimated savings or costs where this is possible.

The proposals contained in the report would result in annual savings of up to approximately £4 million, achieved over a 5 year implementation of the policy.

<p>How will this proposal impact on the environment?</p> <p>N.B. There may be short term negative impact and longer term positive impact. Please include all potential impacts over the lifetime of a project and provide an explanation.</p>	<p>Positive impact (Place a X in the box below where relevant)</p>	<p>No impact (Place a X in the box below where relevant)</p>	<p>Negative impact (Place a X in the box below where relevant)</p>	<p>Explain why will it have this effect and over what timescale?</p> <p>Where possible/relevant please include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changes over and above business as usual • Evidence or measurement of effect • Figures for CO₂e • Links to relevant documents 	<p>Explain how you plan to mitigate any negative impacts.</p>	<p>Explain how you plan to improve any positive outcomes as far as possible.</p>	
<p>Minimise greenhouse gas emissions e.g. reducing emissions from travel, increasing energy efficiencies etc.</p>	<p>Emissions from travel</p>	X			<p>Implementation of the revised policy proposal, limiting eligibility to the nearest suitable school only, will result in an estimated reduction in the amount of home to school transport. The savings would be achieved over a 7 year period for the implementation of the policy. The annual requirement for home to school transport is subject to fluctuations in pupil numbers, parental preferencing of schools, schools' capacity and the home addresses of eligible pupils. As a result it is not possible to provide an accurate estimate of the CO₂ savings that would be achieved</p>		
	<p>Emissions from construction</p>						
	<p>Emissions from</p>						

<p>How will this proposal impact on the environment?</p> <p>N.B. There may be short term negative impact and longer term positive impact. Please include all potential impacts over the lifetime of a project and provide an explanation.</p>	<p>Positive impact (Place a X in the box below where relevant)</p>	<p>No impact (Place a X in the box below where relevant)</p>	<p>Negative impact (Place a X in the box below where relevant)</p>	<p>Explain why will it have this effect and over what timescale?</p> <p>Where possible/relevant please include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changes over and above business as usual • Evidence or measurement of effect • Figures for CO₂e • Links to relevant documents 	<p>Explain how you plan to mitigate any negative impacts.</p>	<p>Explain how you plan to improve any positive outcomes as far as possible.</p>	
	running of buildings						
	Emissions from data storage						
	Other						
<p>Minimise waste: Reduce, reuse, recycle and compost e.g. reducing use of single use plastic</p>		X		No impact			
<p>Reduce water consumption</p>		X		No impact			
<p>Minimise pollution (including air, land, water, light and noise)</p>	X			Any reduction in home to school transport that is achieved through the implementation of the policy will have a positive effect upon pollution levels			

<p>How will this proposal impact on the environment?</p> <p>N.B. There may be short term negative impact and longer term positive impact. Please include all potential impacts over the lifetime of a project and provide an explanation.</p>	<p>Positive impact (Place a X in the box below where relevant)</p>	<p>No impact (Place a X in the box below where relevant)</p>	<p>Negative impact (Place a X in the box below where relevant)</p>	<p>Explain why will it have this effect and over what timescale?</p> <p>Where possible/relevant please include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changes over and above business as usual • Evidence or measurement of effect • Figures for CO₂e • Links to relevant documents 	<p>Explain how you plan to mitigate any negative impacts.</p>	<p>Explain how you plan to improve any positive outcomes as far as possible.</p>
<p>Ensure resilience to the effects of climate change e.g. reducing flood risk, mitigating effects of drier, hotter summers</p>		X		<p>No impact anticipated</p>		
<p>Enhance conservation and wildlife</p>		X		<p>No impact anticipated</p>		
<p>Safeguard the distinctive characteristics, features and special qualities of North Yorkshire's landscape</p>		X		<p>No impact anticipated</p>		
<p>Other (please state below)</p>		X		<p>No impact anticipated</p>		

Are there any recognised good practice environmental standards in relation to this proposal? If so, please detail how this proposal meets those standards.

N/A

Summary Summarise the findings of your impact assessment, including impacts, the recommendation in relation to addressing impacts, including any legal advice, and next steps. This summary should be used as part of the report to the decision maker.

Current annual expenditure on home to school transport amounts to £41 million annually arising from the provision of transport to eligible pupils. The requirements for home to school transport vary according to the needs of pupil cohorts but involve the use of a broad range of vehicles by size and type. As a consequence, there is some impact upon climate change arising from vehicle emissions and other impacts.

The implementation of revised proposals, aligned with statutory guidance issued by the DfE would have the effect of limiting some criteria for eligibility, and thus reducing the total amount of transport provided and, as a consequence, have a positive impact upon climate change.

In addition to the proposed implementation of policy proposals it is also proposed that the Council will develop and implement a Sustainable Travel Strategy for all home to school travel (i.e. including that undertaken by pupils not eligible for assistance) and thus have a greater impact upon climate change.

Sign off section

This climate change impact assessment was completed by:

Name	Jon Holden
Job title	Head of Strategic Planning
Service area	Education and Skills
Directorate	CYPS
Signature	Redacted signature
Completion date	5 July 2024

Authorised by relevant Assistant Director (signature):

Date: A Newbold