

Oaklands Catholic School and Sixth Form College

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Headteacher: Matthew Quinn B.Ed (Hons), M.A., INPQH Registered in England and Wales,
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Our Ref: TF/DL

6th July 2022

Dear Parents/Carers

654 BUS SERVICE BETWEEN HAMBLEDON, DENMEAD AND OAKLANDS CATHOLIC SCHOOL AND SIXTH FORM COLLEGE

I am pleased to inform you that the 654 bus service, which is a private contract bus service with First Bus, will continue during the next academic year, starting in September 2022. However, due to significant rises in the cost of running this service some minor changes have had to be made to the timetable in order to mitigate some of those increased costs. This includes the use of the D1 Bus Service to connect between Hambledon and Denmead in the mornings, see attached timetable. Originally First Group were seeking a 68% increase in the cost of the contract but through careful negotiation, which is in the process of being finalised, and seeking the opportunity to revise the timetable across all three schools and colleges that this bus service covers, a more reasonable rise in costs has been reached. This has been further assisted by the School's decision to increase the subsidy provided against the cost of the service.

The fare arrangements have been reviewed in light of the inflationary increases that the bus company will be charging the School and in order to make this service financially viable the ad hoc single and return fares have had to be increased to £3.80 for a single fare and £5.10 for a return fare. These will be flat fares for any length of journey on this service.

The purchase of an annual pass is available at the cost of £560 per pupil and in order to spread the cost for Parents the School will be happy to accept 10 equal payments of £56.00 by standing order from August 2022 to May 2023. Equally, parents can pay in one lump sum by cheque or bank transfer to the school account in the normal fashion. This amount represents very good value for money with return travel at an equivalent of only £2.95 per school day.

Whilst the School will continue to subsidise this bus service we have had to increase the fares in line with the inflationary increase charged by the Bus Company and to keep the level of financial risk to the School to a manageable level.

An additional bonus is that the bus pass will entitle students to connecting travel on the First Hampshire network if they need to use a bus to get between their home and a bus stop along this route. This supplement will be valid daily until 7.00pm for each day of the school year.

This service will be kept under constant review and will only remain viable if maximum use is made by pupils living in the Hambledon and Denmead area. If there are insufficient numbers of pupils using this service further price increases to fares cannot be ruled out and will be reviewed in November 2022.

Please find attached an application form and bank standing order form which need to be completed and returned to school as soon as possible and no later than 15 July 2022 along with a passport size photograph of your child for us to use on the photo ID card (if you have not previously supplied this). Bus pass letters will be issued to students before the start of the new term by email or post. These will be used in lieu of their pass. The school will then endeavour to issue passes to students during their first week of term.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'T S A Finch', with a long, sweeping horizontal line extending to the right.

T S A Finch
Director of Business and Finance