

Home to School Transport for After School Clubs

Consultation - Responses

Breakdown of respondents

A parent/carer of a child or young person who uses an After School Club run by Castle School, Granta School, Highfield Ely Academy, Samuel Pepys School or Spring Common Academy	19
A parent/carer of a child or young person with SEND and an EHCP who uses an After School Club run by another school	3
A parent/carer of a child or young person with SEND and an EHCP who attends an Enhanced Recourse Base at a Cambridgeshire mainstream school.	1
A child or young person who uses an After School Club run by Castle School, Granta School, Highfield Ely Academy, Samuel Pepys School or Spring Common Academy	0
A child or young person who has an EHCP who uses an After School Club run by another school	0
A member of staff at Castle School, Granta School, Highfield Ely Academy, Samuel Pepys School or Spring Common Academy	7
A member of staff at one of the other Cambridgeshire special schools or a mainstream Enhanced Resource Base	0
A governor or Trust member of Castle School, Granta School, Highfield Ely Academy, Samuel Pepys School or Spring Common Academy	1
A governor or Trust member of one of the other Cambridgeshire special schools or a mainstream Enhanced Resource Base	1
A Professional Association / Trade Union representative	0
A representative of another Partner Organisation / Education Provider	2
Other	3
Total	37

Please select which After School Club your child uses:

Castle School	6
Granta School	4
Highfield Ely Academy	2
Samuel Pepys School	2
Spring Common Academy	3
Do not currently attend a Club	1
Other	3 (Witchford Village College, Ridgefield Primary School, Meadowgate Academy)
Not Applicable	16

If your child does not attend an After School Club, what are reasons for this?

No club available	1
No transport available	1
Cost	1
N/A	3

Current Arrangements and Alternative Options

Please tick a box if you have a clear preference for one of the options listed:

Option 1 (a) <i>“Continue to provide free transport to children and young people who attend Castle School, Granta School, Highfield Academy Ely, Samuel Pepys School and Spring Common Academy to enable them to access the After School Provision run by those schools”.</i>	23
Option 1 (b) <i>“Continue to provide free transport to the children and young people currently on roll at the schools named in Option 1, but not to any children and young people who are placed at those schools after the start of the 2022/23 academic year”.</i>	0
Option 2 <i>Change from providing free transport to those children and young people who attend the schools named in Option 1, to providing subsidised transport with parents/carers meeting part of the cost”.</i>	2
Option 3 <i>“Change from providing free transport to those children and young people who attend the schools named in Option 1, to providing subsidised transport with parents/carers meeting part of the cost, with the subsidy phased out over 3 years at the end of which parents/carers would meet the full cost”.</i>	0
Option 4 – <i>“Change from providing free transport to those children and young people who attend the schools named in Option 1 to providing free transport only to those families who qualify for financial support on grounds of low income* and offer subsidised transport for other children with parents/carers meeting part of the cost.”</i>	5
Option 5 - <i>“Cease providing free transport to those children and young people who attend the schools named in Option 1 with effect from the start of term in September 2022. This would mean that parents/carers would need to meet the full cost of transport themselves, should they wish their children to continue to attend one of those clubs from the start of September 2022”.</i>	1
No Preference	6

If you have ticked Option 2, please use the boxes below to indicate the level of subsidy you think the Council should provide:

75% of the cost	1
50% if the cost	2
25% of the cost	0
Other	0
Not Applicable	34

If you have any alternative suggestions, please use the box below to let us know what they are.

1 Response

"Why do you not fund other schools? My daughter used to get transport provided and it was stopped. I am willing to pay towards it, having to get transport to get my daughter home makes it hardly worth her going as I have to rely on other people to help. It was just suddenly stopped"

If your child currently attends one of the After School Clubs run by one of the 5 Area Special schools, would they continue to be able to access their existing After School Club if the decision was taken to implement Option 5 (cease providing free transport).

Yes	7
No	13
Not Applicable	17

If you have selected "Yes", how would they travel to the club?

"Assuming that the free provision would be replaced by transport which we would need to pay for, my son could not travel in a private taxi without a chaperone"

"They would have to be collected by parent"

"We may need to cut down after-school club attendance from 5 to maybe 2-3 times a week in order to accommodate our jobs. We both work full time jobs."

"I would have to drive out to school and collect him after work"

"Drive"

If you would like to make an additional comment, please use the box below and continue onto a separate sheet if necessary.

"We rely on transport currently and xxx really enjoys it".

"On some occasions I am able to collect our daughter from after school club, but this is a short-term thing and if transport stops then in the future after school would be a closed option for her".

"It is essential that free transport continues to be provided in order for her to access after school club. This provides inclusion and equality for my child."

"I think the after school transport provision is crucial for two reasons: i) it offers an opportunity for children with SEN to socialise with their peers outside of school hours in a familiar, safe space ii) it allows parents to work. Having a child with SEN plunges most families into poverty and this adversely affects women (as they usually are impacted in families due to maternity leave initially) and this is unfair and discriminatory. Working not only helps avoid poverty and the stresses that that causes but provides self-esteem and a respite for carers also."

"I am extremely grateful to you for providing free transport. xxx loves After-School Club and it is the only club available to him. His special needs make it impossible for him to access any mainstream activities even with a carer present. After-school club for children with SEND is available for one afternoon per week only. This is woefully inadequate compared to the provision for children in mainstream schools who have access to such clubs for five afternoons per week. Please can you continue to fund their transport so that they can have at least this one day per week at a club? It was decided long ago to close all the smaller local special schools and for the local authorities to fund transport to larger schools. Surely you cannot now turn round and say that it's too expensive and deprive these children of this one activity per week? The consequences are far reaching for many families. While xxx is at after-school club his twin sister is able to have play-dates at home without being afraid that xxx will hurt someone. This is a lifeline for her and for xxx older brother (who also has autism). We do not (as is the case for many other families) have family nearby to help. Nor did we choose to have a child with special needs. We need help and support to give them and their siblings the care they need."

"We don't claim any benefit for our son even though we are entitled to help because we want to work full-time to provide for him and to also ensure that those who are truly unable to work full time can then claim those benefits for their children. This provision for transport from after-school club allows me and my husband to work full time without one of having to find part-time work or not working at all."

It's vitally important for students to access after school clubs for their mental and emotional needs. Also important for parents, enabling them to work or for respite

"There are insufficient opportunities for these children to socialise and partake in leisure activities. Parents and carers are already struggling. Making it more difficult for parents or carers to support children will deprive children of a scarce resource or/and put more pressure onto parents. Save money elsewhere."

"Without transport provided, many after-school clubs wouldn't be viable, so even those families who could afford/arrange transport would be missing out because the provision would no longer be there. After-school provision is so, so important for children with SEND who attend Special Schools, so providing the transport enables that to happen. So many of the children at special needs schools travel long distances to go to school because the area schools are not local to the child's home. It is therefore harder for them to access other after-school activities, such as a child going to their local school may be able to do, who does not have such a long school commute. Children at Special Schools have such pronounced needs that they generally need specialised after-school provision, such as their schools are equipped to provide, but other activity groups may not be able to provide. This provision makes a hugely positive difference to children and young people whose access of other life experiences is so limited, so it is really worth investing in the infrastructure which enables this provision to take place."

"We already feel penalised as working parents of a disabled child, with limited wrap around care available at significant cost. We were fortunate that until covid hit, a mainstream afterschool club provided a place for our son. The ran 7.45am- 9am and 3.15 -6pm in term time, and offered school holiday. This is no longer feasible and we now have no care before school, until

5pm after school and 1 week per year holiday club if it runs at a cost of £10 per hour, as opposed to £9 per term time day and £25 per day in the holidays. This feels inequitable and discriminatory. I have previously raised this, with no response. Removing free after school transport means reducing the working day if we needed to collect, which is not possible, or if funding is required making cost of childcare unrealistic. Ultimately it results in one of us having to give up work. Whilst we appreciate there are cost cutting exercises across all public sector organisations, we feel, as highlighted this is making life even tougher for parents of children that are complex and challenging. We both feel that work allows us an element of respite and supports our sanity. Is there any consideration given to the impact this will have on our family and health? I currently do not claim benefits, however if I were to give up work would be entitled to carers allowance etc - have you factored in that you are simply shifting costs elsewhere? This is in addition to any impact it may have on mental health and wellbeing, again at a potential cost to the NHS. I look forward to the update and response in relation to this."

"The children get so much from the After school club. They enjoy the interaction on a play level with their friends or different students. It also helps the parents that work and need a safe place for their children".

"The leadership team at Samuel Pepys School wish to offer the following response to the consultation regarding transport home from after school club provision and request that these reflections are considered as part of the consultation. We would wish any review or changes made to ASC transport arrangements to be fair, transparent and not create any disparity between users and their families. If changes are made then they should be equitable, for example, by maintaining some 'historic' transport funding or subsidies for existing users and no transport funding for new users will be perceived as inequitable. It is recognised that children and young people with SEND have less opportunities to socialise with their peers. The ASC provision is valued by some and removing or reducing the free transport home may reduce this access if the families cannot meet the costs of transport (either if subsidised or if a charge applies.) Please may we enquire if funding is ceased, how will the funding be reallocated? Will that funding then support the education transport budget? The importance of being able to access an appropriate specialist school place is recognised and home to school transport is valued by many families. Could an important overarching priority be ensuring that those families who need transport to and from school have it? This supports keeping pupils in their school placements and indeed their home or community environment. We trust that the consultation will enable a wide range of views to be considered and a best interests decision made."

"The Governors of Samuel Pepys School have reviewed the consultation document and although we cannot confirm an appropriate option (as listed) we do wish to offer the following response. Governors are mindful of the value of the After School Club at Samuel Pepys School but have also discussed the need to use public funding in an equitable and effective manner. In discussion with the school's leadership team and in consideration of our current offer to families, we would make the following points. We recognise that the opportunity for our young people to socialise with their peers outside of the usual school day is of significant value and the ASC provides this facility to a number of our families. Removing or reducing the free transport home may reduce this access if the families cannot meet the costs of transport (either if subsidised or if a charge applies.) As confirmed in our Leadership team's response we would wish any review or changes made to ASC transport arrangements to be fair, transparent and not create any disparity between users and their families. If changes are made then they should be equitable, for example - by maintaining some 'historic' transport funding or subsidies for existing users and no transport funding for new users - will be perceived as inequitable. Most importantly however, is our concern that if funding is ceased, how will the funding be reallocated? Will that funding then support the education transport budget? The importance of being able to access an appropriate specialist school place is significant and home to school transport is highly valued by many families, indeed our high attendance figures reflect the value

of ensuring that our young people are able to come to school every day. Could an important overarching priority be ensuring that those families who need transport to and from school have it? This supports keeping pupils in their nearest and most appropriate school placements and indeed their home or community environment.”

“I am writing to oppose in the strongest possible terms, the possibility that Cambridgeshire County Council should cease funding school transportation that enables children at the Area Special Schools to attend after school activities. This will have a devastating effect on friends of ours who have a wheelchair bound child with very complex special needs at one of these schools. The overall financial impact for the county and the country as a whole will be significantly greater than any short term savings that may be achieved. This will include higher home respite care costs, overnight stays etc.

For parents already struggling to combine working and caring for a child with very complex special needs it may mean one of them having to give up work. This will lead to additional costs for Carers Allowance and Jobseeker’s Allowance. It will also impact their mental and physical wellbeing with associated costs for the additional care provision required. The pressure on parents is already immense.

Can I ask how you have calculated the savings of this proposal and whether you have taken into account any of these wider costs?

Can I also ask how this decision can possibly fit with the following statements for Cambridgeshire County Council:

We are becoming an increasingly outcomes-focused Council, making budget, investment and performance decisions based on the contribution of each activity to our priority outcomes:

- A good quality of life for everyone*
- Thriving places for people to live*
- The best start for Cambridgeshire’s children*

One of the Council’s principles is (Strategic Framework): Meeting need in a way that improves the quality of life and reduces inequalities.

In addition, the Business Plan 2019-24 Medium Term Financial Strategy states: The Council will continue to seek to shape proposals so that the most vulnerable are the least affected.”

Please note that any feedback containing personal information which could not be sufficiently redacted has not been included.