



meeting	CABINET	
date	10 January 2007	agenda item number

REPORT OF THE CABINET MEMEBER FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SERVICES

Variation of the home to school transport policy in connection with 'rising fives'

Purpose of report

1. To propose that the home to school transport policy be varied to ensure primary pupils enrolling at school before the term in which they are five are eligible to qualify for transport assistance where appropriate.

Information and advice

Background

2. In March 2005 the County Council agreed that from September 2006 the admission arrangements for pupils being admitted to Nottinghamshire schools will change whereby pupils may be admitted to school on a full time basis up to two terms ahead of their reaching compulsory school age.
3. It was agreed that the following policy was to apply from the 2006/07 admissions round that

Date of birth range of children becoming aged five	Admission arrangements
1 September to 31 December	Admission at the beginning of the autumn term (one term earlier than compulsory school age)
1 January to 31 March	Admission at the beginning of term or at half term during the autumn or spring terms (up to two terms earlier than compulsory school age)
1 April to 31 August	Admission at the beginning of term or at half term during the spring or summer terms (up to two terms earlier than compulsory school age)

4. To keep all admissions within one school admission year, it is necessary for the September to December birth dates to be offered only up to one term's earlier admission; if they were to be offered up to two terms earlier they would be taken into school in the previous school admission year.
5. Within this policy individual school governing bodies will be able to decide upon a more specific policy about when, within a two term window, to admit children born between 1 January – 31 August.
6. This policy is subject to parents' compulsory right to defer their child's admission to compulsory school age.
7. The home to school transport policy provides free transport where a pupil attends the local area catchment school and whose home address is over the compulsory walking distance. In the case of pupils up to the age of eight, the distance is two miles.
8. However, for pupils under the age of five who are admitted to school before the start of the term in which the fifth birthday occurs or children attending nursery school (or units) do not normally qualify for travel assistance. In exceptional individual circumstances, such as Special Educational Needs, the policy does provide for free transport.
9. The effect of the two policies taken together means that a parent may be refused free transport, for an otherwise eligible pupil, if they enrol their child in line with the Nottinghamshire admission arrangements. This anomaly is clearly to the detriment of the pupil and parents and should be removed by a variation to the home to school transport policy to allow free transport to an eligible child who enrolls in the term before they reach statutory school age.
10. It should be noted that pupils enrolling at a school which opts for a single entry point will not be eligible for free home to school transport more than two terms ahead of the term in which they attain compulsory school age.

Statutory and policy implications

11. This report has been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of finance, equal opportunities, personnel, crime and disorder and those using the service. Where such implications are material, they have been described in the text of the report.

Financial implications

12. This proposal brings the home to school transport policy into alignment with the rising fives admissions policy, and as a consequence may increase the number of pupils eligible for free transport. However the number of children under five eligible for free transport is a very small proportion of the pupil population and the anticipated cost to the Local Authority of this adjustment is not significant.

Implications for service users

13. This will enable eligible pupils to access free home to school transport where they enrol no more than two terms before they attain the compulsory school age.
14. This will not apply to pupils enrolling at a school which opts for a single entry point. Pupils will not be eligible for free home to school transport more than two terms ahead of the term in which they attain compulsory school age.

RECOMMENDATION

15. That:
 - (1) the home to school transport policy is varied in order to allow free home to school transport for eligible pupils where they enrol within two terms of attaining compulsory school age.
 - (2) This variation should not apply to pupils enrolling at a school, which opts for a single entry point more than two terms ahead of the term in which they attain compulsory school age.

COUNCILLOR JOYCE BOSNJAK

Cabinet Member for Children and Young People's Services

Reasons for recommendation

16. To ensure the home to school transport policy does not place eligible pupils in a disadvantageous position where they enrol in line with the Nottinghamshire admission rules.

Legal Services' comments (LM/12.12.2006)

17. Cabinet has the delegated authority to approve the recommendations in the report.

Strategic Director of Resources' comments (NDR)

18. The financial implications are set out in paragraph 12. It is not expected that there will be a significant increase in costs arising from this proposal.

Background papers available for information

Nil

Electoral division(s) affected

Nottinghamshire

M19C1703