

News from Thurston Community College

Proposed cuts to free school bus provision by Suffolk County Council could remove the choice of parents in many of our catchment villages to send their children to Thurston Community College. Suffolk County Council is proposing to stop providing free bus transport to Thurston Community College to residents that live nearer to another school, even though Thurston will remain the catchment school for all the children in these villages.

This means that children who wish to continue attending their catchment school will have to pay £960 a year for a school bus or find some other way to get to school. We feel this is a huge burden for our families and will mean that a choice of school will only be available to those who can afford it.

We hope all residents will respond to the Suffolk County Council consultation to oppose the proposed changes. Even if you do not have school-age children, this will affect your community.

Suffolk County Council is consulting on three options:

1. Change to "nearest school only" wholesale in September 2019 (all students in all year groups would no longer qualify for free transport to Thurston Community College if they live closer to a different secondary school).
2. Change to "nearest school only" incrementally, from September 2019 (same as above, but existing students would continue to receive free transport while new students, including siblings, do not).
3. Make no changes to the school travel policy, but make savings from other Suffolk County Council budgets.

Thurston Community College will continue to oppose options 1 and 2 which we have shown will not make savings but will result in additional costs elsewhere. **Option 3 is the only way to ensure that children in your village will all have the choice to attend Thurston Community College and its Sixth Form.**

We urge all local people to make their views known to Suffolk County Council by responding to the consultation by 28 February 2018. The questionnaire can be completed online here: <https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/5to16HtoS>

Full information about the consultation is available here:
www.suffolk.gov.uk/schooltravel

If you want to know more about our campaign against the proposed changes, please visit the College website: <http://www.thurstoncollege.org/Information/Home-to-School-Transport/>