



Feedback Report from the Survey about Free School Transport in Conwy

From 1st February 2024 to 4th April 2024, we asked people what they thought about the school transport we choose to give to some learners.

In 2023, Conwy County Borough Council helped **3,900** learners get to school every day on free school transport!

48% we have to provide **52%** we choose to help



In the last year, school transport costs have gone from **£5.8 million** to **£6.5 million**.

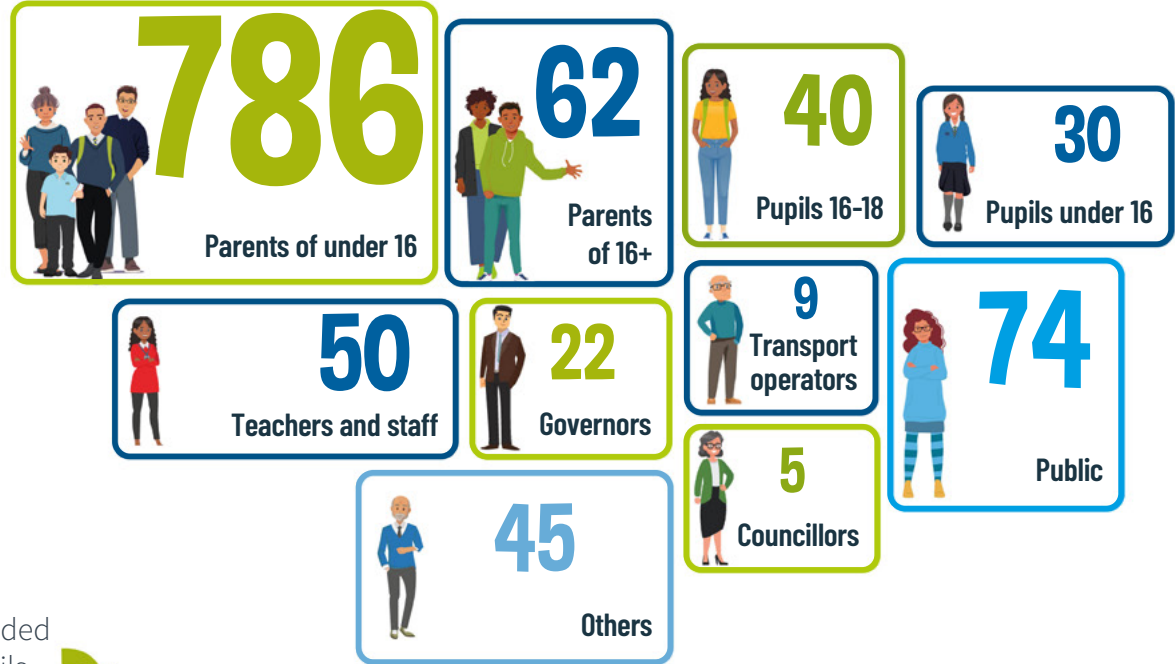
That's **£700,000 extra** because of rising fuel prices, more learners needing support and other costs.

529 people who took part said they get free school transport now.

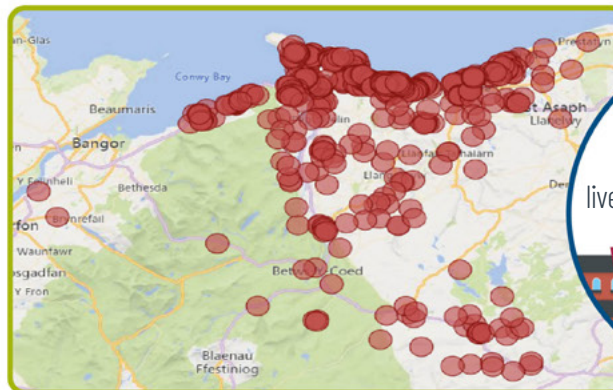


1123 people took part

They didn't answer every question — just the ones that interested them.



People who responded and gave their details.



75% live in a town

25% live in a rural area



This report tells you what people said.

1. School transport to Welsh medium schools

We give free transport to learners that go to a Welsh Medium school.



? We should keep giving free transport to learners going to their nearest Welsh medium school?



The rules:

Learners must live:

- 2 miles or more away from their nearest Welsh medium primary school
- 3 miles or more away from their nearest Welsh medium high school

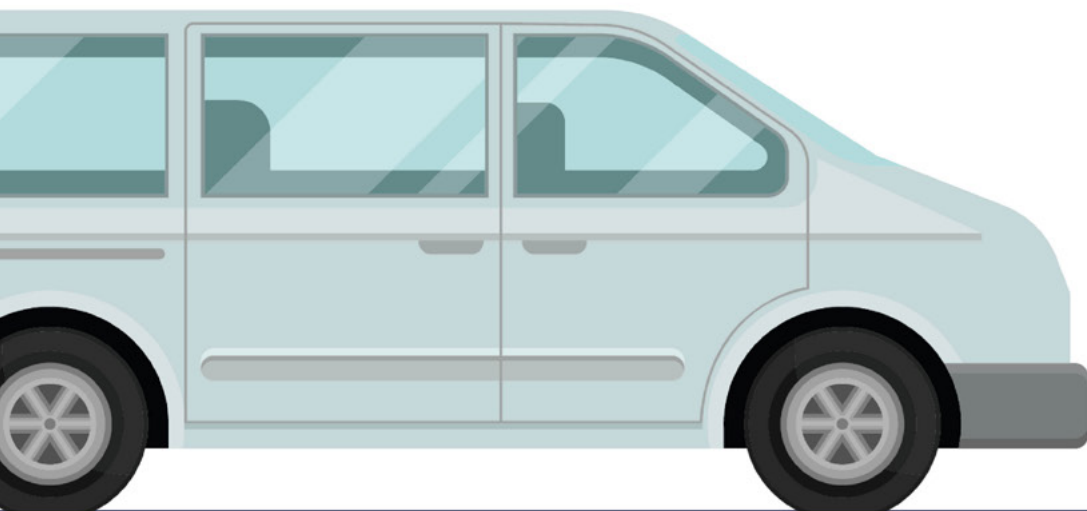
We do this even if another school is closer to promote the Welsh language.

Some comments:

“The Welsh language must not be treated less favourably than English language and the Welsh Government have a Welsh language strategy, Cymraeg 2050 and route into Welsh medium education for as many children as possible remains one of their priorities. If school transport was removed for children who wanted to access a Welsh medium education this would go against the ethos/standards in which we are trying to achieve.”

“Removing transport to a Welsh medium school would mean our child would not be able to attend a Welsh medium school, this could negatively impact her as we are a Welsh speaking household and removing transport could have further implications to her future career opportunities.”

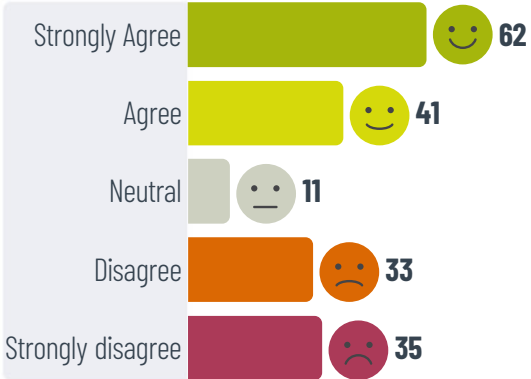
“Please give our future children the opportunities to thrive in all aspects of education by supporting our Welsh language.”




2. School transport to high school learners who move house during their exam years

We give free transport to high school learners whose families move in their exam years. ➔

 **We should keep giving free school transport to learners who move house during their exam years.**



 **182** people answered this question

The rules:

The new home must be 3 miles or more away from the high school they're attending.

The move happens:

- after the October half-term in Year 10
- at any point in Year 11
- after the October half-term in Year 12

If the move happens before that, learners can either move to the nearest high school or find their own transport if they want to stay at the school.

Some comments:

“If a family is moved through no fault of their own e.g. emergency housing, then children, especially in exam years, should be provided with transport if the regular rules of distance from their schools applies.”

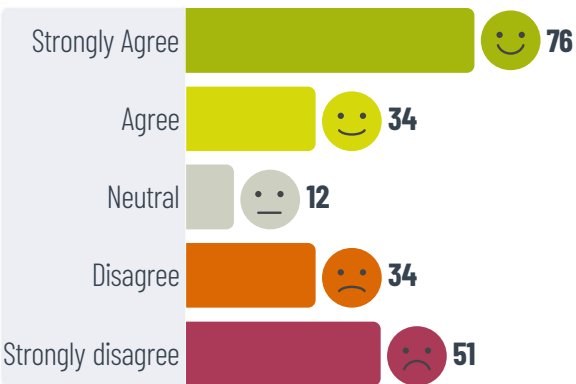
“It's not the young person's fault or choice as to where they live or reside part time.”



3. School transport to denominational and faith schools

We give free transport to pupils who choose to go to a denominational or faith school. ➔

Q1 We should keep giving free school transport to learners who live within the catchment of a denominational school.



207 people answered these questions

The rules:

Learners must live:

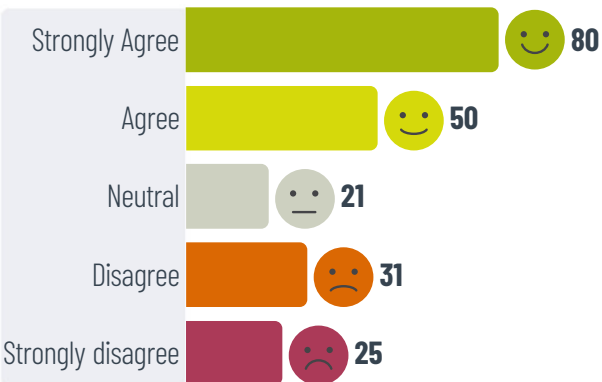
- 2 miles or more away from their catchment Denominational primary school
- 3 miles or more away from their catchment Denominational high school

We do this even if another school is closer.

Learners must also be inside the Denominational school's catchment area.

Catchment area — Councils specify a catchment area for each school. It's a specific geographical area surrounding a school where most of its learners live.

Q2 Parents who apply for school transport to a denominational school should have to give evidence of their faith (such as a baptismal certificate or a letter from their church or faith leader).



Some comments:

“We wanted to say a huge thank you for the great transport service we have received for the past years. It is highly appreciated and helps our family not only to let our children attend a faith school but also helps them to attend school at all. Without the free school transport service, we would have to keep our children at home and home educate them...”

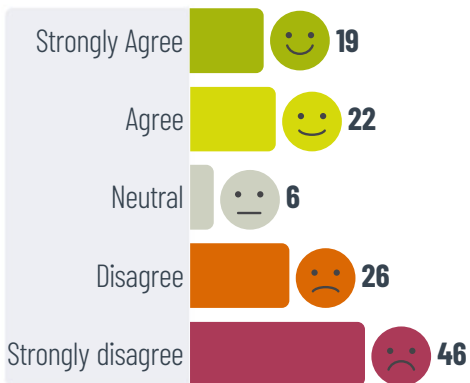
“Without the school taxi my children have every day they wouldn't be able to attend a Catholic school which is our family's religion. The school taxi is a blessing.”

“No free transportation should be provided just for a religious or language school but could be part-funded with the parents paying too as it is not a necessity to go but the parents' choice.”

4. School transport for Gypsy, Roma and Traveller children

We sometimes give free school transport to Gypsy, Roma and Traveller children. ➔

? We should keep giving free transport to Gypsy, Roma and Traveller children even if they live close to the school.



119 people answered this question

The rules:

Learners sometimes get this support even if they live close to the school. We don't follow the same rules on distance.

This is to help them attend school regularly and not miss out on an education.

Some comments:

“ I think free transport should be available to all children in Wales who live 2-3 miles away from their nearest school up to 19 yrs. ”

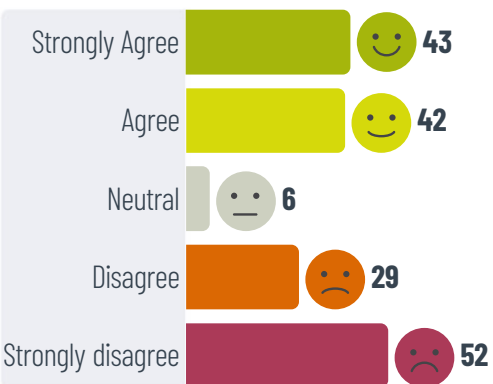
“ School is paramount to their wellbeing and education. Being unable to attend would be devastating. ”



5. School transport for learners who have more than one home address

We sometimes give free school transport to learners who live at more than one address during the school week.

Q1 Should we only give free transport from the learners' main home?



172 people answered these questions

The rules:

Free transport is only given for addresses that are:

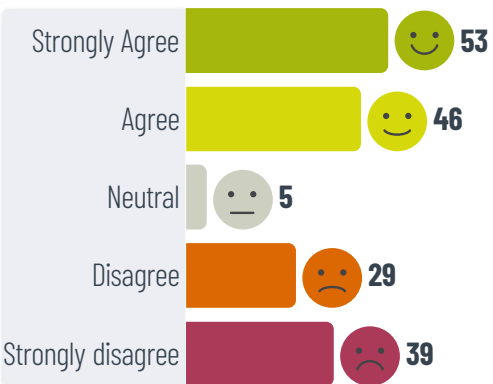
- 2 miles or more away from their nearest primary school
- 3 miles or more away from their nearest high school
- less than 10 miles from the learner's school

To get free transport from both homes, learners have to regularly live at both parent's addresses, either different days of the week or alternate weeks.

We don't give free transport from an address if the learner doesn't stay there regularly.

The main address has to be inside Conwy County, but the second address can be in another county.

Q2 Should we only give free transport from homes inside Conwy County?



Some comments:

“So important!!! No other available transport in rural areas. Should be priority.”

“We have a reduced budget. We need to consider this carefully and prioritise on those who need this transport the most. If parents can get the children to school, then that should be considered first.”



6. Transport for Post-16 learners

We sometimes give free transport to learners who are 16 to 18 and studying full-time. ➔

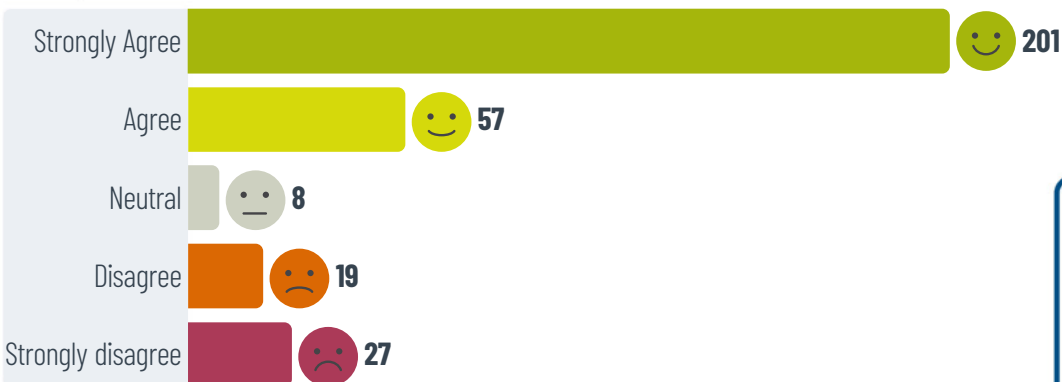
The rules:

Learners must live 3 miles or more away from their nearest high school or other post-16 education setting.

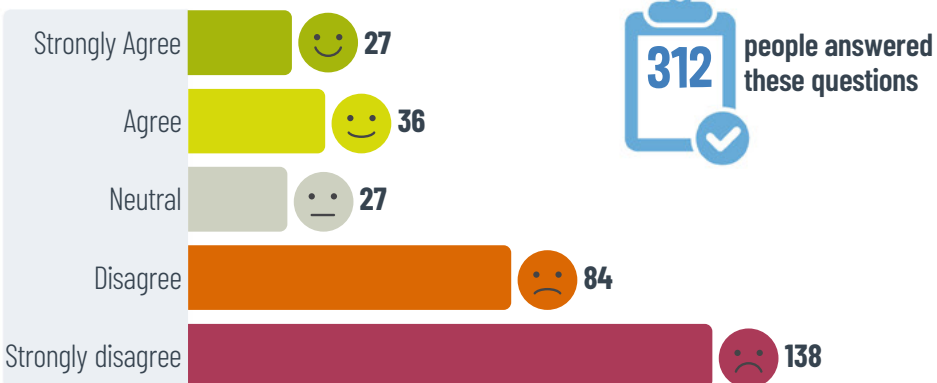
We transport to the closest setting which offers the majority of courses they want to study.

Learners may have to get to the transport pick up points.

Q1 We should keep giving free transport to post-16 learners.



Q2 We should only give free transport to the nearest sixth form or college, even if it doesn't offer the courses the learner wants.



Some comments:

“All children eligible should receive free transport as without it, all it creates are further barriers to receiving an education when there are already so many environmental, financial and emotional barriers within it.”

“Remember the rural children who are completely dependent on transport to school. We are not in a position to rely on or use public transport as it is not sufficient in the area.”

“Parent/guardians should be responsible for getting their children to school. It's a 'nice to have' option if the council can afford it but at the moment we can't.”

“Post 16 should be in the same circumstance as any person that is not in education who has to pay their own way you receive no transport support if you are self-employed, employed, apprenticed etc.”

“Post 16 students should be given every support to keep them in education.”

“Conwy should be giving our young people as many opportunities as possible to succeed - they are our future.”

7. School transport for Additional Learning Needs or Medical needs

We give free school transport to any learner with transport specified on their Individual Development Plan (IDP) or Statement of Educational Needs. Sometimes we give free school transport to other learners who have additional learning needs, a medical condition or a disability.

The rules:

Learners must live:

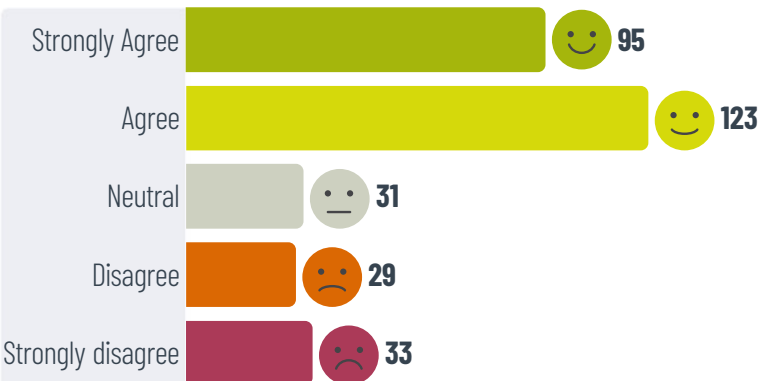
- 2 miles or more away from their nearest primary school
- 3 miles or more away from their nearest high school

Most learners who get free transport have an IDP or Statement of Educational Needs.

Every year, we can check to make sure if their free transport is still needed.

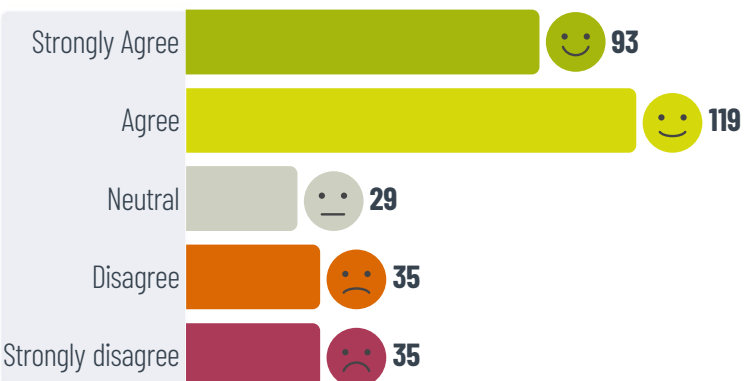
They may, according to their needs, travel with a passenger assistant and in special vehicles.

Q1 Parents and carers (of learners with medical or additional learning needs and who live close to a school) **should have to give evidence** (from medical and/or educational professionals) **before getting free school transport.**

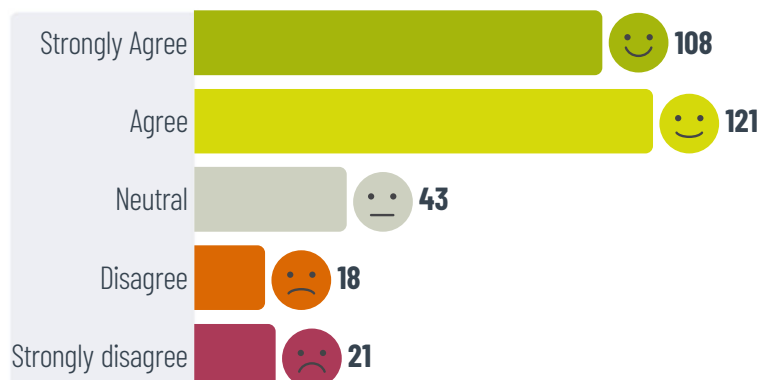


311 people answered these questions

Q2 We should review the transport of learners with medical or additional learning needs each year and check if they can travel independently as they grow and develop.



Q3 We should keep supporting learners with medical or additional learning need to work towards travelling independently.



7. School transport for Additional Learning Needs or Medical needs

Some comments:

“ I think each child and each case should be looked at individually. Different children live in different situations and have different capabilities. ”

“ I believe the priority for free transport should be for children with additional needs. ”

“ Many pupils with ALN at Ysgol y Gogarth would not be able to travel independently. Reviewing this every year would be costly to Conwy and stressful for families and the young person. ”

“ Also it provides them with independent living skills and confidence as most children will only have travelled with their parent or carer. They also feel safe and know their journey and gain social skills with their companions . All gaining life skills in a safe space. ”

“ For learners with ALN the provision of a consistent service provides them with a stepping stone in their independence and the development of that independence that would otherwise not be present through the reliance on parents and guardians. ”

“ Whilst I agree learners should be supported to become more independent, I worry that this transition should only happen when it is safe and appropriate and the decision to step away from providing school transport should never be driven by costs. Life is difficult for parents of ALN children and knowing they are safe and supported to and from school is hugely important. ”

“ Barriers to non-attendance are already significant, taking away transport from some of our most vulnerable and needy will just create more issues. I strongly believe that you should continue to include a ‘special circumstances’ proviso, if the request comes from a professional with a good working knowledge and insight into the issues preventing the attendance at school. ”

“ As a parent of a child with learning disabilities who doesn’t drive, free transport to school is a necessity for me, but as my child does get older, I would like extra support for her to be able to travel on public transport independently. ”



8. School transport for other reasons

Sometimes we give free school transport to learners who are:


- anxious or phobic about going to school and need help to attend
- vulnerable and need to be kept safe from harm
- a risk to themselves or other people in the community

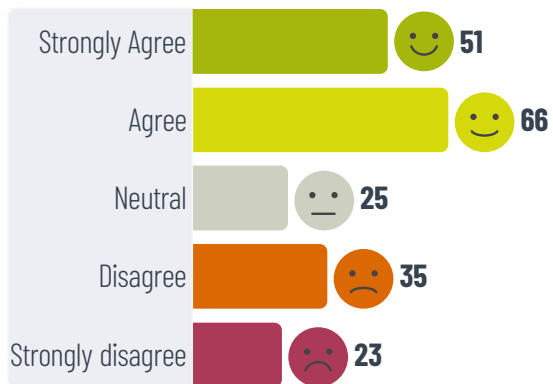


The rules:

Learners get this support even if they live closer to the school. We may not follow the same rules on distance.

We check to make sure learners meet all the guidelines.

 We should keep giving free school transport to learners who meet the other reasons above, even if they live close to school.



200 people answered this question

A comment:

“We are a 1 car household, both parents work. Our son can't make his own way to school as the behaviour unit is 2.5 miles away from our house and there are no regular buses. We didn't choose for him to be placed there; it was forced as there is nothing else available for him. So it's the council's duty to get him to school.”



Next steps

We'll take all of the feedback and use it to form part of our recommendations that will go through the democratic committee process.

This will help them make decisions about what school transport we choose to fund and develop our new Home to School Transport Policy for September 2025.

★ Thank you to everyone who took part!

To find out more about home to school transport, go to:

conwy.gov.uk/en/Resident/Education-and-Families/School-Transport/School-Transport.aspx

Active Travel

In Conwy, we're looking to make active travel the natural choice for short journeys.

Active travel simply means making every day journeys, like travelling to and from school, by foot, bicycle or scooter.

We have new active travel routes. To find out more:

conwy.gov.uk/en/Resident/Parking-Roads-and-Travel/Active-Travel/Active-Travel.aspx

