

## What is the Council doing?

We are considering changing how we provide free transport to denominational schools. These are church schools where buildings are owned by the relevant church.

We currently choose to give children going to these schools free transport where the distance is over three miles and the child or parent is of that faith.

## Why is a change being considered?

We have to consider whether the current arrangements are fair and applied equally to everyone. Most parents who choose not to send their child to a local school have to pay the transport costs. It can be argued that it is unfair that parents whose children go to denominational schools receive help with their transport while children at other schools do not.

The Council is committed to low council tax increases because that is what local people have told us they want. But the increase in money we get from the Government doesn't cover our inflation costs.

This means we have to make some difficult decisions about what services we continue to provide.

We will have to spend significantly more than we had planned this year on school transport. This is because transport costs are increasing by between 10% and 15% – well above the rate of inflation. If we cannot save money on school transport we will have to make savings elsewhere.

Some councils have recently reviewed and changed their arrangements.

## Why are changes being considered now?

The Government is changing the law on school transport. In future we will have to provide help where children go to denominational secondary

schools which are between two and 15 miles away and whose families receive free school meals or Working Tax Credit.

## What is the cost of transport to denominational schools?

At the moment we spend £585,000 on transporting 1,334 pupils to denominational schools. This is about 7% of the total spending on school transport. Out of 183 primary and secondary schools in the county, transport help is provided to only 10 denominational schools. We also transport pupils to nine denominational schools outside East Sussex. By making changes, this cost would be reduced over seven years.

## What changes are being considered?

The possibilities we are looking at are set out in this leaflet.

### The diocesan authorities which represent Church of England and Catholic schools say the following.

Are there really any savings to be made?

- Many children will still receive transport help for other reasons.
- If children don't go to their church schools they will still need places and local schools may be full.
- The churches pay for the buildings and save the council money.

Is it really fair to remove this support?

- Church schools are a popular choice for many families.
- Historically these schools were placed to serve large catchment areas.
- If parents use cars instead, congestion increases and damages the environment.

# Have your say.

1 Do you think children who go to a denominational school should be entitled to free transport?

Yes

Not sure

No (please go to question 4)

2 If you answered 'Yes' or 'Not sure' to question 1, how important is it that we take the following action?

Please choose three statements and put them in order of their importance to you. Please write '1' against the most important, '2' against the second most important and '3' against the third most important.

	Order of importance
Provide help for children from low-income families living more than 15 miles from the nearest denominational secondary school.	
Apply the same arrangements for denominational primary schools as those that will apply to secondary schools.	
Expect parents to pay towards the transport costs to denominational schools (see question 3 below).	
Support families with younger children who are yet to go to a denominational primary or secondary school.	
Help large families by providing free transport for the third child and later children from the same family who go to denominational schools.	
Make a cash contribution to denominational schools so they can make arrangements they think are best.	

3 If you think parents should be expected to pay towards the cost of transport, how much do you think this should be? The full cost is approximately £2 for each pupil per day. Please tick the amount you believe to be appropriate – the amounts given are per child per day.

50p

£1

£1.50

£2

£2.50

4 Are there any other comments you would like to make?

Please use a separate sheet if necessary.



## About you

The following questions help us to understand more about the people who make up our community and make decisions and target our services where they are needed. We have a legal duty to collect this information to show that we are getting rid of illegal discrimination and promoting equal opportunities and good race relations.

1 Are you: male?  female?

2 How old were you on your last birthday?

3 What is your postcode?

### 4 Are you:

- a parent or carer with a child or children in full-time education? (If so, please answer the two questions below)

Please tell us which schools your children go to.

.....

Do they currently receive free transport?

Yes  No

- a school governor?

Name of school.....

- a parent with a child yet to go to school?

- Other (please say)

.....

## 5 Which of these groups do you consider you belong to?

Please tick one box only. If your ethnic group is not included in this list, please tick the 'Other ethnic group' box in the relevant section and write it in the line at the bottom.

### White

- British
- Irish
- Gypsy or Roma
- Irish Traveller
- Any other White background.....

### Mixed

- White and Black Caribbean
- White and Black African
- White and Asian
- Any other mixed background.....

### Black or Black British

- Caribbean
- African
- Any other Black background.....

### Asian or Asian British

- Indian
- Pakistani
- Bangladeshi
- Any other Asian background.....
- Chinese
- Other ethnic group.....

Please return this form to the **Director of Children's Services, Freepost (BR157), PO Box 4, County Hall, St Anne's Crescent, Lewes, East Sussex, BN7 1SG** as soon as possible or not later than **30 March 2007**.

## Who can comment?

We are interested in hearing everybody's views and are consulting a wide range of people who may have an interest in this. You can tell us what you think by either filling in and returning the attached slip or filling in the survey online at [eastsussex.gov.uk](http://eastsussex.gov.uk)

We will keep responses you give confidential.

## What will happen next?

We will consider comments in a report to our Cabinet on **1 May 2007**. The Cabinet will then decide whether to introduce new arrangements. Any changes will come into force on **1 September 2008**.

**It is important to note that any help currently being given to children going to denominational schools will continue until the child leaves that school (except in sixth forms where different arrangements already apply).**

If you would like our information in large print, in Braille, on audio tape or in another language, please contact **01273 481232** or visit [eastsussex.gov.uk](http://eastsussex.gov.uk)



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# Consultation on transporting pupils to denominational schools

## Possible changes for the 2008/2009 school year

