

Environment and Transportation Department,
Civic Offices, Wood Quay, Dublin 8

An Roinn Comhshaoil agus Iompair,
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Norma Foley, T.D.,
Minister for Education
Marlborough Street,
Dublin 1,
D01 RC96,

14th November, 2023

Dear Minister,

The motion detailed below was agreed by the members of Dublin City Council's Traffic and Transport Strategic Policy Committee at their meeting in June, 2023:

Motion in the name of Councillor Deirdre Conroy, Chairperson of the Public Transportation Sub Committee to the Traffic and Transport SPC, requesting this committee writes to the Department of Education to bring forward and address a policy in support for a School Bus System for students within the Dublin Area:

There previously was a school bus system in place, which was very successful in promoting the use of public transportation for the school-going younger generation but for various reasons this scheme was stopped. Currently in place of this scheme are private operators for specific routes providing a service for selected schools depending on the demand in the area. This privately operated school bus system is on the north side of the city but unfortunately, we are not aware of such services on the south side. As the demand for secondary schools is becoming more oversubscribed, students often find themselves at a disadvantage in having to travel a significant distance for a place in a school that may not have private bus services operating from them. Also during school term, we can clearly see the impact of congestion and delays that the school run by private car has on the road network.

Although during the school run times, bus operators put on universal additional buses on routes to meet the increase in demand, but these services are discreet and buses can be already be quite full by the time they pass various schools. This does little to prompt the modal shift to encourage students to take the bus. If there was a dedicated bus service or a bus on the public route service for school going students only, we believe that this would raise a profile of public transportation services for students and provide a friendly and comfortable environment for children at this school-going age.

The purpose of this policy would be;

- To promote change to public transportation and to allow students to become accustomed to taking the bus.*

- *To reduce the unnecessary school car run as students would have an alternative*
- *To reduce traffic congestion and as a result reduce pollution and improve air quality*
- *In providing a dedicated school bus service, this raises the awareness of choice for parents in the use of public transportation and would encourage the right modal-shift.*

With the integrated ticketing system in place, the travel demand for students on the public routes would be known and this would assist in surveys to determine effective times and routes for dedicated school buses and encourage other students to avail of the service.

As the remit of school bus services at a national level is with the Department of Education and provided via Bus Éireann, unfortunately there is no central system or scheme in place for the Dublin Area for school children. Thus for the purposes presented above, the Department of Education is in the best position to assist in supporting this policy and we welcome the opportunity to work with the Department of Education to develop and support the policy that would result in the school bus being the 1st choice for students.

I should be obliged for your response in due course.

Yours sincerely,

Councillor Noeleen Reilly

Chairperson

**Traffic and Transport SPC
Dublin City Council**