
Variation to Dunoon Grammar Opening Hours – School Transport

1. SUMMARY

- 1.1 After intensive consultation with parents, pupils and the local community a decision has been taken by the Education Service to vary the opening hours of Dunoon Grammar School with effect from August 2014. This will enable the school to further embrace the Scottish Government's rationale for Curriculum for Excellence. The benefits include:
- An additional period creating extra time for the delivery of some mandatory experiences and outcomes that do not currently feature due to insufficient time
 - A redistribution of period allocation that creates an additional period for learning across each selected subject in S4 and one additional period in S5 and S6
 - Fundamental to our 'Pathways' approach to our senior phase curriculum
 - Earlier finishes on a Thursday and Friday will allow for imaginative additional learning opportunities for pupils. Utilising community and national partnerships to enhance the curriculum helps meet some of the recommendations of the Wood Commission Report.
 - Additional opportunities for extra-curricular activities in a range of contexts including supported study as we strive to continue to raise attainment across the school.
 - An improved provision to meet every individual pupils' entitlement to daily personal support through a revised House Time programme
 - More efficient staffing for the school which is estimated to save the school approximately £70,000 per annum. These savings will offset increased transport costs.
- 1.2 This paper considers the timetable implications for the school/local transport arrangements that serve the school. The proposal is to move to an asymmetric timetable with a longer school day Monday to Wednesday and a shorter school day on Thursday and Friday. Unlike some other areas of Argyll and Bute the bus services in Cowal, although based around school transport, are heavily patronised by fare paying passengers. In addition some extra in-house transport will be required for ASN pupils.
- 1.3 This paper sets out the proposals for an enhanced bus service, together with the associated costs, which will serve both the needs of the Education Service and the wider fare paying community.

2. RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 It is recommended that the members of the Bute and Cowal Area Committee note the contents of this report and agree to the implementation of an enhanced school/local transport service, having mind to the additional costs.
- 2.2 The increase in costs will be met partially by the Education service in 2014/15, with the balance being paid from the School Transport Budget, and thereafter the additional cost will be met by the Education Service from staff savings which will come about as a result of the variation in school opening hours.

3. DETAIL

- 3.1 After consultation the Education Service has agreed to vary the opening hours of Dunoon Grammar School with effect from August 2014.
- 3.2 The revised opening hours will be 0845 each morning and 1530 Monday to Wednesday, with an earlier close of 1445 on Thursday and Friday.
- 3.3 It is envisaged that the revised school opening time of 0845 each morning will have little effect on the current patronage, and will not incur additional costs.
- 3.4 However, in order accommodate the pupils who live in the outlying areas of Strachur, Colintrave, Tighnabruaich, Lochgiolhead and Carrick Castle, allowing them to opt in or out of the extra-curricular activities being offered, additional school transport will be required leaving Dunoon Grammar School at 1445 on Thursday and Fridays, as follows.
 - Service 484 which operates between Dunoon and Carrick Castle will require an extra bus journey at 1445 on Thursdays and Fridays. The current operator has provided a cost for this extra service of £22,420
 - Service 486 which operates between Dunoon and Cairndow will require an extra bus journey at 1445 on Thursdays and Fridays. The current operator has provided a cost for this service of £20,520
 - Service 478 which operates between Dunoon and Tighnabruaich will require an extra bus journey at 1445 on Thursdays only, as the existing school hostel coach will be able to accommodate pupils wishing to return home at 1445 on a Friday. The current operator has provided a cost for this service of £14,940
 - Additional transport, at a cost of £5,863 per annum will be provided to transport an ASN pupil from Kirn PS to Strachur on Thursdays and Fridays. This pupil is currently transported on a minibus leaving from Dunoon Grammar School and picking up at Kirn Primary School.
 - Additional transport will be provided at a cost of £5,373 to transport an ASN pupil from Sandbank Primary School to Ardtaraig on Thursdays and Fridays. This pupil is currently transported on a minibus coming from Dunoon Grammar School and picking up at Sandbank Primary School.
- 3.5 Toward and Strachur Primary Schools have confirmed that the proposals have no impact on their existing transport arrangements. The Toward school minibus will pick up Dunoon Grammar School pupils first on Thursdays and

Fridays before travelling on to the primary school. Pupils living in the outlying Strachur area will leave school 5 minutes earlier on Thursdays and Fridays to ensure connection to existing transport via the minibus. This will have minimal impact on the pupils learning and affects a relatively small number of pupils.

- 3.6 The total cost of the enhanced service and the additional ASN transport required is £69,116

4. CONCLUSION

- 4.1 This paper has been prepared by Facility Services in collaboration with the Education Service.
- 4.2 The introduction of an asymmetric timetable at Dunoon Grammar School will offer considerable benefits and widen the learning opportunities available.
- 4.3 In order to accommodate pupils living in outlying areas with transport home after the implementation of the varied school closing times in August 2014, it will be necessary to enhance existing bus services to Carrick Castle, Cairndow and Tighnabruaich, providing an extra journey from Dunoon Grammar School at 1445 on Thursdays and Fridays. In addition there will be a requirement to transport ASN pupils from Sandbank and Kirn Primary Schools on Thursdays and Fridays.
- 4.4 It is envisaged that the earlier opening hours of 0845 will have little impact on the fare paying community, but will result in earlier pick up times for pupils and public alike. There will be no cost associated with this change.
- 4.5 The cost of the enhanced services together with the additional ASN transport is calculated to be £69,116 per annum.
- 4.6 The Education Service has agreed to partially fund the additional costs in 2014/15 from existing budgets, and thereafter has agreed to fund the enhancements in full from staff savings they will realise by varying the school opening hours.

5. IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Policy – None
- 5.2 Financial - Additional transport costs of £69,116 per annum, which will be met from 2015/16 onwards by savings realised through varying school opening hours.
- 5.3 Personnel – The requirement to recruit additional drivers and escort, and changes to drivers' hours.
- 5.4 Equal Opportunities – ASN pupils will not be disadvantaged by changes to school opening hours.

- 5.5 Legal - There will be a requirement to vary existing contracts and submit registration changes to the Traffic Commissioner.
- 5.6 Risk - none
- 5.7 Customer Service – The proposals will offer an enhanced service for the wider fare paying community.

6. APPENDICES

- 6.1 None

Douglas Hendry
Executive Director of Customer Services
and
Cleland Sneddon
Executive Director of Community Services
2nd June 2014

For further information please contact Malcolm MacFadyen (01546 604412) and Carol Evans (01369 708522)