

Listening Typescript 2- A radio Programme.

Presenter: We continue the topic of getting to school without a car. Helen Warren of the Department of Transport is still with us. Helen, how about those who live too far from school to walk or cycle?

Helen: Well, of course public transport should be the best option for those longer journeys, but sometimes the bus services in the area don't really meet students' needs. Both students and parents complain that the bus stops are too far from home or from school, or that tickets are too expensive. And so a lot of parents choose to drive their children to school.

Presenter: So what can be done?

Helen: Local authorities and schools can work with bus companies to set up special bus services for school children, with buses that follow convenient routes and stop right in front of the school. They can also offer bus passes at reduced prices. In some places, parents also worry about bad behavior on buses: things like vandalism, smoking, and possibly fighting. Vandalism is the most common problem, but of course fighting is the most worrying as children may get hurt.

Presenter: That sounds like a more difficult problem.

Helen: Well, several towns have handled this really well, you know. Each school service has the same bus driven by the same driver each day. These drivers are specially trained in customer care and, more importantly, they know the children. A driver will say hello, direct the student to his or her own numbered seat, and remind everyone to fasten their seatbelts. It immediately creates a better atmosphere. At the end of every journey the driver checks the bus for signs of vandalism. These buses have CCTV cameras in them, so if there is any damage, it's possible to check who's responsible. Parents and children sign 'a code of conduct'. Students who don't respect it may lose their bus passes and have to use ordinary buses, where tickets are more expensive and the routes less convenient. It has worked really well. There are very few behavior problems on those buses, and parents feel confident enough to let even quite young children travel on them.

Presenter: That's really impressive and an example for the other places to follow. Helen Warren, thank you very much.

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