

Sheralee Mitchell-MacEwan

Subject: FW: Change to busing

-----Original Message-----

From: Alicia Wilmot [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, June 28, 2023 11:19 AM
To: Norval Mitchell <nmitchell@easthants.ca>
Subject: Change to busing

Hi Norval,

I am sure you have heard about the recent letter quite a few residents within East Hants have received in regards to busing.

I am aware there is a council meeting tonight and I feel with so many at possibly all schools in the area this topic should be discussed with council.

I am not completely against children walking from school but it needs to be able to be done safely. With lack of sidewalks, crosswalks, traffic lights, massive amounts of development which means heavy construction vehicle traffic throughout every area I don't feel this many children pouring out into our streets is wise. The school has informed me that they don't even monitor to ensure "walkers" from the school leave with an adult.

My children aged 9 and 4 will not be waking from Elmsdale District to their in home daycare on Hemlock Drive. So if I don't not find a way to transport the youngest will be pulled from the pre-primary program and the oldest will likely have to miss a lot of school. Full time working parents cannot accommodate driving their kids to and from school daily and they should not be allowed to walk home alone. Legally my 9 year old isn't even allowed to be home alone but the school would allow her to leave without an adult and walk her 4 year old brother home? I know you walk those streets daily and I'm sure you would agree a large amount of children walking those sections of roadway would be terribly risky.

Thank you for taking the time to read my email.

Alicia Wilmot
[REDACTED]

Below is my email I sent to the email we were provided to contact with concerns:

> To Whom It May Concern;

>

> We, like many, have received a letter home on Friday with our 9 year old daughter who will be attending grade 4 at Elmsdale District for the 2023-2024 school year.

> We also have a 4 year old registered to start pre-primary for this same school year and school.

>

> I am fully aware that we have been receiving courtesy busing for our location and this has been provided since the school has been at this location.

> This was explained to me a couple of times as I had called to confirm busing when my daughter first started school as well as again last year.

> There are 2 buses that come into our subdivision to transport children to Elmsdale District. I made the assumption that based on the number of children that live in here and the lack of sidewalks bus service was extended to all children in this subdivision.

> With this new change I am assuming that a lot of the in-home day cares in our subdivision will now no longer be able to get children to their homes to provide the care needed for working families. I can think of 4 day homes that are within this same 1.6 kms. And likely includes my own in home daycare. And given that the Swings Daycare is also less than 1.6 kms from the school that they will no longer be able to accommodate before and after school care without increased cost for staffing.

> I feel like these daycares alone would create a significant amount of young children walking a very busy section of Highway #2.

> Was there any consideration to the amount of children attending these day homes and day cares?

> One family that lives up the street from me did not receive a letter as their home is 1.7 kms away. However the home daycare that their children attend is within the 1.6 kms, so they still get bus service but I do not?

> Given the massive crisis in childcare in the province I am sure you can see my concern.

>

> I have a few options with this change:

> 1. We find new childcare further from our home and hope whatever bus in that location has enough room. Have you heard about the extremely long wait lists and shortage of childcare in the province?

> 2. My kids do not attend school and both have to go to full time childcare until I hear back on whether there is an "available" seat on the same bus my daughter has already been riding on for 4 years to go to her daycare on Hemlock Drive. Busing reviews starting at the end of September sounds like it would be late October before we would receive a response. If you could ensure the teacher send home school work for my daughter so she doesn't fall behind.

> 3. I quit my job so I can pick them up from school each day.

> 4. I hire someone to walk/drive my children from the school to my daycare.

> 5. We move less than 200 meters up the street so we are eligible for busing.

> 6. My 9 year old and 4 year old walk to their daycare without

> supervision on a very busy section of highway #2 until they turn onto Elmwood drive walking to hemlock drive with NO SIDEWALKS. Elmwood subdivision only has one small section of sidewalk that conveniently still gets bus service. (I also hope the school wouldn't allow this) I could go on but you can see every option is not acceptable or reasonable.

>

> We recently attended pre-primary orientation with my son where the educators revealed that the registration numbers are fairly low, I feel this change with busing is also feeding that problem. Most parents I talk to that aren't sending their eligible child to pre primary aren't sending them as they have no childcare for after school. Losing bus service for my children means I will likely have to pull my son from pre-primary and leave him in full time day care and hope we can accommodate one of the ridiculous options above when he starts primary. This option still leaves me with the 9 year old walking to daycare after school without supervision, while I feel she is responsible enough I find it outrageous that legally she is not allowed to be home alone, yet the school could turn her loose to walk home alone? Our subdivision streets are not very wide and it is dangerous on a good day let alone with 20+ kids walking home daily.

>

> I find the timing of this notice ironic when I was just sent a survey to complete on after school care for pre-primary last week. When I completed that survey I thought my son would be taking the bus with his sister to their daycare so I felt confident in my after school care. However now I would be completing the survey very differently.

>

> I look forward to what you feel will be an appropriate solution.

>

> Alicia Wilmot

> [REDACTED]

Sent from my iPhone

Verified virus free by MessageLabs