

Ref: CP/JS

28 June 2022

Dear Parents/Carers,

At St John's, we are committed to providing you with affordable transport to and from school. It continues to be the case that St John's subsidises the cost of every seat on every bus, however, transport to St John's is a Durham County Council administered service; they arrange the contracts which define the total costs of the service, and they collect payments from you. We, as a school, make a significant financial contribution to this scheme and support subsidies for families on lower incomes. Essentially, we pay the difference between parental payments and the total cost of the transport scheme. To give you some idea of our financial commitment, the average cost of a seat on one of St John's coaches is currently £3.50 per day.

With inflation at a 40 year high, we are all feeling the effects of rising prices; fuel costs are a major contributing factor in this. These costs, together with additional overheads facing coach operators, are a serious concern for all of us. We have been in discussions with Durham County Council and they have confirmed that they are applying an inflationary increase in cost of transport to St John's from September 2022. As always, we are doing everything we can to limit the financial impact on our families but, unfortunately, we are unable to take on the entirety of this extra cost under the current economic climate.

In order to address this issue, all daily fares will rise by 8.4% per subsidy band from 1 September 2022. This will mean that the standard daily fare will be **£2.98**. The figure of 8.4% is a below inflation increase, which means that a greater share of the transport costs will fall to St John's as we are still committed to making transport to our school as affordable as possible.

Please see below for the new pricing structure which is based on household income. We also offer a subsidy for second and third siblings.

Band A:	£1.41
Band B:	£1.95
Band C:	£2.49
Band D:	£2.98

For Year 6 parents/carers, who intend to use school transport in September, you will need to apply online. Please apply using the following link <https://www.durham.gov.uk/concessionaryseats> and then scroll down to 'St John's Catholic School and Sixth Form College'.

You will find the online application form, the 'St John's subsidy scheme' form and a guide for parents/carers. Please read this guide carefully.

- If you are a parent/carer of a student in current Years 7, 8, 9, 10 or 12, your application will be carried forward, unless you have selected to apply for a new bus pass each year.
- All current Year 11 parents/carers, who have children returning to our Sixth Form in September, will need to apply for transport in September.

To be considered for the subsidy, evidence of household income will need to be submitted. This can be uploaded electronically when you complete the online application. Alternatively, evidence can be given to Mrs Swindells, Admin Team, at St John's Main Reception. Evidence supplied will be kept in the strictest of confidence.

Please be aware that you may be eligible for free school transport if your child is in receipt of Free School Meals and you are a Catholic family. Please contact Durham County Council transport services for further details if you think you may be eligible.

The deadline for submission of applications is **Wednesday 13 July 2022**. Please note that capacity on school transport is dependent on applications and, therefore, we cannot always guarantee a seat should you wish to join the scheme later in the academic year.

If you have any queries about the application process or the subsidy scheme, please contact Mrs Cynthia Swindells (Admin Team) via telephone 01388 603246 or email cswindells@stjohns.bhcet.org.uk. We can also provide paper application forms on request.

Thank you for your support and understanding with this matter.

Yours sincerely,

Chris Parker
Deputy Headteacher

Sarah MacDermott
Assistant Headteacher