

**To Parents**

4<sup>th</sup> January 2022

Driver Shortage for School Transport

I hope that you and your family enjoyed a safe and peaceful break.

We have heard from several bus and taxi operators that they are experiencing driver shortages due to COVID-19 illness or required self-isolation. While all operators are required to have some back-up drivers, the omicron variant appears to be overwhelming those back up numbers, so I am writing to explain our contingency plans in case operators struggle to provide their usual services.

Central Bedfordshire Council's School Transport Team is in close contact with all of our operators and we will do all we can to ensure that routes are unaffected, but this might mean that we have to use different operators on routes where one operator has more capacity than another.

In a worst-case scenario it could also mean that some routes are not able to be run or that that we have to stagger pick up and drop off times so that one driver can operate two routes. This would mean that some passengers would arrive to school later than normal, and others may have to leave school earlier.

I appreciate that none of these scenarios are ideal and we are committed to mitigating the impact of driver shortages as much as possible. We will keep you updated in the event of any cancellations or changes and thank you for your understanding.

Yours sincerely



**Peter Fraser**  
**Assistant Director, Education**  
**Children's Services Directorate**