

Grammar Schools: Transport

Written Answer

Sarah Wollaston Chair, Health and Social Care Committee, Chair, Liaison Committee (Commons)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, with reference to the Chancellor's announcement in the 2017 Budget , what the timetable is for the extension of free school transport for children in receipt of free school meals to those travelling to selective schools.

Nick Gibb Minister of State (Education)

The Department is committed to ensuring every child is able to access a good school place, regardless of background. The new Selective Schools Expansion Fund will create more good school places where there is local demand by supporting the expansion of existing good or outstanding selective schools. Those schools that are successful in their application will be expected to undertake activity to encourage more pupils from low-income families to attend and be committed to improving access for disadvantaged pupils.

Children will be eligible for free transport to a selective school if they meet the existing eligibility criteria.

The Department expects more children to become eligible for free home to school transport as a result of new rules on eligibility for free school meals, and will be providing local authorities with additional funding to help them provide this.

The Department is not, however, taking forward proposals to open new selective schools and, not taking forward plans for free transport specifically for children who are eligible for free school meals who attend their nearest selective school.

Where disadvantaged pupils are not eligible for free transport, schools may wish to consider whether it is appropriate to use pupil premium funding to support transport costs for these pupils.