

My Ref: PW/CM - 037

Your Ref:

Date: 15 July 2010

Dear Parent or Carer

I am writing regarding travel-to-school arrangements when all pupils return to the classroom in September.

This letter applies to every pupil in Staffordshire, however they usually get to school.

In normal times there are around 120,000 pupils travelling to and from school every day in Staffordshire. Around 8,000 children are entitled to free Home to School transport on 800 routes to 150 schools, with the remaining 112,000 making their own way to and from the classroom every day.

Many pupils already walk or cycle to school and we want them to continue, because it is good for them and good for the environment.

However, we are very worried that the number of people who travel to school by car may increase in the autumn. For example, current Government advice is that pupils not entitled to free transport should avoid public transport. If school run traffic does rise there will be more road congestion, parking problems outside already busy schools and increased air pollution.

I would urge every parent of a pupil not eligible for free transport to begin thinking now about how their child can walk or cycle to school in September – and if it is not possible for them to walk or ride all the way, look at ideas like ‘park and stride’ where they can be safely dropped off and picked up a little distance from the school rather than at the gates.

The council has begun working with schools to develop local action plans where needed and they will be developed during the summer, so please keep in touch with your school’s website and Facebook pages as appropriate.

Free Home to School Transport will continue in September for those entitled to it with additional temporary hygiene and safety measures on dedicated school services. Those entitled to free travel on public transport will also be able to get to school without a problem, with the County Council willing to provide temporary increased capacity on busy routes if necessary.

Travel passes will be issued in the next few weeks and we will be writing directly to all those parents at the same time with more detail about what is planned.

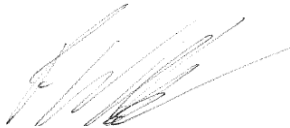
Help and advice for schools and parents about walking, cycling, 'park and stride' is available at www.staffordshire.gov.uk/activeschooltravel.

I hope that we can all work together in these unusual times to reduce the number of cars at the school gates and the County Council will support this effort as much as it can.

The council is keeping the situation under review and will update you as the situation changes, but I think it is essential that you start thinking ahead because it is not a return to normality in September and we should plan accordingly.

Thank you and stay safe.

Yours sincerely



Philip White
Cabinet Member for Learning and Employability
Councillor for Dove Division