

J Thurso, MP
House of Commons
LONDON
SW1A 0AA

Please ask for: Arlene/Christine
Direct Dial:
E-mail: graham.nichols@highland.gov.uk
Your Ref:
Our Ref: GN/SM
Date: 31 October 2007

Dear John

SCHOOL TRANSPORT

Thank you for your letter of 24th October, and I am happy to clarify the position for you.

Mrs Henderson is correct in her understanding that pupils in Milton and Haster areas do travel free on school transport from Watten to Wick High School. They take up vacant seats under the 'concessionary' rules whereby we use any available seats to provide transport free for children who are either within 3 miles walking distance or are not attending their 'catchment' school. The Milton and Haster children are within 3 miles of school.

We do not have school transport from Staxigoe to Wick High School as this is within 3 miles, and no child lives beyond the 3 miles criterion. A number of years ago Rapsons wanted to withdraw the public service bus from Staxigoe as the route was not economical and very few children were travelling on the bus. Under pressure they re-instated the run, but this has never been a school transport route and we have no say in determining either the route or times.

We did authorise a safety survey to be undertaken when the route was under threat, and the subsequent appeal for a school bus service was turned down by Members. There have been no changes to the route since this time.

In the past we did seek to assist to arrange private transport, but when the costs were known, parents decided to transport their own children. I understand that on a daily basis, especially when the weather is good, many of those who could travel do in fact walk.

In closing I can only say that we are not able to provide free school transport as Staxigoe is within walking distance of Wick High School.

Yours sincerely

GRAHAM NICHOLS

Area Education, Culture & Sport Manager