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**This letter is addressed to Hampshire parents applying for September 2012 places for their children in Year 7 at secondary school, whose address is in catchment for more than one of The Arnewood School, Highcliffe School, Priestlands School and Ringwood School**

Date

17 October 2011

E-mail

admissions.team@hants.gov.uk

Dear Parent

**Changes to Hampshire County Council Home-to-School Transport Entitlement Policy**

The closing date for secondary applications (31 October) is approaching fast and the availability of assistance with home-to-school transport may be a significant factor in your choice of preferred school for your child. I am writing to you because it is apparent that information about changes to the Home-to-School Transport Entitlement Policy did not come to the attention of all parents currently applying for secondary school places.

In the circumstances, it has been agreed that, for families in the catchment areas of The Arnewood School, Highcliffe School, Priestlands School and Ringwood School making applications for places for their children in Year 7 in September 2012 who are affected by the changes (i.e. those with more than one catchment school), there will be a delay of one year in implementing the change to policy. Where an on-time application results in an offer, entitlement to assistance with transport will be assessed **on the basis of the existing policy**.

*A parent's guide to applying for a school place 2012/13* includes a summary of the policy approved for implementation for all other transport entitlement decisions from September 2012. A copy is attached to this letter; I would particularly like to draw your attention to the italicised sentence: *Where an address has more than one catchment school, free transport is available only to the nearest catchment school*. In other words, whilst a child may have catchment priority at more than one school, they will only have an entitlement to transport to the nearest such school.

The policy outlined on the attached summary **will** be implemented for families in the catchment areas listed above for those applying for September 2013 entry to Year 7 at secondary school. Where there is no change of circumstances, entitlement for those children already attending one of the listed secondary schools prior to September 2013 is unchanged; the revised policy will

Director of Children's Services  
**John Coughlan CBE**

come into effect for new entrants only. Please note, however, that the new policy will be used from September 2012 for all 'in-year' applications and to reassess entitlement to transport following any change of circumstances.

Should you need to alter your application for September 2012 as a result of becoming aware of the change to the policy, please log back into the online application system (if you applied online) and make changes before the application deadline of 31 October 2011. If you applied on a paper form, you may submit a replacement form until this date; the later form will replace the earlier one.

If you have any queries about which is your nearest catchment school, please contact the transport entitlement officers on the numbers given. Please note that the entitlement for children receiving free school meals, or whose parents are in receipt of the maximum level of Working Tax Credit, is different and is also set out in the attached summary.

I hope this information is helpful.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M Goff', written in a cursive style.

Martin Goff

Head of Information, Transport & Admissions

## **Extract from *A parent's guide to applying for a school place 2012/13***

### **Transport to school (children attending mainstream schools)**

Free transport will be provided for children to a school which is the catchment school\* or the nearest school to the home address, providing the following distance criteria are met: a pupil will be eligible for assistance with transport to school where the distance from home to school, measured by the shortest safe walking route, is **more than two miles** (up to the end of the school year in which the child has their eighth birthday) or **more than three miles** (from the beginning of the school year in which the child has their ninth birthday).

Where parents express a preference for the catchment or nearest school and the school is unable to offer a place, free transport will be offered to the next nearest school with a place available providing the above distance criteria are met.

*\* Where an address has more than one catchment school, free transport is available only to the nearest catchment school.*

#### **Children entitled to free school meals or whose parents (with whom they live) are in receipt of the maximum level of Working Tax Credit** have an enhanced entitlement:

- A child aged 8-10 attending the catchment or nearest school is entitled to free transport if they live more than two miles from school (nearest available walking route)
- A child aged 11 or over is entitled to free transport to any one of the three nearest suitable schools, where the distance travelled is **more than two miles but not more than six miles** from the home address. The two mile distance will be measured by the nearest available walking route and the six mile distance along road routes.
- For a child aged 11 or over whose parent has expressed a preference for a school based upon the parents' religion or belief, free transport will be provided to the school if it is the nearest such school and if the distance is **more than two miles but not more than 15 miles**. The two mile limit will be measured by the nearest available route and the 15 mile limit along road routes.

**Discretionary assistance with transport for new entrants to school is being withdrawn by Hampshire County Council from September 2012. This includes transport to church schools for children other than those entitled to free school meals or whose parents are in receipt of the maximum level of Working Tax Credit.** The full Home to School Transport Entitlement Policy can be found at [www.hants.gov.uk/traveltoschool](http://www.hants.gov.uk/traveltoschool)

#### **Privilege seats**

A spare place may be offered to a child who is not entitled to transport assistance, but can be withdrawn at short notice if, for example, it is needed by an entitled child or if routes change. A flat rate charge will be made except where the child being transported is entitled to free school meals or the family is in receipt of the maximum level of working tax credit. Parents must make their own arrangements for the pupil to travel to the nearest existing pick-up point.

#### **How to apply for assistance with transport**

Application forms are available from schools or from the Passenger Transport Group, Economy, Transport and Environment Department, The Castle, Winchester SO23 8UD

Tel: 01962 846924 or 01962 845332 or visit [www.hants.gov.uk/traveltoschool](http://www.hants.gov.uk/traveltoschool)