



DERBY CITY COUNCIL

School Transport - *your views*



Derby City Council has to make 10% budget savings over the next three years to meet a number of new pressures. As part of these savings, we propose to:

- **change the charging policy for transport to faith schools**
- **increase all home to school transport charges.**

By law, we have to provide free home to school transport (including transport to faith schools) for pupils who live in Derby City Council's area **AND** attend their nearest suitable school which is at least:

- two miles from home for pupils aged four to seven
- three miles from home for pupils aged eight to 16.

Under the Education and Inspections Act 2006, some secondary school pupils who are eligible for free school meals or whose parents are entitled to maximum working tax credit will be entitled to free school transport. This would be to any one of three suitable schools closest to their home where those schools are between two and six miles away. For faith schools, the distance is between two and 15 miles.

We are now asking people about the proposed changes to school transport with teaching staff, school governors, parents, transport operators and anyone else who has an interest.

We have enclosed a questionnaire with this leaflet.

Please complete and return it to us by **Friday 20 April**. You can either:

- complete the questionnaire, put it in an envelope and return it to us using our FREEPOST address, so you won't need a stamp, to:

**Derby City Council
Children and Young People's Services
FREEPOST MID18771
DERBY
DE1 9BR**

Or you can complete the questionnaire online from our website. You can find the document at:

www.derby.gov.uk/schooltransport

If we do decide to amend the current policy on transport to faith schools, we will publish it in September 2007 and implement it from September 2008.

We will increase fares on all other services from September 2007 on a 'pay as you board' basis. You will have to pay in advance on all services from September 2008.

Free transport to faith schools



We currently meet the full cost of school transport for pupils attending faith schools on faith grounds, as long as they live at least two miles from school for pupils aged four to seven years or at least three miles for pupils aged eight to 16 years. We spend £378,000, or £645 per child, every year to transport faith school pupils free of charge.

We propose to start charging for this transport to faith schools, in a similar way to the charge for pupils attending their nearest suitable school but living less than two or three miles away.

The main advantages of this approach are:

- the bus network will be maintained and pupils will still be able to travel safely and directly to school
- the introduction of a fare for all will avoid the complexity of calculating different fares on different routes
- it would achieve financial savings and protect other Council services.

The main disadvantages are:

- people may choose to take their children to school in the car rather than paying, which will increase congestion
- the financial impact for families who will have to pay for their child's school transport from September 2008.

The earliest date that any changes in transport to faith schools will be implemented is September 2008, *but would include those children who started at affected schools in September 2007*. So pupils who start at a faith school and are entitled to free school transport from September 2007, would start to pay from September 2008. Pupils who started at such a school before September 2007 would still receive their entitlement under the old policy until they leave statutory education or change school.

Other school transport

We also currently provide subsidised school transport for pupils up to age 16 who attend their nearest suitable school. Transport tends to be provided in areas where pupils have difficulty getting a direct commercial bus service to take them to school. On some services, pupils have to show an identity card to the bus driver to travel.

The fare that pupils pay is only a small proportion of the total cost of providing the service - we spend £450,000, or £475 per child, every year on providing these services in addition to the money we collect from bus fares.

Pupils aged over 16 should be travelling using their b_line card, which entitles them to half fares on commercial bus services. We may be able to offer any spare places to students aged 16 or over once all other students have been allocated places. This transport will be at the fare paying rate, payable in advance from September 2008.

FAQs



Who are you consulting?

- Parents of all pupils attending schools in Derby
- Parents of children who live in Derby but who attend faith schools outside the city
- Chairs of Governors and Headteachers of all Derby schools and neighbouring faith schools
- The diocesan education authorities for Derby
- Neighbouring local authorities
- The Confederation of Passenger Transport.

I am not sure if I live in Derby City Council's area – how will I know?

If you pay your Council Tax to Derby City Council, you live in their area.

My child is over 16 but still at school. Can they travel on these services?

Your child's b_line card entitles him or her to half fare travel on commercial buses. We will only offer places, at the fare paying rates, to students aged 16 or over if spare places are available after all other students have been allocated a seat.

Why are you making the savings on transport?

Most of the services we provide have to be provided legally and we have no choice in funding them. However, we have a choice over faith and subsidised school transport. There are few such services that we provide and this was felt to be the least damaging to children and young people. Faith school transport affects relatively few pupils but the costs are significant. It seems fairer to all pupils to target this, as not all pupils can benefit from the current subsidy. Low income families will be protected by the Education and Inspections Act 2006 which extends the right to free transport.

Why are the charges for travelling to nearest suitable schools cheaper than those for travel to faith schools?

Because journeys to nearest suitable schools are generally shorter.

When will the changes start?

The new charges for transport to faith schools will be introduced from September 2008, but will include children who started at the school in September 2007. The increased fares for pupils who already pay will be introduced from September 2007, with advanced payments being introduced from September 2008.

Will the changes affect all pupils?

Pupils who start at faith schools from September 2007 will be affected. Any pupils who started at faith schools before this date will not be affected and will continue the same arrangements under the existing policy until they reach 16 or change schools. Pupils currently paying a fare will have their fares increased.

Will my child still pay the bus fare each day?

Payment on the bus for pupils already paying fares will continue from September 2007, but we will need payment in advance from September 2008.

Are you increasing bus fares before September 2008 to schools other than faith schools?

Yes, the proposal is to increase fares to an average 70p each trip for primary aged pupils (£1.40 per day).and an average 80p each trip for secondary aged pupils (£1.60 per day) from September 2007 for all schools where students currently pay a fare.