

10<sup>th</sup> December 2024

Dear Families

We are aware of the current issues surrounding school transport. Significant traffic disruption in Abingdon has caused widespread delays in getting students to school. This has been exacerbated by changes to Oxfordshire County Council's travel policy for areas within our catchment, as well as bus timetables that are not fit for purpose.

We are legally obliged to mark student attendance in accordance with the Department for Education's guidance: [Working Together to Improve School Attendance – August 2024](#). This means:

- Any student arriving at school after 8:30 am will be marked as late. This counts as a present mark for the AM session (the school day is divided into two sessions).
- Students arriving after 9:00 am, when the AM register closes, will be marked as arriving after the register is closed. This results in an unauthorised absence.
- If a student arrives at school late for a reason within their control, such as waking up late or going to the shop, they will receive a lunchtime detention that same day.
- If a student arrives at school late for a reason outside of their control, they will be marked depending on their arrival time. They will not be set a detention.

We understand that, in many cases, delays are beyond the control of you or your child. In such instances, they will not count as evidence for issuing a fixed penalty notice. As part of our supportive attendance strategy, we are committed to helping students catch up on any work missed due to transport disruptions, minimising the impact on their learning. If you have received communication regarding attendance, please be assured that it is part of our effort to balance our duty to provide a full-time education with our commitment to offering support and clear information.

We have been in contact with the local bus company, Oxfordshire County Council, and our local MP to address these issues. I would greatly appreciate it if you could also share any challenges your child is facing regarding transport and consider contacting these organisations to voice your concerns. Working together, we can help ensure this issue is resolved as quickly as possible for the benefit of all children in our community.

If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Kind regards,

Mr Ben Gilkes  
Assistant Head Teacher

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