

Home to School Transport Consultation

Overview

The Home to School Transport Policy aims to provide guidance for parents/carers, young people and young adults on transport assistance available for pupils aged 3 -25 years of age.

Why are we consulting?

Where Local Authorities are proposing key changes to their local policy on school travel arrangements, a consultation with interested parties should be undertaken

What is the proposed key change to the policy?

Warwickshire County Council is proposing the following change to the definition of a **pupil's Qualifying School (contained in paragraph 2.3 of the draft policy attached below)**. **In all other material aspects, the Policy remains unchanged.**

At the moment, a pupil's qualifying school is defined by Warwickshire County Council to mean only the pupil's closest school to home with a space available for the pupil by the shortest available route (this will be a driving route if the journey is over the statutory walking distance or a walking route if the journey is less than the statutory walking distance). This may not be the priority area school¹ (sometimes referred to as 'catchment school') but will be the one physically closest to the student's home address.

The County Council are proposing to change the definition of qualifying school for a pupil to mean either the closest qualifying school (see paragraph 2.2 of the draft policy) to the pupil's home address, with places available, that provides education appropriate to the age, ability, and aptitude of the pupil and takes into account any special educational needs that the pupil may have, **or** the priority area school in which the pupil resides. This means that some children will have two qualifying schools.

Low-income families would continue to benefit from extended rights eligibility criteria.

The definition for a pupil's qualifying school will continue to take into account any special educational needs that the pupil may have.

The calculation of the qualifying school for a pupil who has gained a place at a selective school will remain unchanged and will include non-selective comprehensive schools which

¹ [Priority area maps for schools](#)

provide schooling for those of all ability levels. As such transport to selective schools will only be provided if it is the closest qualifying school to the child's home, taking into account all relevant secondary schools. The distance from home to school will also need to exceed the relevant statutory walking distance.

Similarly, the calculation of qualifying school for a pupil who has gained a place at a faith school remains unchanged and will include non-faith schools which provide schooling for those of all faiths. As such transport to faith schools will only be provided if it is the closest qualifying school to the child's home, taking into account all relevant schools. The exception to this will be when the pupil is of secondary school age and qualifies under the extended eligibility criteria (see section 3.3). The distance from home to school will also need to exceed the relevant statutory walking distance.

Subject to approval following consultation, it is proposed that this change would be effective from the date the new policy is published (anticipated September/October 2020).

Why is the policy being changed?

A number of changes were endorsed by Cabinet in January 2018 including a revision of the definition of the qualifying school for a pupil ('the nearest qualifying school'). From 1st September 2019 the definition of a pupil's qualifying school was altered to include only the school closest to the pupil's home by the shortest route with a pupil place available, in line with statutory requirements. However, it may not be the school in whose priority area the pupil resides (their 'catchment school') if there is another school closer to home by the nearest available walking route. Previous criteria encompassed the priority school or the nearest school with places available.

Following a review of this change in the definition of a pupil's qualifying school, it is proposed to change the definition to reintroduce the priority area school. A number of factors contributed to the decision to review and propose a change to the definition the qualifying school for a pupil including:

- The revision to the definition in January 2018 was part of addressing non-statutory duties, wide priority areas and the removal in some instances of priority areas altogether. Following the review, the County Council recognise that the number of schools removing priority areas remains small and that within the wide, largely rural, priority areas the revision created a divide in transport assistance eligibility within

certain localities and villages where the nearest school can differ by marginal distances.

- The unalignment from priority areas has created confusion and can prove complex to understand for parents when making a school place application with one priority area school and multiple nearer schools.

When will the consultation take place?

The consultation will run for six weeks from Monday 8 June 2020 to Friday 17 July 2020.

The full timeline is set out in the table below:

Activity	Date
Portfolio Holder Decision to go to public consultation	Thursday 28 May 2020
Public consultation start (6 weeks)	Monday 8 June 2020
Public consultation end	Friday 17 July 2020
Cabinet	September 2020

How can I take part in the consultation?

You can take part in the public consultation in the following ways:

- **Online:** by completing the consultation survey <https://ask.warwickshire.gov.uk/>
- **By Email:** transportconsultation@warwickshire.gov.uk
- **In writing:** School Organisation & Planning, Saltisford Building 3, Warwickshire County Council, Ansell Way, Warwick, CV34 4UL.

You can request a paper copy of the survey by telephone (01926 742058) or email (transportconsultation@warwickshire.gov.uk) and return it to the postal address above. You can also request an alternative format or language this way.

The closing date for responses to the consultation is midnight on Friday 17 July 2020.

Following the end of the consultation we shall publish the results and this may include quotes of comments which will be anonymous. If you reply to an anonymous survey then no personal details will be captured. If you would like further information, visit our website: www.warwickshire.gov.uk/privacy or contact our Customer Service Centre on 01926 410410