

**NORTH LANARKSHIRE COUNCIL**

**REPORT**

To: Education Committee	Subject: Petition: Reduction in the number of bus places available for children travelling to St Margaret of Scotland Primary School.
From: Director of Education	
Date: March 2001	
Ref: MM/BB/MB	

**Summary**

This report outlines the current situation concerning the transport of children to St Margaret of Scotland Primary School and advises the committee of the receipt of a complaint petition.

**Recommendations**

The committee is recommended:-

- (i) to note the terms of the petition from residents of Seafar, Carbrain and Kildrum.
- (ii) to note the current situation regarding transport to St Margaret of Scotland Primary School.

*Michael O'Neill*

Members wishing further information on this paper should contact:

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**NORTH LANARKSHIRE COUNCIL: EDUCATION DEPARTMENT**

**Petition: Reduction in the number of bus places available for children travelling to St Margaret of Scotland Primary School.**

**Report by the Director of Education**

**1. INTRODUCTION**

1.1 A petition has been received from residents in the Seafar, Carbrain and Kildrum areas of Cumbernauld regarding school transport. It objects to the council's alleged reduction in the number of bus places for pupils attending St Margaret of Scotland Primary School.

**2. BACKGROUND**

2.1 North Lanarkshire Council provides free transport for children who reside more than 1 mile from their zoned primary school. This is more generous than the legal requirement. The legal thresholds are 2 miles for children up to 9 years and 3 miles for older children.

2.2 As at August 2000, 16 children eligible for free transport to St Margaret of Scotland Primary School had submitted transport applications to the education department.

**3. TRANSPORT ARRANGEMENTS**

3.1 Once the final number of children eligible for free transport was established, Strathclyde Passenger Transport negotiated a revised contract specification of 24 seats with the successful contractor. Subsequently, it was reported that a group of parents had entered into a private arrangement with the operator, with these parents paying a small fee to allow children not eligible for transport to travel on the bus. The operator was advised that this arrangement could not continue unless the service was registered. The operator refused to do this.

3.2 The bus capacity was further reduced to 24 seats from Tuesday 20 February. Parents of children receiving privilege seats were advised, in writing, if allocated places would be withdrawn or stay in place, from this date.

3.3 Following receipt of this information, a group of parents made representation to the operator. This resulted in the operator advising S.P.T. that they would continue with the 33 seater coach until the end of June 2001, but charge only for a 24 seater vehicle.

3.4 Privilege seats have been reallocated based on this information. As a result the numbers receiving free transport are as follows:

entitled pupils	-	18
privilege pupils	-	15
unsuccessful/privilege pupils	-	4

**4. RESPONSE TO THE PETITION**

- 4.1 The procedures described above are in accordance with both legal requirements and council policy. Obligations towards entitled pupils, privilege considerations and best value are being met.
- 4.2 In addition, the allocation of privilege transport will now be reviewed in the context of the revised policy approved by the education resources sub-committee.

**5. RECOMMENDATIONS**

The committee is recommended:

- (i) to note the terms of the petition from residents of Seafar, Carbrain and Kildrum.
- (ii) to note the current situation regarding transport to St Margaret of Scotland Primary School.

MM/BB/MB  
01/03/01