

4<sup>th</sup> July 2017

Dear Parent/Carer

You may be aware that there have been changes recently to the bus service bringing students into school from the Middlewich and Holmes Chapel areas.

The bus services currently transporting students to school are all run on a commercially operated basis. School no longer receives any funding towards transport, and therefore has to rely on private companies operating the required bus routes. However it does mean the school are reliant on those external providers continuing to provide this service, which must be viable financially for the bus operator. In a bid to maintain the existing bus routes, school pays a subsidy to some of the bus operators, although this is diverting school funding away from educating the students. As commercially operated routes, the bus operator has to register the route with the Transport Commission, and can deregister the route as well if required.

The bus company operating the two bus routes from Middlewich and Holmes Chapel has decided to deregister both routes, and has registered a single route covering the same area. Ideally this would have been done in consultation with both the school and parents, and the alternative bus route and timetable should have been issued, before the changes happened. Unfortunately this hasn't happened, but school have requested the revised bus route and timetable from the bus company, and this is now attached.

The bus currently being used on this route does have a maximum capacity of 70, as stipulated on the plate displayed on the bus itself, and there have been a number of occasions where the bus has appeared over crowded. In order to avoid this situation, and to ensure the continued safety of the students, a member of school staff will check the bus each night to ensure it is not over capacity, and if it is, a minibus will be provided to ensure students can get home. The bus operator has purchased a new bus to operate this route with a greater capacity, so this issue should be resolved from September.

Yours sincerely

Mrs K Bowdler  
School Business Manager  
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