



MAPSSS FEEDBACK REGARDING THE 'FREE AND SUPERVISED TRANSPORT TO ALL STUDENTS ATTENDING KINDERGARTEN AND COMPULSORY SCHOOLING' CONSULTATION DOCUMENT ISSUED IN FEBRUARY 2018

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MAPSSS Feedback regarding the ‘Free and Supervised Transport to all Students Attending Kindergarten and Compulsory Schooling’ consultation document issued in February 2018.

MAPSSS welcomes the Ministry for Education’s commitment to implement the promised supervised school transport, one of the main proposals made by MAPSSS representatives during the Working Group “Behaviour on School Transport Guidelines” chaired by Ms. Dolores Gauci.

MAPSSS reiterates its proposal that every school should have a point of reference with whom parents can discuss any issues related to transport during the scholastic year.

MAPSSS insists that any free school transport should pick up school children not more than 60 minutes prior to school assembly time.

MAPSSS urges the Ministry for Education to include all Klabb 316 centres as drop-off points for any eventual free school transport service. This would help working parents who, in the past, were not able to use the service because intra-college transport was not offered at their school.

MAPSSS believes that the service level conditions for transport operators mentioned in Chapter 5A should include strict safety measures and scrutiny of all drivers. No person whose name appears, or has previously been, in the Sex Offenders Register should be allowed to drive school transport. Furthermore, no driver who ever had his driving license temporarily revoked, should be allowed to drive school transport. MAPSSS reiterates that only a marked qualitative improvement in school transport will result in an increase in parents’ confidence in the proposed free school transport initiative.

MAPSSS refers to point C in Chapter 5. We note that there is a difference between the Maltese and the English version of the document. The Maltese version states that the reform may entail changes in the opening and closing times of particular schools whereas the English version specifies that the changes will affect state schools in particular. We believe that **all** schools – Private, Church and State Schools - should be considered when studying the feasibility of changing the opening and closing hours to facilitate the implementation of the proposed reforms. Furthermore, the Government should discuss the proposal with all stakeholders in the Malta Council for Economic and Social Development as any change in the opening or closing hours of schools will directly impact the working hours of some parents in both the private and public sector.

MAPSSS also notes that children attending church or private schools will be provided supervised free transport irrespective of the distance travelled, accommodating these parents’ choice of school. At the same time, children attending state schools are provided transport only to schools within the locality or the area designated by the College boundaries, thereby ignoring any potential preference of school by these parents. This shows a discrepancy in the system which needs to be addressed. This point was also raised during the consultation process leading to the quoted document.

Finally, MAPSSS remains at the disposition of the Ministry of Education for further consultation on the development of an effective strategy that will eventually result in the implementation of a policy providing a free, safe and efficient school transport system that our kids deserve.



MAPSSS

Maltese Association of Parents
of State School Students

MAPSSS Committee

March 2018

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