



PRINCE'S
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PRINCE'S MEAD SCHOOL

Minibus Handbook





Introduction

Prince's Mead provides a minibus service that is flexible, friendly and safe. We have a fleet of nine minibuses that are used to take the children to and from school as well as for school trips and matches during the day.

We run eight bus routes to and from school in the morning and afternoon. The buses are all named after birds of prey meaning the children can enjoy coming into school on an Eagle or a Falcon! Parents can make the most of this environmentally friendly option, which allows you to avoid the peak traffic at the school gates and extend the working day, at no additional cost.

The buses are closely linked with our after-school clubs and this means we operate the bus routes three times a day. There is a bus into school in the morning, an early bus at the end of the school day (4.10pm) and a late bus after clubs (5.10pm).

The height-adjustable seat-belts that are fitted in all our minibuses plus the care that our drivers provide for our young people mean that the minibus service is suitable for all the children in our school, including those in Reception.

Flexible

Each term we ask parents to sign-up for the bus routes they would like to book next term. This does not have to be the same bus or the same time every evening. For example, you may wish to book early Harrier on a Monday, early Eagle on a Tuesday, late Eagle on a Wednesday, late Harrier on a Thursday and pick your child up from school on Friday. Similarly in the morning you may wish to use the bus every day or just some days and/or select a different bus route on different days. Once you have been allocated a place on the bus it will be reserved for future terms/academic years provided you reapply for it during the sign-up window.

While we do try and keep daily changes to a minimum we appreciate that sometimes children's arrangements change as a one-off for a variety of reasons. To accommodate this, parents can change their child's arrangements as late as 2pm on the day concerned. Changes that are required as a result of matches or other school events are automatically applied without you having to organise this.

As you can imagine having such a flexible service requires a good deal of organising so we employ a Transport and After-School Club Manager and a Transport Assistant, who are the focal points for all bus and club related issues.

Friendly

As well as employing the Transport and After-School Club Manager and Transport Assistant we also directly employ and train all of our bus drivers. The drivers are assigned to a consistent route so that they get to know the children and the children get to know them. It is not unusual to see one of the buses decorated for one of the children's birthdays and the Christmas decorations are becoming something of a competition! The drivers play an important role in continuing the pastoral care that is so important in our school while the children are en-route to and from school.



Safe

As well as being a friendly face to the children all our drivers are Minibus Driver awareness Scheme (MiDAS) accredited to ensure high standards of driving and safe minibus operation. Our MiDAS training is delivered in-house so we can ensure the quality of the training is consistently high.

The minibuses are subject to a regular maintenance schedule. A full safety check is completed at least three times a year by a qualified garage and the minibuses are checked daily by the drivers, with any minor niggles recorded and dealt with straight away.

Our flexible bus service goes hand in hand with appropriate safeguarding for the children. The bus drivers all have registers that are updated daily, so that they know exactly which children they are expecting on the bus for both the morning and afternoon runs. The drivers also have the support of the Transport Assistant during the afternoon runs. The teachers and club leaders have a daily list of which children are going on buses and which are being handed over to parents or are going on to an after-school club.

Rules & Guidance

The Transport & Administrative Assistant, Catherine Pardoe, is the point of contact for all changes to your child's after-school arrangements. Mrs Pardoe can be contacted via e-mail at busesandclubs@princesmeadschool.org.uk, telephone on 01962 888001 or by using the day book in reception. Mrs Pardoe will confirm any changes so please do not assume your message has been collected unless you receive this confirmation.

In order for the bus service to run smoothly for everyone there are a few rules and deadlines to observe:

- Changes must be made with the Transport Assistant and not directly to the drivers, who cannot accept any changes. The only exception to this is the unplanned removal of your child from the bus in the morning, which should be advised via a text to the driver before the departure time.
- The deadline for planned afternoon changes is 2pm on the day. This allows the messages to flow through the school, for the catering to be planned and ensures accurate club and bus registers.
- The deadline for planned morning changes is 2pm the day before. Sending a text to the driver in the morning is for unexpected changes only, for example, your child being unwell.
- If your child is taking part in a school match and you are collecting from the match, the deadline for advising the Transport Manager is 12 noon the day prior to the match.
- Please ensure you are at your stop 5 minutes before the scheduled stop time to drop off and collect your child. The drivers are not authorised to deviate from the route times to ensure the children arrive at school on time and parents are not kept waiting at their stops later in the journey.

Happy Bussing!