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Budget saving proposals 2013-2014

Home to School Transport

Response – Victoria School

Justine Sims
Executive Head teacher

At Victoria School we meet the individual needs of all of our pupils most of whom have significant, complex and very specific physical, medical and cognition and learning needs. This means that some of our pupils needs can only be met at Victoria and they may travel extended distances for this purpose. As Victoria is their nearest appropriate school to meet their individual needs travel assistance should be supported in these instances.

As you are aware Victoria is an all age 2-19 school. Parents have made what they believed to be an informed decision, sometimes as early as their child is 2 years old, for them to be educated at Victoria due to a number of significant factors which included being an all age provision. It would have a huge detrimental impact on the child if at secondary transfer either their transport assistance was removed or a different school place was allocated unless the child's individual needs had changed which would then need to be professionally assessed on an individual basis. Our parents chose and were allocated Victoria with transport assistance on the understanding that their child would remain with us until 19 years old. These placements should remain the same with the same level of transport assistance.

As we are all aware early intervention and support for children with complex medical and physical difficulties is essential. As a school and in partnership with our healthcare providers we can make life-changing differences to our youngest children's health and wellbeing by having them in school from an early age. For these children who are not of compulsory school age it is essential that where required transport assistance is provided for them.



The Federation of Cherry Oak and Victoria Specialist Arts College
Working Together For Success



The Government and Local Authority are striving to ensure that students Post 16 remain in education and they are also striving to reduce the number of NEETs (not in Education, Employment or Training) within the city. This is also the case for students who are LLDD (Learners with Learning Difficulties and/or Disabilities). Having a young person with significant complex needs has not only the day to day challenges for parents and carers but also the increased financial challenges of supporting their youngsters. Putting a charge for transport assistance for this most vulnerable group is not going to be sustainable or achievable for most parents and carers and the impact of this will be Post 16 students who are LLDD dropping out of education and training. As we are all aware, gaining employment for this most complex group of young people is virtually non-existent and so therefore the future would be very bleak indeed. Therefore to put a 'blanket' charge for Post 16 students would be unreasonable and have a significant negative impact on their future prospects.

Victoria School supports some of the city's most vulnerable and complex children. Most of our children and young people are transported to school on vehicles with a guide. We have made adaptations to the front of our school car park to ensure the safe dropping and picking up of our 185 pupils by the buses. The school is situated on a dual carriageway on a steep hill with a speed limit of 40mph. (We have a safety issue with this speed limit alone as outside most schools it is 20mph) We do not have a safe place for our parents and carers to drop their children off outside of the school gates or within the school car park due to the unloading off buses for our wheelchair users. It is essential for the safety of our vulnerable and complex children and young people that their transport assistance remains on vehicles supported by pupil guides.

Therefore it is imperative that before any proposed changes to a child's transport assistance each child's complexity of needs are comprehensively assessed when making transport assistance assessments. It is vital that these assessments are made with due regard to the child's health and safety including the opinions of both school staff and parents and carers, both of whom have accurate details of the child's needs.

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Victoria School
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