

School Transport: Frequently Asked Questions

Why should I choose Masons for my child's school transport?

We are a family-operated business with over 30 years' experience. As parents ourselves we fully understand that moving into secondary school is a big step, and that for some children this will be the first time they have used school transport. We genuinely care that your children have a positive experience.

Our online booking system and app-based tracking make the experience hassle free.

How do I work out which route and stop is best for me?

Head to our website <https://www.masonscoachhire.co.uk/school-buses-transport> Here you will find listed all the routes, stops and times. If you hover over each of the bus stops it will allow you to click through to google maps and show you exactly where the stop is.

There is not a suitable boarding point for my child, can you add a stop?

Our routes are registered similarly to a public service bus and we are unable to add stops outside of the ones listed.

How do I make a booking?

Stage 1

Head to our website <https://www.masonscoachhire.co.uk/school-buses-transport> If you are an existing customer you will need to log in to your parent account before purchasing your deposit ticket for the new school year. If you are new to Masons please first send us a registration form to send us your details. Next you will need to click on the button that says PURCHASE DEPOSIT TICKET and create a parent account at this point (using YOUR details, not your child's). You will then be able to purchase a £50 deposit ticket for the route you wish to travel on. Once paid your space is secure and you do not need to do anything until we contact you with the next steps of purchasing and activating your child's ticket and bus pass. Detailed instructions to help you complete the process can be found by clicking https://www.masonscoachhire.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/Deposit-Ticket-Guide_compressed.pdf

Stage 2

You will be sent an email in the month of June with full details of how to purchase your annual ticket or set up your instalment ticket (whichever is your preference) once they have been made live. At that time you can head to our website <https://www.masonscoachhire.co.uk/school-buses-transport> Click the button that says PURCHASE ANNUAL/INSTALMENT TICKET. Log back in to your parent account and complete the necessary set-up before purchasing your ticket and activating your child's bus pass. Instructions for completing the process will be sent to you and made available on our website.

A physical pass will be made available to your child in the first full week of the autumn term, along with him/her being able to access their ticket on their mobile phone.

Stage 3

Download the Masons Coaches App (in google play for android or Apple play for i-phone) Both parent and child can download the App. Parents must use the email address registered to log in to the app and child must use their own email address as registered when purchasing the annual/instalment ticket. The parent App allows you to track your child onboard the coach, you will also receive an alert as they board the coach. You will receive push notifications through this with alerts and communication from us. Your children can also track the coach and gain access to their mobile ticket. We issue a physical pass as we have found children often run out of batteries on their phones, and it enables the children to scan on and off the bus much, much quicker.

I have purchased my deposit ticket—do I need to ‘activate’ it?

No you don't need to, but it won't hurt if you do!

How much does the school transport cost?

There are two payment options available to parents...

Option 1 – ‘Upfront’ annual discounted payment

Routes MAS001/002/003/004/005/006

Booking deposit (non-refundable)	£50
Annual discounted payment	£1100
Total paid	£1150

Village Routes MAS101/102/103/104

Booking deposit (non-refundable)	£50
Annual discounted payment	£800
Total paid	£850

Option 2 – Making instalment payments

Routes MAS001/002/003/004/005/006

Booking deposit (non-refundable)	£50
Instalment payment (August – May)	£126
Total paid	£1310

Village Routes MAS101/102/103/104

Booking deposit (non-refundable)	£50
Instalment payment (August – May)	£88

Total paid	£930
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My child is in an exam year (11 or 13)—do I have to pay for the whole year, even if they don't need to use school transport much after May?

Children in their GCSE year or A-Level year pay their annual fee in ten monthly instalments over 10 months just like any other child; we do not charge extra. This takes into account that your child will use the bus sporadically after May when exams take place, and it enables us to keep their space available for them.

My child has just sat their 11 plus, where is the best time to register for a space?

If you are interested in transport it is best to register early. This can be done by completing the registration form on our website

https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=8y5D15deiE2D5ta-IIDSJjioL-xA-9BBsf_kfgtEtJUUQTBLWThUS05SSFpRTkhPM0IFOVXRUDJCNS4u Or by emailing us schools@masonscoachhire.co.uk

We must make you aware that this does not confirm you a space, it merely registers your interest. When the schools confirm their allocation of spaces in March you will need to contact us to confirm you wish to proceed with the space.

What if I only require transport on a part-time basis?

The services are calculated to run with full time students, and as a result we are unable to offer part-time spaces. You will be able to use the bus as and when you need it once you have committed to the full year.

Have the buses got seatbelts?

Most of our school transport routes are fitted with seatbelts but not all of them. Similarly, to public service buses there is not a legal requirement for us to provide seat belts on all routes. However, it is very much our goal that as we make new purchases that this will be top of the priority list.

Are drivers DBS checked?

Yes, all of our drivers go through rigorous pre-employment checks and a full enhanced DBS is carried out at regular intervals. Along with these our drivers' licences are checked regularly and we monitor driver performance using the tracking systems on our vehicles.

Can students eat and drink on the vehicles?

No, we operate a no food and drinks (except water) policy on our school transport. This is to safeguard children with allergies and to maintain the cleanliness of our vehicles.

When do my payments come out of my bank account?

When you set your initial payment up through our GoCardless payment system it can take 10-14 days for the money to be taken from your account. This will then become the approximate date that the payment will be taken each month. Unfortunately, we are unable to amend the dates of these payments once the set-up is complete.

My child is due to start A-Levels in September and the space for this will not be confirmed until later in the year, what should we do about transport bookings?

Our transport routes become very heavily subscribed, so it is best to book and pay the deposit to secure your space on the transport. If you wait until the school space is confirmed in August, you may not be able to secure a space on the transport.

I want to change route mid-year because we are moving home—what should I do?

Contact schools@masonscoachhire.co.uk listing the route and stop you currently use and the request for the new route and stop. Please also indicate the date you wish to start the transfer. There is an admin cost of £10 to transfer routes. Route changes are subject to a place being available on the new route and therefore are not guaranteed.

Do I automatically get allocated a space each year on the transport?

No, the process for booking is reviewed annually and you will need to re-book each year.

We have a sibling we would like to add to the transport for the next academic year, do we get a discount? Automatic space?

We don't operate sibling discounts. If you have a sibling who wishes to travel with us, it is essential you register your interest at the earliest opportunity by completing our booking form.

https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=8y5D15deiE2D5ta-IIJSJjioL-xA-9BBsf_kfgtEtJJUQTBLWThUS05SSFPRTkhPM0IFOVXRUDJCNS4u

We would also urge you not to delay paying your deposit ticket when those are announced.

How do I report lost property?

If the drivers find lost property on the coaches, they leave it on the coach for the next journey, your child will need to ask the driver for the item. If this fails, please email

schools@masonscoachhire.co.uk

My child has lost their bus pass—how do I arrange a replacement pass?

Contact schools@masonscoachhire.co.uk who will make arrangement to produce a new bus pass for your child. In the meantime, they can access their pass on their mobile app. Replacement passes are charged at £10+VAT.

What happens if the bus is running late?

If the bus is a few minutes late this is often down to traffic issues. We find days when it rains, Mondays and Fridays can be busier days of the week. If there is a significant delay you will be

notified through a push notification via the app. You can track the buses through our new app-based system.

What happens in the event of a breakdown or accident?

In the unusual event of a breakdown, parents will be notified via push notification via the app. There is often a delay between the driver notifying us and a replacement vehicle being sent out. We often find your child texts you first! Please rest assured that in the background we will be working hard to establish a replacement vehicle and mechanic to manage the situation and will get an alert out as soon as we can.

My child's other parent wishes to be added to the mailing list, how do I do this?

Head to Mailchimp and sign up using this link <http://eepurl.com/hreDeP>. Text alerts and push notifications can only be sent to the registered user on the app system. You can change contact details in the booking portal by clicking here <https://masonscoachhire.bushub.co.uk/>

There was a behaviour incident on the coach, who should I report this to?

We work in line with the school's behaviour policies and procedures. In the first instance we would encourage you to raise your concern with the school directly. If you are unhappy with the outcome or you wish to make us aware, please do email schools@masonscoachhire.co.uk; we take matters of behaviour very seriously and will work with the school to improve any challenges we may face.

I need to cancel my space

If you wish to cancel your child's transport at any point throughout the academic year, you will need to give Masons **one full calendar months' notice**. Our preference is for this notice to be given by mail (schools@masonscoachhire.co.uk) stating: your child's full name, the last date that transport is needed and your reason for the cancellation. Please note that the annual payment is a one-off, discounted payment. No refunds will be made for this payment at any time, no matter what the circumstances. If you make instalment payments and you cancel part way through a month, you will need to pay for the remainder of that month **plus** the calendar month which follows.

How do I check if transport is running in extreme weather conditions?

Head to the Bucks website <https://closures.buckscc.gov.uk/> where schools will list any closures as a result of adverse weather conditions. We monitor this website for announcements and will operate inline with these. If the school is open, we always do our best to ensure our services continue to run.

My child wishes to bring a friend home, or we have an exchange student staying with us

Often our school transport routes are full, and we are unable to accommodate extra bookings, however we will look at each individual request and if we can offer a space will do so. There is a charge of £6 per day per additional child and you can make a booking by emailing schools@masonscoachhire.co.uk

Where do I find your terms and conditions?

A link on our website can be found here <https://www.masonscoachhire.co.uk/terms-conditions/school-transport>

You can also find this in your online portal <https://masonscoachhire.bushub.co.uk/>

How do I make a complaint or comment?

We love to receive great feedback; you can send your reviews to schools@masonscoachhire.co.uk or pop a review on our FB page or google review pages. If your review is down to a negative experience you have received with Masons, we would appreciate you raising this with us in the first instance and giving us the opportunity to work through any concerns you may have.

We do our utmost to provide a high standard of service, but we understand that occasionally things do not run smoothly and you might wish to raise a concern or complaint with us. please send in an email to schools@masonscoachhire.co.uk we will acknowledge your response and will respond in writing within 72 hours.