



# **Home to School Transport Policy including the Post-16 Transport Policy Statement**

## **Consultation Details**

Name of Local Authority: Buckinghamshire Council

Department Responsible: Children's Services

## **What is the Home to School Transport Policy?**

Buckinghamshire's Home to School Transport Policy sets out the Council's approach to providing transport to schools and a range of other educational settings for 0 – 19 year olds (and up to 25 years for those with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities). The Policy aims to ensure that pupils arrive at their education setting ready to learn.

## **What is the Post-16 Transport Policy Statement?**

The Council has a duty to prepare and publish an annual Post-16 Transport Policy Statement (the Statement). This statement specifies the arrangements for transport that the Council considers it necessary to make in order to facilitate the attendance of sixth form students receiving education or training. The Statement is published in line with the statutory duties under the Education Act 1996, including s.509AA and s.509AB and takes into account the Department for Education statutory guidance – Post-16 transport to education and training - January 2019.

The Buckinghamshire Post-16 Transport Policy Statement provides information on travel and transport arrangements that are available to young people who are above statutory school age, which ends on the last Friday in June in the academic year in which they turn 16. The statement applies to any young person who lives in Buckinghamshire.

## **Why is Buckinghamshire Council consulting?**

The current Home to School Transport Policy and associated Post-16 Transport Policy Statement were both reviewed in 2018/2019. Following this review, a decision was taken to make changes to the Policy and associated Statement in March 2019. The changes came into effect from September 2019.

The Post-16 Transport Policy Statement is reviewed annually and therefore it was consulted on again in July 2020.

The current Transport Policy Statement applies a charge to 16–18 year old students with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities who receive transport; however charges have been paused for the academic year 2020/21 due to the impact of Coronavirus. This is an exceptional decision. Charges as described in the current policy that we are now consulting on are set to resume for the academic year 2021/22.

We are now carrying out a further review of the Policy and associated Statement to ensure that we are continually improving our approach. The Council is committed to:

- Supporting children and young people to have access to educational opportunities at school or other educational settings, helping them to achieve their potential and effectively transition to adulthood.

- Providing clear and transparent information and guidance to pupils and families so that they make informed choices about transport provision.

## **What are the proposed key changes?**

We have reviewed our Home to School Transport Policy and the associated Post-16 Transport Policy Statement and have considered the feedback received from parents/carers and other key stakeholders over the last 12 months. We have worked with parent representatives from FACT Bucks, your parent / carer forum, to revise these documents. A discussion group was also held with parents / carers of children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities in August 2020 that helped to shape our proposals, including the three options contained within the Post-16 Transport Policy Statement.

### **Home to School Transport Policy:**

There are no major changes proposed for the overall Home to School Transport Policy. We are asking for views on proposals to update the content of the main Policy by providing clarification and more detail to some parts of the Policy. This aims to provide clearer information and guidance to students and families so they can make informed choices about their school transport.

### **Post-16 Transport Policy Statement:**

We are asking for views on proposals to update the content of the Post-16 Transport Policy Statement, to help provide clear information for young people and parents/carers. As charging for Post-16 educational transport will continue from September 2021, we are also asking for views on three potential options for how future transport for students aged 16–19 with SEND will be arranged and paid for.

Any changes implemented as a result of this consultation are planned to be published in March 2021 for the academic year 2021/22. The new Policy and associated Statement will apply to all pupils and students, including those with existing transport arrangements.

## **DRAFT Home to School Transport Policy**

The key changes (highlighted in yellow in the Policy document) are:

- Revised layout to reflect the pupil's journey from age 0-25 years and the support available at each stage. This aims to make information clearer for families;
- Clarification on the travel assistance available to 0-4 year olds (section 2)
- Clarification on the need to name the nearest suitable school in order to be considered for travel assistance (section 3)
- Clarification on who decides whether a school is classed as suitable (section 3)

- Clarification on aspects of Extended Rights for low income families (section 3)
- More clarity on how travel assistance applies to 19 year olds (section 4)
- More details about the content of the Post-16 Transport Policy statement, including the inclusion of those students aged 19 and over (section 5)
- Expanded information on Personal Transport Budgets and mileage forming part of a Personal Transport Budget (section 7)
- Clarification on the Spare Seats Scheme and the way that spare seat allocations are prioritised (section 9)
- Clarification that it is the Transport Exceptions Panel that considers exceptional circumstances relating to transport (section 10)
- Provided information on transport arrangements for students with SEND transferring in year to a new school (section 10)
- Information on what you should do if a driver or passenger assistant is unable to show you their ID badge (section 10)
- Clarification on the role of the Passenger Assistant (section 10)
- Clarification on the information about transport to residential placements (section 10)
- More detailed information on behaviour expectations (section 10)

## **DRAFT Post-16 Transport Policy Statement**

The key changes (highlighted in yellow in the Policy document) are:

- Clarification of the fact that the Statement refers to those students who are above statutory school age, which ends on the last Friday in June in the academic year in which they turn 16 (sections 1,3);
- Added detail on the consultation process (section 2);
- More clarity on how travel assistance applies to 19 year olds (section 3);
- Clarification on the Spare Seats Scheme and the way that spare seat applications are prioritised (section 4);
- More clarity on the eligibility criteria for travel assistance for students with SEND (section 6);
- Added information on Personal Transport Budgets which are available to all age groups with SEND (section 7) subject to meeting eligibility criteria;
- Clarification that mileage payments are still available as part of a Personal Transport Budget (section 7);
- Sets out three options that relate to how transport to educational settings is arranged and paid for from Sept 2021 (section 8)
- Clarification of how financial hardship is determined (section 8);
- Clarification of how non-payment is managed (section 10);

- Clarification of payment expectations for students from the same household and circumstances where payment is not required (section 10).

Alongside both the Policy and associated Statement there is a guidance document to help families understand how these would work in practice. This document has been made available for your information, but is not part of the consultation.

## **The consultation process and how you can take part**

The consultation will run from 12 October to 7 December 2020 and we would welcome your comments and opinions.

We would like to hear your views on our proposals and invite you to complete the short online questionnaire by visiting the [consultation webpage](#).

Alternatively if you would like to receive a paper copy please [contact us by email](#) or call 01296 382891.

The closing date for you to submit your feedback is **Monday 7 December 2020**.

You may also be interested in attending one of our virtual discussion groups to find out more information and share your views. Full details of these are on our [consultation webpage](#).

Please be assured that the information you provide will be used only for the purposes of this consultation, and will be kept confidential and stored securely in line with data protection laws.

Thank you for taking the time to read this document and provide your views. Updates on the consultation and subsequent decisions will be posted on our [consultation website](#) after the consultation closes.

## **Next steps following consultation closure**

The dates outlined below are all indicative:

**Close of consultation:** 7 December 2020

**Consideration of consultation feedback:** December 2020 – January 2021

**Final Policy agreed by Buckinghamshire Council Cabinet:** March 2021

**Publication of the new Policy and associated Post-16 Transport Statement:** April 2021