

West Dunbartonshire Council
Educational, Learning & Attainment



A Proposal Document
to
Alter arrangements for the provision of transport by West Dunbartonshire
Council for pupils attending mainstream schools

The following Schools and are affected by this Proposal Document:

GARTOCHARN PRIMARY SCHOOL
KNOXLAND PRIMARY SCHOOL
LINNVALE PRIMARY SCHOOL
ST. EUNAN'S PRIMARY SCHOOL
ST. MARY'S (ALEXANDRIA) PRIMARY SCHOOL
ST. MARY'S (DUNTOCHER) PRIMARY SCHOOL
ST. PATRICK'S PRIMARY SCHOOL

CLYDEBANK HIGH SCHOOL
DUMBARTON ACADEMY
OUR LADY & ST. PATRICK'S HIGH SCHOOL
ST. PETER THE APOSTLE HIGH SCHOOL
VALE OF LEVEN ACADEMY

This document has been issued by West Dunbartonshire Council for consultation in terms of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010

1. Introduction

1.1 At its meeting on 8th March 2023, the Educational Services Committee of West Dunbartonshire Council is asked to:

- a) approve the launch of the statutory consultation document by the Chief Education Officer under the terms of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 on the proposal to discontinue arrangements for the provision of transport for pupils attending denominational schools;
- b) agree that the consultation period should run from Thursday 9th March 2023 until Tuesday 9th May 2023, a total of 31 days when the schools are open for pupils; and
- c) agree that a report outlining the results of the consultation and making appropriate recommendations be presented to a meeting of the Educational Services Committee provisionally scheduled to be held on 5th July 2023.

2. The Proposal

2.1 West Dunbartonshire Council is proposing, subject to approval from Education Services Committee and the outcome of the consultation process:

- from August 2023, the discontinuation of the existing school transport arrangements whereby any primary aged pupil who resides more than 1 mile from their catchment school, and any secondary aged pupil who resides more than 2 miles from their catchment school will be provided with transportation;
- replacing the existing school transport arrangements with a revised home to school distance, whereby any primary aged pupil who resides more than 2 miles from their catchment school, and any secondary aged pupil who resides more than 3 miles from their catchment school will be provided with transportation.

3. Background to the Proposal

- 3.1** Although Local Authorities have an obligation through the Section 51 of the Education (Scotland) Act 1980 to provide conveyance for pupils between their home and school, there is no specified distance in legislation. Instead, the act refers to a safe walking distance, deemed to be 2 miles for any child who has not attained the age of 8, and 3 miles for any other children. The most recent Scottish Government School Transport Guidance of 2021 continues to refer to this safe walking distance.
- 3.2** Presently, the Council provides transportation to catchment primary pupils who reside more than 1 mile from school, and catchment secondary pupils who reside more than 2 miles from school. This is a more generous provision than that outlined in legislation, and a more generous provision than that provided by many other local authorities.
- 3.3** Transport arrangements for children who attend Additional Support Needs (ASN) settings are unaffected by this proposal. Additionally, children who attend ‘out of authority’ placements are not affected by this proposal. Any child or young person who attends a school that is not their catchment school through a placing request is not eligible for transportation to be provided by the local authority.

4 Current Position

- 4.1** The majority of our children and young people reside within a safe walking distance from their catchment school
- 4.2** We presently provide transportation for children and young people to 12 mainstream catchment schools. The following table shows the schools presently in receipt of transport, and the number of children transported:

School	Number of children transported
Clydebank High School	249
Dumbarton Academy	23
Gartocharn Primary School	17
Knoxland Primary School	21
Linnvale Primary School	*
Our Lady & St. Patrick’s High School	533
St. Peter the Apostle High School	106
St. Eunan’s Primary School	22
St. Mary’s (Alexandria) Primary School	16
St. Mary’s (Duntocher) Primary School	12
St. Patrick’s Primary School	*
Vale of Leven Academy	184

* redacted, due to numbers being less than 5

- 4.3** This is composed of dedicated school transport, and travel passes to make use of public transport provision (service bus and rail)
- 4.4** For a number of our children, transport is provided due to their being no safe walking route to school. This will continue to be the case with the change in policy.

5 Proposed Position

- 5.1** It is proposed that we increase the distance a pupil would have to reside in order to qualify for transportation, to bring it more in line with legislation. The proposal would be for a revised home to school distance to be introduced, whereby any primary aged pupil who resides more than 2 miles from their catchment school, and any secondary aged pupil who resides more than 3 miles from their catchment school will be provided with transportation.
- 5.2** The proposal is directly impacted by the assessment of walking routes to school being regarded as 'safe'. Safety of walking routes are assessed by West Dunbartonshire Roads and School Transport teams. The safety of a route can be affected by the provision, accessibility and quality of suitable footpaths, lighting, suitable crossing points and any associated traffic surveys.
- 5.3** Children walking to school unaccompanied are deemed by their parent to have the appropriate road safety sense, or would need to be accompanied by an adult who has suitable road safety sense.

6 Educational Benefits Statement

- 6.1** West Dunbartonshire Council believes this proposal will provide a range of educational benefits and enhance the Council's efforts to meet obligations enshrined in:
- the Education (Scotland) Act 1980;
 - the Standards in Scotland's Schools etc. Act 2000;
 - the Local Government in Scotland Act 2003;
 - the Equality Act 2010;
 - the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014; and.
 - School Transport Guidance 2021

6.2 The proposal is aligned with UN Convention on the Rights of the Child Article 3 which affirms that ‘in all actions concerning children, whether undertaken by public or private social welfare institutions, courts of law, administrative authorities or legislative bodies, the best interests of the child shall be a primary consideration’.

6.3 The Scottish Government is committed to a long term vision for active travel that encourages promotes walking, cycling, public transport and car sharing in preference to single occupancy car use for movement of people, and encourages efficient and sustainable freight.

6.4 Benefits of active travel

- The World Health Organisation reported that walking for 30 minutes or cycling for 20 minutes on most days reduces mortality risk by at least 10%
- Active commuting is associated with an approximate 10% decrease in risk for cardiovascular disease and a 30% decrease in type 2 diabetes risk
- Cancer-related mortality is 30% lower among bike commuters
- The Scottish Health Survey of 2021 identified 28% of children at risk of being overweight. An active lifestyle combined with a healthy diet can help to reduce this.
- Improve focus – in one study, brain activity in the areas of focus and attention were increased following a period of walking. Walking to school can therefore improve focus on school activities
- Walking has been found to improve people’s mood and develop creativity
- Building relationships with those you walk with. Whether it be a group of friends or family, spending time walking together can help build relationships as people talk about their day or other things that are on their mind.
- Reducing the number of people taking car or bus journeys can help to improve our air quality.
- Increased social cohesion – for those children that do not have the required sense of road safety to walk unaccompanied, parents or carers may have to accompany their children on the journey to and from school. In other local authorities, many parents have benefitted from sharing this with a group of other parents whose children live near them. This has reduced the impact on individuals, led to increased connections with neighbours, and an increased sense of community.
- A walking survey in 2021 found that participation was lower amongst residents of the 10% most deprived areas.

6.5 Dis-benefits of active travel

- Journey time – for some, the journey to school time will increase if not travelling by bus. This may result in an earlier start to the day for some, as they plan for their journey taking longer.

- Inclement weather – weather in the West of Scotland is frequently inclement, resulting in families having to equip children and young people for wet and windy weather. This may increase financial pressure on households.
- Some benefits are only realised if children and young people swap the passive bus journey for an active means of getting to school

6.6 The Eco-Schools Scotland programme (with which all of our school are engaged) encourages active travel for our children and young people. The programme promotes:

- encouraging and enabling parents and children to walk, cycle and use public transport;
- setting up a working group with school, parent, local authority, community, police, and transport representatives to run a school travel or 'safer routes to school' project;
- writing and implementing a school travel plan;
- running an effective road safety awareness programme for pupils;
- raising awareness of the damage caused by transport to the environment and people's health, and;
- providing adequate support and information about travelling to school for pupils and staff who wish to walk, cycle or use public transport.

All schools will be encouraged to revisit their school travel plan to encourage an increasing uptake of active travel.

7.0 The Consultation Process

7.1 At its meeting on 8th March 2023, West Dunbartonshire Council authorised the Chief Education Officer to undertake formal consultation in terms of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 in relation to the Proposal specified in section 2 above and the arrangements noted below have been made to discharge that instruction.

7.2 The overall timeline for the consultation is as follows:

Activity	Date
Launch Statutory Consultation Process – Education Committee.	8 th March 2023
The consultation period will run from 9 th March 2023 – 9 th May 2023 (extended to 44 days to allow for “clear days” rule and accommodate 13 days where schools	

are closed due to an in-service day, a long weekend and the spring break) and will include public meetings.	
Public Meeting: Our Lady & St. Patrick's High School	18 th April 2023, 7pm
Public Meeting: St. Peter the Apostle High School	19 th April 2023, 7pm
Public Meeting: Vale of Leven Academy	25 th April 2023, 7pm
Compilation and issue of Section 8 (1) information to Education Scotland	9 th May – 12 th May 2023
Education Scotland 3 week Period for Response	15 th May – 2 nd June 2023
Consultation Report Published (To be issued 3 clear weeks before the Committee Meeting)	12 th June – 4 th July 2023
Outcome of Statutory Consultation – Education Committee	5 th July 2023
Start of school term (for pupils)	16 th August 2023

7.3 The Proposal Document will be issued by the Chief Education Officer to the consultees included in the following list:

- Education Scotland;
- The Archdiocese of Glasgow of the Roman Catholic Church;
- the Parent Councils of all West Dunbartonshire Primary and Secondary Schools;
- the parents/carers of pupils attending all West Dunbartonshire Primary and Secondary Schools;
- the parents/carers of any children expected by West Dunbartonshire Council to attend the primary schools listed in section 4.1 above within two years of the date of publication of this Proposal Document (with that date of publication being defined in the table included in section 7.2 above), including those pupils attending all private and voluntary pre-school nurseries in the West Dunbartonshire area;
- the pupils attending all West Dunbartonshire Primary and Secondary Schools (insofar as this is possible and taking cognisance of the age and maturity of the pupils);
- the teaching and support staff of all West Dunbartonshire Primary and Secondary Schools;
- the trade union representatives of the above staff;
- the constituency MSP;
- the constituency MP; and
- Neighbouring local authorities.

7.4 The Proposal Document will also be published on the West Dunbartonshire

Council website and copies will also be available from the reception point at the following West Dunbartonshire Council buildings:

- Gartocharn Primary School, Ross Loan, Gartocharn, Alexandria, G83 8NE
- Knoxland Primary School, Leven Street, Dumbarton, G82 1QU
- Linnvale Primary School, Livingstone Street. Linnvale, Clydebank, G81 2RL
- St. Eunan's Primary School, Gilmour Street, Clydebank, G81 2BW
- St. Mary's (Alexandria) Primary School, Bank Street, Alexandria, G83 0UJ
- St. Mary's (Duntocher) Primary School, Chapel Road, Duntocher, Clydebank, G81 6DL
- St. Patrick's Primary School, Crosslet Road, Dumbarton, G82 2LQ
- Clydebank High School, Janetta Street, Clydebank, G81 3EJ
- Dumbarton Academy, Crosslet Road, Dumbarton, G82 2AJ
- Our Lady & St. Patrick's High School, Howatshaws Road, Bellsmyre, Dumbarton, G82 3DR
- St. Peter the Apostle High School, Kirkoswald Drive, Clydebank, G81 2DB
- Vale of Leven Academy, Main Street, Alexandria, G83 0BH
- West Dunbartonshire Council, 16 Church Street, Dumbarton G82 1QL

7.5 The Proposal Document can also be made available in alternative formats or in translated form for readers whose first language is not English. Please make contact with West Dunbartonshire Council's Educational Services, 16 Church Street, Dumbarton G82 1QL, Tel: , 01389737391 or e-mail: educationconsultation@west-dunbarton.gov.uk

7.6 A public notice to advertise the consultation will be placed in the Dumbarton Reporter and Clydebank Post and the same notice will be displayed on the reception area notice boards in the above noted West Dunbartonshire Council buildings.

7.7 Public meetings will be held in our Lady & St. Patrick's High School on 18th April 2023 at 7pm, St. Peter the Apostle High School on 19th April 2023 at 7pm and Vale of Leven Academy on 25th April 2023 at 7pm, at which representatives of West Dunbartonshire Council's Educational Services Department will be in attendance to present the details of the Proposal, answer questions and record comments/representations from those in attendance at the meeting. Education Scotland will also attend the public meetings.

7.8 Comments/representations may also be made by contacting 01389 737391; by email to educationconsultation@west-dunbarton.gov.uk or by writing to the Chief Education Officer at West Dunbartonshire Council,

16 Church Street, Dumbarton G82 1QL

- 7.9** At the end of the consultation period, the Chief Education Officer will submit a copy of all written comments/representations, together with oral comments/representations made at the public meetings, to Education Scotland who will prepare a professional and independent report on the educational aspects of the Proposal.
- 7.10** The Chief Education Officer will consider all written and oral comments/representations received in relation to the Proposal which have been received during the consultation period, together with Education Scotland's report, and prepare a Consultation Report.
- 7.11** The Chief Education Officer shall publish the Consultation Report which shall be issued (either in full or as a summary document) to the consultees specified in section 7.3 above; be made available on Council's website; be available in printed format from the reception points at West Dunbartonshire Council buildings specified in section 7.4 above; and be issued to all those who responded and provided contact details through the consultation process.
- 7.12** The Consultation Report shall be published to allow a period of no less than 3 weeks prior to the Council's Decision to either implement or reject the Proposal.
- 7.13** The Chief Education Officer shall immediately notify Scottish Ministers if the Council's Decision is to implement the Proposal which would see a reduction in the provision of school transport.
- 7.14** Representations (from consultees) can be made to Scottish Ministers within 3 weeks of the Council Decision to request Scottish Ministers 'call-in' the Council Decision.
- 7.15** West Dunbartonshire Council can only implement the Council Decision 6 weeks after the date of the Council Decision or in the event such earlier notification is received from Scottish Ministers.
- 7.16** West Dunbartonshire Council cannot implement the Council Decision if 'called-in' by Scottish Ministers during the 6 week period after the Council Decision and Scottish Ministers will then adopt the position of making the decision to either implement or reject the Proposal.
- 7.17** **The proposal question is as follows:**

Do you agree that West Dunbartonshire Council should bring transport provision for schools more in line with the safe walking distance to school?

Consultees may also wish to provide reasons for their opinions.