

Leeds City Council under pressure from vested interests over school transport cuts

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Leeds City Council is coming under pressure over its plan to scrap free transport for pupils travelling to "faith schools".

A meeting was held this week at one of the schools affected, St Mary's Catholic Academy in Menston, where the headteacher called the plans "madness".

Parents packed the meeting to discuss the consultation. Council officers also attended to explain the reasons behind the proposals to stop free transport for 2600 pupils who attend faith schools.

The MP for LeedsNorth West, Greg Mulholland is also criticising the plans. He said: "I was shocked to hear Leeds City Council was considering cutting free home to school transport for pupils of faith schools who live closer to a mainstream school. This decision unfairly discriminates against parents wishing to send their children to faith schools and I urge the Council to reconsider."

In its consultation document Leeds City Council says the cost of providing statutory and discretionary school transport to families inLeedsis more than £16 million per year. It tells parents: "Councils throughout the country are facing financial pressures on the services they provide. This means they must make choices about what they can continue to offer and how it is delivered.

"We do not have the option to keep children's transport expenditure at the current level; we have to do things differently."

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