

Baugh, Ben

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 08 January 2014 08:47
To: Baugh, Ben
Subject: Re: Changes to home to school transport policy

Dear Mr Baugh

As a teacher at John Masefield High School, I would like to express my concern over the changes to Herefordshire's home to school transport policy.

While I understand that there *may* be some minimal financial gain from this change of policy for the county (though that in itself is disputable), there seems to be no calculation or appreciation of the impact this will have on the families who expect their children to attend John Masefield.

In particular, I'm concerned that the new policy will force parents to make decisions that will be detrimental to both family life and the interests of their children purely for financial reasons. At present the majority of the families in our catchment area who choose to send their children to John Masefield make their decision unreservedly for all of their children. Under your new policy, parents are likely to be forced for financial reasons to send their children to different schools. This would certainly be the case for families who have children in current KS3 and KS4 classes. In my experience, there is much to be gained from the current provision and much to be lost through the changes being driven through. I can cite many examples of how older siblings help younger brothers and sisters to settle into high school, but one specific example occurred at a recent parents' consultation interview when a Y10 student accompanying her Y7 brother and mother stepped in to reassure her brother, one of our more vulnerable students, when he became upset over an issue raised. She very quickly drew on her own knowledge and familiarity with the school's interventions and support, offering him far more effective first hand reassurance than either I or his mother could have given. Separating families will put an end to this sort of support.


Aside from the emotional well-being of our young people, there are other consequences of families being forced to send their children to different schools. Some of these are financial such as not being able to hand down school uniform and others are practical such as trying to juggle two school calendars which may result in choices having to be made in terms of which school event they support when dates clash or coping with their children being on holidays at different times.

I would also like to raise the important issue of continuity for our students. For all children a move to high school is a big step and one that can be stressful. I can see no advantage in moving any child who has already settled into our school. But even more potentially damaging is the effect on our more vulnerable students. As a parent myself of a SEN child, I am fully aware of the need for these children in particular to have stability in order that they make the right level of progress. Furthermore, one of the big advantages of our school for our more vulnerable students is its size. I know my own son would not have coped in a much larger school, the size of one of the Malvern schools some of our children may have to attend as a result of your changes.

As a long serving member of staff at the school, I appreciate the advantage of the long term relationship the school has with many of its families. A large number of our parents are ex-students of the school, parents who understand the ways of our school and can therefore be more effective in supporting both the school and their children.

I would like these concerns to be considered in any appeal over the authority's decision. I write to voice some of the issues our families will be facing if this plan is implemented.

Yours sincerely


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