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Bohunt Horsham Headteacher: Ms G Ayling BA (Hons)

Tuesday 29 March 2022

Dear Families

Re: Travel and Transport Post Easter

With only two weeks left of the spring term, I write to you with some important updates and reminders. **Our first term in the new building** has been a brilliant one for our community; we all came together and with the support of you all, as well as our partners at Wates, West Sussex and the DfE, managed to move in over Christmas despite delays to the bridge and travel infrastructure and we've certainly made the most of this term: practical lessons in Art, Food Technology, Design Technology, Computing, Science, PE, Dance, Drama and Music, social time outside in our MUGA and quiet zone, inside in our new dining hall, library and sports hall - and there's still so much more to come. Over Easter with the rest of the building handed over, we will move into our permanent SEND space, our amazing new Drama space, start using our IT suites and finally take ownership of our huge sports field. I wanted to start by thanking you, our families, for the support you have given us over the last three years. It's been a long journey to final handover of this building and we have relied upon your resilience, positivity and adaptability every step of the way. I would also like to thank Mrs Sharkey, who has worked incredibly hard on getting us the five bus routes that have meant we were able to open in January; her determination and logistical thinking made a very tough job possible in a very short space of time.

Legal and General report that **the bridge is on track**, as well as the adjoining pathways to and from its entrance, for use when students return after the Easter break. This will make a huge difference to our community, enabling the vast majority of students to come to school on foot or by bicycle and will reduce traffic to and from the school site, in turn making life easier for those families who still need to pick up and drop off by car. We will also take over the whole of the front car park, moving staff parking to the dedicated staff car park behind the sports hall and this will ease traffic in that space which is currently very congested at the end of the school day.

As you will be aware, we sent out surveys to families at the start of this term to find out how much interest there was in keeping any of our bus routes, or an alternative version of any of the routes after Easter. We shared these results with West Sussex and with all of the local bus companies once we had our responses but the numbers of families requesting a permanent paid for route were too small for any of the companies to consider the proposition financially viable. **None of the bus companies could see a way to provide a dedicated service after the DfE funding for the current bus routes ends.**

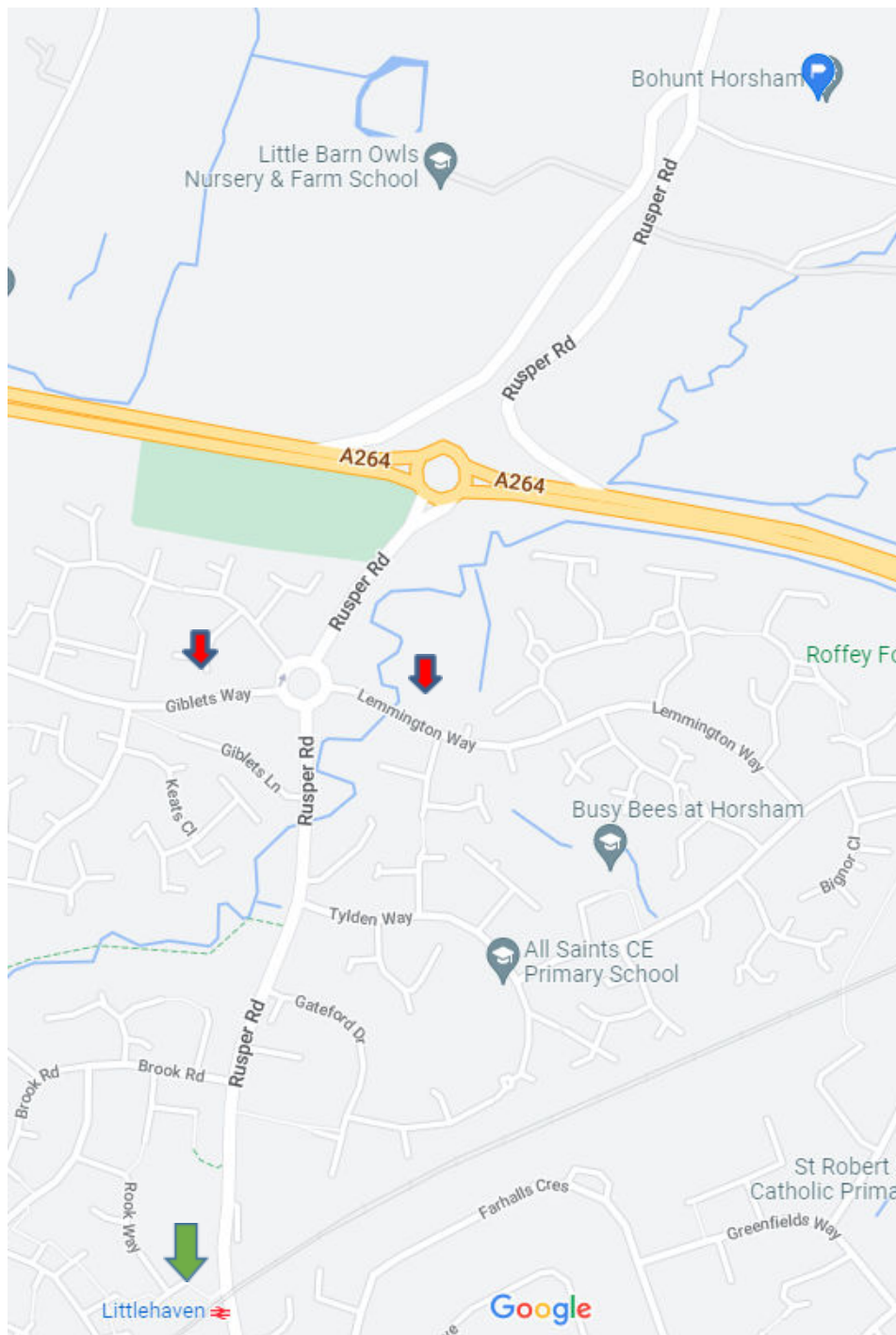
I do understand that for some families, this is frustrating and disappointing news, I too had hoped, and had felt confident, that the bus companies were very interested in keeping at least one route going after Easter. I am sure that rising fuel costs and a lack of drivers has played a part in their decision but it is also true that the

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numbers of families requesting a paid route are very low – for the same reasons, it is not financially viable for the school to run a route either as this would run at a cost that the school simply cannot afford.

What does this mean for families who live outside of walking or cycling distance from the school? This means that these families will need to make use of existing public transport routes that bring you within walking or cycling distance of the school, knowing your child can then make the rest of the journey safely using the new bridge. Please see below a map with the closest bus and train stops, all within walking distance of the new school, for your information:



Nearest bus stops served by the 200 (Metrobus) Timetable and information can be found here: <https://www.metrobus.co.uk/services/MB/200>



Nearest train station (Littlehaven) served by Southern railway. Journey planner and information can be found here: <https://www.southernrailway.com/travel-information/plan-your-journey>

Although the lack of a dedicated school route is disappointing, we are really fortunate to have the connections that are identified above and will continue to put pressure on local transportation providers to serve the school directly. As we grow in size and the houses around us start selling, we can hope that this situation will change. Families who are eligible for school transport from West Sussex will receive additional correspondence from them directly as to plans for the post Easter period.

A reminder that our late bus service was put in place temporarily to ensure student safety whilst there was no bridge in place and so, once the bridge is open for use, **the late bus service will no longer be available.** Our premises officer, Mr De Feo, has done a brilliant job over the last three months of collecting students from various points around town and bringing them safely to school and I am sure those of you whose children have used the service will join me in thanking him for his willingness to do this for us every day.

The bridge itself represents safe passage across the A264 but we are well aware that we, as a whole school community, will **need to ensure we use the bridge safely and responsibly.** We will talk to students in tutor time and assembly about bridge safety and will have staff on duty at the start of term to monitor students crossing the bridge at the start and end of the day. We will remind our students that anything they do whilst in our uniform must adhere to our code of conduct and that any dangerous behaviour on the journey to and from school will be taken just as seriously as it would if it occurred in school. I appreciate the time it will also take you as a family to once again shift your modes of travel and transport and don't underestimate the changes you may need to make to adapt to this last change.

Students who are **cycling to school after Easter** will be expected to wear helmets as always and will be directed to the sheltered and secure bicycle storage areas on arrival. Our lockers are now ready for distribution and you will hear from Mrs Jenkins this week about how to claim a locker should you need one.

As things currently stand, we are expecting the last bus services to run on Friday 8 April, the last day of the spring term; this is a half day and students will leave site at 1.40pm. Should there be any last minute changes, we have ensured the bus companies have capacity to run services again after Easter as a safety measure but I will write to you all again at the end of the term with any further updates I have at that point.

With best wishes

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ms Ayling', written in a cursive style.

Ms Ayling
Headteacher