

# Wakefield latest council to propose cutting faith school transport subsidies

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Wakefield Council in West Yorkshire is considering scrapping free transport for pupils attending "faith schools" in the town. Council officers said that the changes were prompted by the dire financial situation it was facing, and follow a public consultation on the matter.

A spokesman said the free transport would be retained for pupils already using the service until the end of their primary or secondary education but would not be offered to any new children. A report by council officers recommends that the service is withdrawn in phases from September 2013.

Councillor Olivia Rowley, cabinet member for children and young people, said: "We are aware from the consultation of the strong feeling about this service and how valued it is by the families who benefit from it. But we have to look at access to all our services and balance that against how much money we have to spend and how we prioritise that spending."

Currently, when families choose a school for their child which is not their nearest school, they have to pay for their own transport unless the child will be attending a faith school on religious grounds, in which case the transport cost is covered by the council. The council has no statutory obligation to provide the service.

Cabinet members at the council were due to discuss the proposals this week.

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