

IMMEDIATE

Wednesday 22 September 2004

NASUWT RESPONSE TO PLANS FOR SCHOOL TRANSPORT BILL

Commenting on the Government's plans to push forward a School Transport Bill, **Chris Keates**, Acting General Secretary of NASUWT, the largest union representing teachers throughout the UK, said:

"NASUWT supports the principle of cutting congestion caused by the school run and the ambition of combining this with promoting a healthy lifestyle for pupils. NASUWT warns, however, that any changes need careful consideration and detailed consultation to avoid the potential of replacing one problem with another.

"For example, staggering school opening hours to ease traffic jams could cause havoc for parents who have to drop off their children at different schools on the way to work or for teachers and their childcare arrangements.

"While it may be a healthy option to encourage children to walk to school, the Government must consider, however, the possible consequences of this policy on rising levels of truancy. Adult-supervised walking buses could be one means of ensuring children arrive safely at school."

National Association of Schoolmasters Union of Women Teachers