

REPORT TO: CITY GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE - 5 MARCH 2026

REPORT ON: REMOVAL OF DEDICATED SCHOOL BUS SERVICE FOR HARRIS ACADEMY

REPORT BY: EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES SERVICE

REPORT NO: 64 - 2026

1 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 This report seeks approval to remove the dedicated school bus service for Harris Academy, with implementation from August 2027. The additional buses were originally introduced to support pupils affected by historic secondary school mergers and are no longer required for that purpose.

2 RECOMMENDATION

2.1 It is recommended that the Committee:

- a. Notes that the dedicated buses were introduced to support pupils following school closure and that these transitional needs have now passed.
- b. Approves the removal of the dedicated bus service subsidy for Harris Academy from August 2027.

3 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

3.1 The Executive Director of Corporate Services confirms that the proposals outlined in this report will deliver savings of £55,000 in 2027/28 and £80,000 per annum from 2028/29 onwards within the Secondary Schools division of the Children & Families Revenue Budget.

4 BACKGROUND

- 4.1 The Council funds a non-statutory, dedicated bus service for Harris Academy. This was one of several services introduced to create temporary additional capacity (direct routes) during historic school closures and mergers.
- 4.2 All pupils affected by the closure of Menzieshill High School have now left the school system. The transitional need the buses were designed to meet has therefore concluded.
- 4.3 Approximately 250 pupils currently use the dedicated bus service for Harris Academy.
- 4.4 The Budget Consultation received 3,906 responses, with 2,898 responses to this survey question. The proposal to reduce Secondary School Bus Services had the lowest average impact rating (1.69) of all options. Respondents raised concerns about safety, winter walking conditions, public bus capacity, punctuality pressures, and impacts on vulnerable learners. Others noted that good public transport alternatives exist and supported making use of them.

MITIGATIONS

4.5 To minimise impacts, the Children and Families will work with Harris Academy and other Council Services to:

- Co-create updated school travel plans, including safe walking and cycling routes.
- Work with bus operators to manage peak-time capacity risks.
- Support planning for alternate stops or earlier services where needed.
- Ensure individual transport entitlements (where applicable) continue unaffected.

CONCLUSION

4.6 The Harris Academy dedicated buses were a time-limited, non-statutory measure linked to historical school mergers and are no longer required. Consultation indicates a low overall impact, though specific concerns around safety and reliability are acknowledged and mitigations have been identified. The proposal delivers recurring savings while enabling pupils to use established alternative travel options.

5 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

5.0 This report has been subject to an Integrated Impact Assessment to identify impacts on Equality and Diversity, Fairness and Poverty, Environment and Corporate Risk. An impact, positive or negative, on one or more of these issues was identified. An appropriate senior manager has checked and agreed with this assessment. A copy of the Integrated Impact Assessment showing the impacts and accompanying benefits of/mitigating factors for them is included as an Appendix to this report.

6 CONSULTATIONS

6.1 The Council Leadership Team have been consulted in the preparation of this report.

7 BACKGROUND PAPERS

7.1 None.

Audrey May
Executive Director of Children and Families Service

Dundee City Council
5 City Square
Dundee

Integrated Impact Assessment

Committee Report Number: XX-2026

Document Title: Removal of Dedicated School Bus Service for Harris Academy

Document Type: Other

Description:

To seek approval for the removal of the dedicated Harris Academy school bus service as this is a non statutory function. The additional dedicated bus service was originally introduced due to historical school closures (Menzieshill/Lawside/St Saviour's). All pupils who were at these schools at the time of these mergers have long since left the school system.

Intended Outcome:

Achieve savings while ensuring appropriate alternative travel arrangements and clear mitigations.

Period Covered: 01/04/2027 to 31/03/2028

Monitoring:

The Head of Service, Strategic Education Manager, Business Support & Resource Manager and Head Teachers will work collaboratively with partners to review service delivery

Lead Author:

Phil Smith, Business Support & Resource Manager, Children and Families Service,
philip.smith@dundee.gov.uk , 01382 433132,
5 East City Square, Dundee, DD1 3BA

Director Responsible:

Paul Fleming, Head of Education Children and Families Service, Children and Families Service
paul.fleming@dundee.gov.uk, 01382 433071
5 East City Square, Dundee, DD1 3BA

Equality, Diversity and Human Rights

Impacts & Implications

Age: Negative

Some secondary age pupils may face longer/less convenient journeys, winter walking concerns and peak time crowding on public buses.

Mitigations: Advance communications; clear safe route mapping; coordination on peak time capacity; school level support for route selection and punctuality messaging.

Disability: Negative

Pupils with mobility needs, anxiety or additional support needs may find busier public services more challenging.

Mitigations: Individual travel planning where required; school pastoral support; maintain separate entitlement arrangements where applicable.

Gender Reassignment: No Impact

Marriage & Civil Partnership: No Impact

Pregnancy & Maternity: No Impact

Race / Ethnicity: No Impact

Religion or Belief: No Impact

Sex: No Impact

Sexual Orientation: No Impact

Are any Human Rights not covered by the Equalities questions above impacted by this report?

No

Fairness & Poverty

Geographic Impacts & Implications

Strathmartine:	No Impact
Lochee:	Negative
Coldside:	No Impact
Maryfield:	No Impact
North East:	No Impact
East End:	No Impact
The Ferry:	No Impact
West End:	No Impact

Household Group Impacts and Implications

Looked After Children & Care Leavers: No Impact

Household Group Impacts and Implications

Carers: No Impact

Lone Parent Families: Negative

Consultation highlighted concerns about adjusting work patterns to accompany pupils if capacity is constrained or routes feel unsafe in winter.

Mitigations: Early notice; clear route guidance; coordination with operators to reduce risk of 'full bus' incidents at school times.

Single Female Households with Children: Negative

Consultation highlighted concerns about adjusting work patterns to accompany pupils if capacity is constrained or routes feel unsafe in winter.

Mitigations: Early notice; clear route guidance; coordination with operators to reduce risk of 'full bus' incidents at school times.

Greater number of children and/or young children: No Impact

Pensioners - single / couple: No Impact

Unskilled workers or unemployed: No Impact

Serious & enduring mental health problems: No Impact

Homeless: No Impact

Drug and/or alcohol problems: No Impact

Offenders & Ex-offenders: No Impact

Socio Economic Disadvantage Impacts & Implications

Employment Status: No Impact

Education & Skills: Negative

Risk of lateness/absenteeism if pupils cannot board peak services.

Mitigations: Operator engagement; alternative stop guidance; school punctuality support.

Income: No Impact

Caring Responsibilities (including Childcare): Negative

Through public consultation, concerns were raised regarding families having to make alternative arrangements, rely on others for support and potentially changing working hours. The introduction of free bus travel for those aged 5-22 would mitigate many of these concerns.

Affordability and accessibility of services: No Impact

Fuel Poverty: No Impact

Cost of Living / Poverty Premium: Positive

The introduction of free bus travel for those aged 5-22 would mitigate many of these concerns.

Connectivity / Internet Access: No Impact

Income / Benefit Advice / Income Maximisation No Impact

Employment Opportunities: No Impact

Education: Negative

Key concerns raised through the public consultation related to potential increased absenteeism due to the use of already crowded public transport and the reliability of our young people to reach school on time. This could result in potential decreased attainment, the introduction of free bus travel for those aged 5-22 would mitigate many of these concerns.

Health: No Impact

Life Expectancy: No Impact

Mental Health: No Impact

Overweight / Obesity: Positive

The removal of the dedicated bus service to Harris Academy would increase alternative methods of accessing school either by walking or cycling leading to improved health & wellbeing.

Child Health: No Impact

Neighbourhood Satisfaction: No Impact

Transport: No Impact

Environment

Climate Change Impacts

Mitigating Greenhouse Gases: No Impact

Adapting to the effects of climate change: No Impact

Resource Use Impacts

Energy efficiency & consumption: No Impact

Prevention, reduction, re-use, recovery or recycling of waste: No Impact

Sustainable Procurement: No Impact

Transport Impacts

Accessible transport provision: Positive

Public bus services are available which in many circumstances will provide an alternative means of transport to schools. The introduction of free bus travel to under 22s can be used at no cost to our school aged children, albeit capacity may be restricted at peak times. Many pupils using these services are within a 30-minute walk or 15-minute cycle of the school.

Sustainable modes of transport: No Impact

Natural Environment Impacts

Air, land & water quality: Positive

The proposed reduction in buses would lead to reduced emissions and an increase in physical activity by our young people who would either walk or cycle to school.

Biodiversity: No Impact

Open & green spaces: No Impact

Built Environment Impacts

Built Heritage: No Impact

Housing: No Impact

Is the proposal subject to a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)?

No further action is required as it does not qualify as a Plan, Programme or Strategy as defined by the Environment Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005.

Corporate Risk

Corporate Risk Impacts

Political Reputational Risk: Negative

The proposed reduction in the dedicated school bus service for Harris Academy may carry political and reputational risks for the Council.

Political Risk: The reduction in the dedicated school bus service may lead to public dissatisfaction and opposition, as evidenced by the public budget consultation results. Respondents expressed opposition to any cuts, citing concerns about the negative impact on young peoples safety, reliability of services and ability of pupils to reach school on time.

Potential Mitigations:

Transparent Communication: Clearly communicate the rationale behind the budget cuts and the steps being taken to minimise, or negate, their impact on education quality and support services. This can be achieved at local level through schools reviewing travel plans to suggest alternative public bus routes, safe cycle routes and safe walking routes.

Stakeholder Engagement: Actively engage with stakeholders, including parents, pupils, and community members, to gather feedback and address concerns.

Economic/Financial Sustainability / Security & Equipment: Positive

Defined savings achieved; financial controls in place

Social Impact / Safety of Staff & Clients: No Impact

Technological / Business or Service Interruption: No Impact

Environmental: No Impact

Legal / Statutory Obligations: Positive

Children & Families Service will continue to meet its statutory requirements with the removal of this service.

Organisational / Staffing & Competence: No Impact

Corporate Risk Implications & Mitigation:

The risk implications associated with the subject matter of this report are "business as normal" risks and any increase to the level of risk to the Council is minimal. This is due either to the risk being inherently low or as a result of the risk being transferred in full or in part to another party on a fair and equitable basis. The subject matter is routine and has happened many times before without significant impact.