

Dear Parent / Carer

If you do not live in the RHSC catchment area, and you have previously been given what is called a 'discretionary' seat on one of the existing school buses, it is important you read this. If you live in the Drayton/Taverham area, or the Litcham/North Elmham area and already have a place on one of the two buses we manage from those areas, this does not apply to you.

Every year the transport unit lets you know that a place on an existing route cannot be confirmed until the end of August. This is because they can only offer you a seat if there are spaces, and those pupils in the school's catchment area have priority. They will also normally tell you that ultimately it is your decision to attend a school other than your catchment area school, and therefore it is your responsibility to transport your children to school.

Until now, this has never been a problem because you have been accommodated on an existing route. However, as many of you (as well as us at school) are now discovering, this may well not be the case this year. The transport department have a duty to do what they can to promote social distancing by having as few pupils on each bus as possible, to free up seats, and it appears this might result in, at best, a limited number of discretionary seats becoming available for out of catchment pupils.

I believe you have been told that the availability of seats might not be finalised until towards the end of September. I hope this information is already known by you, but if it wasn't, you must be aware of it. The consequence of this is that you will need to find a way to get your children to school at least until the end of September, and maybe for the entire school year.

Clearly, this is going to cause significant problems for many of you. Please keep me informed if you are struggling. Although I cannot offer an immediate solution, what I can do is to monitor how many families this might affect, note where they live, and possibly offer to create a support network of families who might be able to work together to share the burden of transport to everyone's mutual benefit, as long as done in a Covid19 friendly way.

I will also be writing to our MP and the transport unit expressing my huge concern over this. At RHSC we have nearly 250 pupils from out of catchment, and it would be awful to think some of them might not be able to continue to attend because of this transport issue.

I will keep you informed if I become aware of any developments.

Yours sincerely

Tim Gibbs