

TO: EXECUTIVE MEMBER for CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE & LEARNING
DATE: 17 MAY 2021

**AMENDMENT TO EDUCATION TRANSPORT POLICY FOR BRACKNELL
FOREST CHILDREN AGED 5-16
Executive Director of People**

1 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 The report seeks formal approval to amend the Education Travel policies, for children aged 5-16 for the period 2020 -2021 and 2021 -2022.

2 Recommendation

- 2.1 **That the Executive member agrees to the revised eligibility criteria for pupils aged 5-16 contained within the proposed Education Transport Policy Statements 2020/21 and 2021/22 to include ‘designated area school’ in order to align itself fully with the School Admissions guide.**

3 Reasons for Recommendation

- 3.1 To ensure that the Education Travel Policies and the School Admissions Guide to Secondary Education state the same criteria regarding designated area and nearest schools.

4 Alternative Options Considered

- 4.1 No alternative option was considered.

5 Supporting Information

- 5.1 Local Authorities are required to publish transport statements each year setting out the travel arrangements they will make to support eligible children of compulsory school age.
- 5.2 Prior to 2019 Bracknell Forest Council published, annually, 3 separate policies for education travel:

- Mainstream Policy
- SEN Policy
- Post 16 Policy

In 2019 one policy was drafted to apply to all Bracknell Forest children aged 5-16 with a separate policy for Post 16 learners. The policy was written in accordance with DfE Home to School travel and transport guidance – July 2014.

During the rewrite, the term **designated area school** was omitted from the statutory walking distance paragraph and only **nearest suitable school** was included. As **designated area school** is not mentioned in the DfE statutory guidance; it is

believed that this is a local interpretation of the guidance as it has been part of the eligibility criteria for many years previously.

It is believed that the removal of **designated area school** was an oversight and not a deliberate deletion as removal of this criteria should have gone to public consultation and a cohort of students would have become not eligible for free transport. It is not believed that any residents have been disadvantaged due to the oversight.

Also, at this time the responsibility of producing this policy was removed from its long-standing author, The School Admissions Manager, who is also responsible for producing The School Admissions Guide to Secondary Education and passed to The Transport and Support Services Manager. This disconnect led to **designated area school** remaining in The School Admissions guide.

The Council must ensure that the same information is available, in both documents, to parents whilst they are making their secondary school application for their children. Transport can be a factor and conflicting information may leave the Council open to appeals or complaints. The revised policies are at Appendix A and B for approval with the relevant paragraphs highlighted for ease of reference.

- 5.3 The Education Travel Policy for Post 16 students is not affected.

Financial Implications

- 5.4 This policy does not have any financial implications as eligibility criteria for free education transport remains the same and the Education Transport team had continued to assess eligibility by using the **designated area school** criteria.

6 Consultation and Other Considerations

Legal Advice

- 6.1 The Legal Team are in agreement that "Designated School Area" should be included within all the relevant sections of the Education Transport Policy 2020/2021 and 2021/2022.

Financial Advice

- 6.2 There are no financial implications associated with the revised criteria included within this report.

Other Consultation Responses

- 6.3 No consultation is required.

Equalities Impact Assessment

- 6.4 Equality Impact Assessment attached at Annex 2 of this report.

Strategic Risk Management Issues

6.5 There are no strategic risk management issues related to this policy.

Background Papers

DfE Home to school travel and transport guidance – July 2014

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/575323/Home_to_school_travel_and_transport_guidance.pdf

Bracknell Forest Council – The guide to secondary education 2121/22

[The guide to secondary education 2021 to 2022 \(bracknell-forest.gov.uk\)](https://www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/secondary-education)

Contact for further information

Matt Howlett, Customer Experience - 01344 355157

Matt.howlett@bracknell-forest.gov.uk

Lesley Adams, Education and Learning – 01344 354143

Lesley.adams@bracknell-forest.gov.uk