

Baugh, Ben

From: [REDACTED] >
Sent: 10 January 2014 16:25
To: Baugh, Ben
Subject: re hereford school transport changes - questions for meeting

We have 2 children that attend John Masefield High School in Ledbury, they are currently in years 10 and 8. Both are eligible for free school transport. We live in Yatton, nr Much Marcle so are actually closer to John Kyrle as the crow flies. But JMHS is our CATCHMENT school.

For context, we applied for a place in John Kyrle when our eldest was entering year 7 but did not get offered a place (over subscription), so we appealed this decision but were unsuccessful. It was worth noting that the transport officer pointed out to us we were eligible for free transport to EITHER secondary school. When our second child was in year 6 we applied to JMHS only as we could not risk having to pick 2 children up from different schools at the same time.

It seems ludicrous that a policy can be retrospectively implemented after we had made decisions for our children based on the understanding of free transport. We are not in control of the catchment area and therefore feel extremely wronged that by doing the right thing, we have still been penalised.

We might point out that with our situation(and your assumption that we move the second child to a different school) you would have to arrange for 2 buses to pick up our children each morning and evening costing substantially more.

I would like to question the following:-

Why didn't you review last years bus schedule and place our pickup from the Much Marcle bus (adding an extra 5 miles in total to its journey) rather than adding us to the Eastnor bus which adds 15 miles to every journey? – that is wasting money!

Why is the policy changing for current students as opposed to giving potential students the chance to make an informed decision based on the costs involved?

Moving schools whilst in secondary school is madness and detrimental to the child's education so why would you place our children in this situation.

What happens if your nearest school doesn't have enough space – that's not my fault but you expect me to pay for transport still?

Assuming we moved the second child and there was a place at John Kyrle, how can providing 2 buses to our house be cheaper to you than providing 1?

Since our eldest will still get free transport (year 10/11 rule) the bus will already be visiting our house so what rationale is there for paying for our other child to sit on this bus or having to make the same journey myself.

We can't afford £720 per year for this service so I would end up driving to school myself each day, with that in mind can I charge you for the expense as you would be saving money not having to pick up/drop off my first child?

Why is the cost per year way more than the current fee, it looks like you are getting us to pay for everyone's bus journey?

How much does it cost to run the current service and will this policy change remove the need for any council subsidy (the paying parents would basically cover all costs involved with that bus route)?

Will there be an appeal process for cases like ours?

How are you going to deal with the increased traffic into Ledbury and the school grounds?

Has the council considered the environmental damage by adding more cars onto the road, and how does this fit with the commitment to reduce the environmental footprint?

John Masefield works closely with its feeder primary schools, inviting primary students into school several times to get them used to the staff and environment, this will be utterly pointless if students can't afford to go to the school.

We are as parents, supposed to have the right to choose our secondary school but in practice it's the catchment school as the other school is oversubscribed. Now our school decision may have to be based on costs involved and not educational value.

Yours sincerely,

