

My family has three children aged [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] and have lived in rural areas, and utilized SBS to get our children to and from school for their entire schooling lives.

At present my [REDACTED] son, catches the bus at 7am, 35km from home and [REDACTED] and [REDACTED], catch the bus at the end of our driveway at 7:25.

Over the last 8 years of school, we have had a variety of bus timetables.

At our first school Lake King, we were on at 8:15 and off at 4:40, the kids that were first on were first off, which was great. Yes he had a late afternoon, but there was a degree of fairness to the children.

We now live in Condingup, and my two younger kids attend Condingup Primary School where until a few months ago we were first on, last off the bus every day, for the last 6 years.

Depending on kids up the bus route our times have been between 7:05 – 7:25, and drop off between 4:30 and 4:45. This is considerably longer than a standard work day for most adults.

After some anxiety issues with my [REDACTED] when she was in Preprimary, a child psychologist recommended I drive her more often, it made a massive difference to the anxiety and behaviour of all my children. We live 35km from school, so an hour and a half bus trip can be done in a 25 min drive. I have requested the contractor on numerous occasions could the bus route be operated more fairly for all the children, but are constantly told they have to follow SBS guidelines and rules that restrict from adjusting the route. So for the last 6 years I have driven my kids to and from school a lot. I adjust my days to pick them up or drop them off whenever possible, and now added my sons high school into this as well, for him to catch the bus he leaves home at 6:30am and returns at 4:50pm. We also have the added challenge of his bus stop being 35km away with pick up at 7am, my primary school aged children's bus pick up was 7:15 earlier in the year, when I questioned SBS as to how I could be at two bus stops 35km apart within 15minutes I was told that was my problem as they are different bus contracts and schools and that is not considered when allocating bus stops and times. The time change to 7:25 has been a big relief. But for my kids mental health I drive them all most days, and have accommodation in Esperance to help with the travel, but that splits our family as Dad stays home on the farm.

I think school bus routes should be designed with kids in mind, not just the bottom line. Rural areas in WA are already given a raw deal as far as infrastructure and health care, particularly mental health care. Surely there is a happy medium that makes the children's health a wellbeing a priority.

Kind regards

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