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**Dr Martin Ayres**

Town Clerk

Tel: 01929 423636

Fax: 01929 427888

E-Mail: admin@swanage.gov.uk



TOWN HALL  
SWANAGE  
DORSET  
BH19 2NZ

Our Ref: MKA/LMB

8<sup>th</sup> July 2011

Dear Mr Perry

**Proposed School Transport Changes for 2011/12**

I refer to our e-mails of 30<sup>th</sup> June and 1<sup>st</sup> July 2011, and confirm that the above matter was discussed by the Council at its meeting held on 4<sup>th</sup> July 2011.

During the debate, grave concern was expressed at the proposals to reduce the school bus service for pupils attending Purbeck School at Wareham, with particular concern at the withdrawal of the N13 service for September. Members felt strongly that a bus service should be provided for **all** schoolchildren, and whilst you point out that pupils such as the sixth formers will be able to access the 143 service where they will be able to pay a daily rate, rather than the annual fee of £400, this service does not provide transport for children living in the surrounding villages i.e. Harmans Cross, Worth Matravers etc. I have been instructed to seek your written assurance that sufficient places will be available for all local children requiring transport to the Purbeck School.

Members were also concerned at an issue raised relating to travel for 'children and vulnerable adults', and the possibility that 'children and vulnerable adults' without a bus pass or appropriate fare, would be denied bus travel – an issue that had previously been dealt with by the bus company by taking names and addresses of the passengers and recovering the fare at a later date. Can you clarify this matter for me, please?

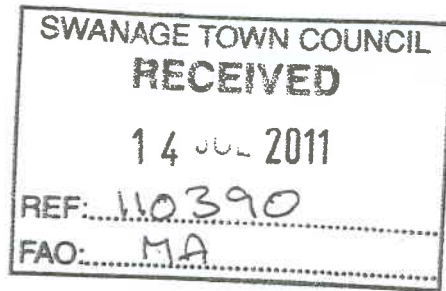
Other concerns raised were:

- Less buses would mean more cars transporting the children, which would be detrimental to the environment.
- Lack of buses to return children to Swanage after attending after-school clubs and the possibility that children will be stranded in Wareham.
- Lack of notification – only a fortnight for parents to respond to DCC letter of 16<sup>th</sup> June 2011.

Overall, these proposals mark a further breach of assurances given in 1973, on the closure of the Grammar School, that local children would have free access to an excellent bus service.

Yours sincerely

Town Clerk



**School Admissions**

Dorset County Council  
County Hall  
Dorchester  
Dorset DT1 1XJ  
Telephone: 01305 221060  
Email: r.perry@dorsetcc.gov.uk  
DX: DX 8716 Dorchester  
Website: www.dorsetforyou.com  
Date: 13<sup>th</sup> July 2011

Dear Dr. Ayres

**Transport Letter Dated 8<sup>th</sup> July 2011**

Thank you for your letter regarding Swanage Town Council's concerns about home to school transport.

Dorset County Council (DCC) have made these changes because of the need to make efficiency savings across the whole of Dorset. Parents have been given a fortnight to respond in order to meet the September deadline when they will need transport for the new academic year and passes will need to be issued. We have been carrying a number of empty seats and the withdrawal of the N13 service is to bring the pattern of bus provision in line with expected demand. It is not expected to significantly increase car travel. As with other local authorities across the country, free transport for **all** pupils has not been possible for a long time but we do offer both an entitled and a concessionary scheme.

The current transport policy is in line with the Education and Inspection Act 2006. The policy clearly states that pupils that are entitled to 'free' transport will be provided for. This has not changed, even with the new policy. I can assure you that pupils in areas such as Harmans Cross and Worth Matravers that are entitled will remain entitled and transport will be provided. In addition, there is the 143 service and of course the public 40 service which provides transport throughout the day.

We are currently working through the requests for the concessionary scheme and once this task is completed, we will know the exact pattern of seats on the buses. Through this process we are endeavouring to ensure that there are sufficient places.

DCC strongly encourage pupils to board the bus they have a pass for. Our own 'Safety on Buses' leaflet states – 'do not attempt to travel on buses other than the one you have been allocated a seat.' This is for the clear reason that by boarding a school bus with the wrong pass means that further down the route a child with the correct pass can then no longer board because the seat is taken. As far as alternative provision such as the 143 goes, you would need to contact the individual bus companies direct to get clarification but typically they take the names and addresses as stated and then recover the fare later.

I trust this has responded to the points you have raised.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Rick Perry'.

Rick Perry  
Project Manager (School Provision)