

7th January 2022

Ms J Palmer BSc, MA, MA, NPQH
Principal

Dear Parents/Carers

Home to School Transport

We have been alerted to changes within the Home to School transport provided by KCC that may affect your child. Please read the information below, which is an extract from KCC's website, you can access the information via the link below:

<https://www.kent.gov.uk/education-and-children/schools/school-transport/school-transport-for-children-with-special-educational-needs/changes-to-the-school-transport-service-for-children-and-young-people-with-send>

Changes to the school transport service for children and young people with SEND

From 21 February 2022, there will be some changes to the school transport service for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) as we arrange new transport contracts to replace those that are coming to an end.

About the changes taking place

The changes will be in place when your child returns to school after the February half-term – from 21 February 2022. There may be further changes during the rest of the 2021/2022 school year, but we will do our best to keep these to a minimum.

The changes to your child's transport could mean that they:

- *have a different driver*
- *take a new route to and from school*
- *begin travelling with other pupils if they have not previously been assessed as needing to travel alone.*

Unfortunately, we cannot guarantee that your child will have the same driver or passenger assistant for the rest of the school year. We know that changes to school transport can be unsettling for families so we will give you as much notice as possible of any future changes.

Information we use to plan your child's journey

To plan the changes, we will be using the information we hold about your child's abilities, needs, home and school addresses, and previous travel assessment decisions. We take this information from our existing transport records and have worked closely with schools to improve the quality of this information to inform our journey planning.

All eligible pupils will already have been assessed to determine if they are able to share with others. If this assessment identified that your child has behavioural or complex needs which mean that they are unable to share, then they will not share with others.

For privacy reasons we are unable to share information about fellow passengers.

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When you will find out about the changes for your child

We will contact you by the end of January 2022 to let you know about the new transport arrangements for your child. We will include contact details if you have any further questions or concerns.

Why we're making changes

We need to make these changes so that we can manage the significant rise in the number of eligible children and young people who need school transport, while continuing to offer an appropriate, consistent, and free service to all eligible pupils.

This year, around 700 more parents have requested school transport, meaning that we are now supporting around 5,500 families. In addition to the extra demand, the transport sector continues to be affected by the national driver shortage, with bus and taxi capacity already stretched.

If we do not make these essential changes to the way we provide school transport, then we will not be able to guarantee enough capacity to get all eligible pupils to school.

The changes we are making allow us to plan transport around the children's needs as thoughtfully as possible, while making sure there is enough capacity in the transport network to accommodate rising numbers of eligible pupils.

Further changes in 2022

We expect demand for school transport to continue to grow during the next year, resulting in more eligible pupils needing school transport places. This means we may need to make further changes from the start of the new school year in September 2022 to provide school transport for pupils.

If we need to make changes to your child's transport, we will give you as much notice as possible to give you enough time to prepare.

Please note that if you wish to discuss anything regarding the information above, please contact KCC transport directly tel. 03000 412121, as these changes are being organised by KCC and we have been assured services will be improved for you and your family.

I hope you find the information useful.

Warmest wishes.

Yours faithfully

Jill Palmer
Principal