7 November 2018

Dear Parent

**Students travelling to and from school by bus**

I am writing to raise our concerns about the late arrival of some students who use the bus to travel to school. We have been closely monitoring the situation and established that the main routes of concern are the numbers 12 and 17. The bus companies and members of the public have previously reported that Ashcroft students have been poorly behaved whilst waiting for the bus and whilst travelling on the bus.

Members of the senior leadership team recently visited the town centre bus stops along with the Police. Our observations will be useful for all parents of students who travel to school on the buses.

- The majority of students use the Church Street bus stop (next to Farm Foods/Pizza Express). Students who use this stop have the highest chance of getting on a bus, whereas those students catching a bus further along the route may not be able to board if buses are full.
- Lots of students are in the town centre for a long time in the morning. They use the town centre shops and food outlets. We advise students to go straight to the bus stop and get on the first available bus. This will enable them to arrive on time to school and keep them safe. We are informed by the Police that there are gangs in town who are targeting students before and after school to recruit them and therefore strongly advise parents to speak with their child about ensuring they travel direct to and from school.
- There are not currently enough buses for the volume of people who need to travel; students using the number 12 bus need to arrive at the stop by 7.30 am to beat the queues. Students using the number 17 bus may be late to school if they use the 8.00 am service so should arrive by 7.25 am for the 7.30 am service.
- Some students are arriving too late to the bus stop and this makes them late to school.
- Some students who are regularly late to school were seen at the bus stop at 7.20 am and we have spoken directly to their parents. It is possible that these students usually hang around in town and are then subsequently late to school. Please encourage your child to get on the first available bus.
- The general public said they regularly observe students using foul language, pushing and shoving onto buses and demonstrating anti-social behaviour.
Please remind your child to always show the good manners you have taught them. Anti-social behaviour in public could result in a criminal record.

- There is no obvious queuing system at the bus stops and this can lead to poor behaviour. Please encourage your child to form a calm and orderly queue and be respectful of the people around them.

It is important to note that there are many students who use the buses to travel to school and arrive on time every day without fail. These students arrive early to the bus stop and get on the first available bus. The number of students arriving late to school decreased by 37% on the day of our visit. The general public informed us that behaviour at the bus stops and on the buses was much improved when we were present. Members of the Senior Leadership Team cannot supervise behaviour at bus stops and on the buses every day. Students must take responsibility to arrive on time to school and behave appropriately on their journey to school. Anti-social behaviour may become a Police matter and, in addition, the school sanction for bringing the school into disrepute is an exclusion. All students can have a free breakfast on arrival to school if they arrive between 7.45 am and 8.20 am.

We are planning a number of visits to the town centre bus stops and other stops along the route, during which the Police will accompany us and we are working with the bus companies who are planning to amend their services. We have shared the messages in this letter with students in assemblies and will keep you updated in the future. Please can you re-iterate the key points to your child in order to keep them safe and to help them arrive on time, every time.

Thank you for your support in this matter.

Yours faithfully

Mrs Atkins

Deputy Head of Shackleton House