



## LOCAL ARRANGEMENTS FOR



**RIVER**  
ACADEMY

<b>Initial approval:</b>	
<b>Review frequency:</b>	
<b>Date(s) reviewed:</b>	

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## Introduction

River Academy opened as a free school in September 2024 to 180 Year 7 students and an additional 7 students in its resource base for moderate learning difficulties. When full, the school will serve 1,200 11-18 students and an additional 35 students in the resource base. It is run by Maiden Erlegh Trust, which successfully leads three other mainstream secondary schools, 2 primary schools, 2 special schools and one Pupil Referral Unit.

The aims for our School Travel Plan will carry over our principles in education to ensure that each child's journey to school is safe and that they are confident in their journey. We will encourage sustainable transport to school where possible and work towards enabling our students to travel to school by sustainable means.

It is hoped that students will become more independent when they feel confident using public transport and increasing walking and cycling where possible will improve students' (and staff) health. We recognise that not all of our students are able to travel by public transport but through this plan, we also seek to educate and raise awareness around the environmental and health benefits of reducing car travel.

Our aims are to:

- Walk, or go by bus or train if we can, only go by car if we have to;
- Be safe – learn to walk and cross the roads and learn what makes a route the best to choose;
- Help to make the routes to school safe and attractive;
- Enjoy the streets, buildings, plants and creatures, weather, people and come and go in friendship groups;
- Learn about the problems cars make, so that we can minimise them.

## School details

The school day starts at 09:10 and finishes at 15:35 on Monday, Tuesday and Thursday, 16:30 on Wednesday and 15:15 on Friday. Our pupils also benefit from a range of after-school activity clubs and a breakfast club is available from 8:30am.

Staff park at the front of the school and walk through to the school reception via an access controlled gate. The car park is of a generous size and includes 4 EV charging stations each with 2 charge points.

Students currently access the school through the pedestrian access on Richfield Avenue. The road has a constant flow of traffic and can be very heavily congested at rush hour.

We do not currently have an area for parents to drop off their child/(ren). This can result in increased traffic in the staff car park and in the leisure centre car park next to the school.

River Academy is well served by Bus Route Buzz 18.

From Kenavon Drive, BUZZ 18 follows the existing BUZZ 42 route to Forbury Road then serves Friar Street stop FE. From Central Reading, BUZZ 18 will then continue towards the Rivermead Leisure Centre, where it will stop near the site of the River Academy (opening in September).

From Rivermead, it will then continue via Cow Lane and Portman Road serving new bus stops at Ashmere Terrace, Portman Road Tesco, Bridgewater Close and Stone Street. It will then run via Kentwood Hill restoring a service to the bus stops at Oak Tree Road, Derwent Avenue, Armour Hill, and Kentwood Close, and finish at Tilehurst Triangle.

Extra journeys on Monday to Fridays in the morning and evening will run as BUZZ18a between Kenavon Drive and St. Mary's Butts only.

**BUZZ** handy bus links about Reading

bus stops  
 • towards Kenavon Drive  
 • towards Tilehurst Triangle

As the school is located in a dense urban area, very close to both Reading and Caversham centre, there are many walking routes to the school with suitable footpaths. There are also several cycling routes.

Reading Borough Council  
 Cycle and Walking Network

OS Greyscale  
 Aerial 2015

## School Travel Plan objectives

The aim of our school travel plan will be to encourage and facilitate safe and sustainable travel to and from our school for our students, parents and staff.

Maiden Erlegh Trust has an ongoing commitment to:

- Make arrangements for the safety of students and promoting this in regard to their journey to and from school;
- Improve the health and fitness of students;
- Support the development of students into responsible, informed and participative members of the community;
- Encourage students and staff to walk or cycle to school where possible.

## School Travel Plan Targets

River Academy has set the following targets for this travel plan:

- Raise awareness of students of the benefits of using sustainable travel to school;
- Educate students on road safety, use of public transport and how to choose the best routes;
- Reduction in number of children being 'dropped-off' in the vicinity of the school;
- Reduce the numbers of parents bringing children to school by car;
- No accidents to students in the area around the school entrance;
- Educate students about the environmental impact of vehicles;
- Reduction in numbers of staff bringing cars on to the school site.

## Surveys

We conducted a parent survey in December 2024, asking for information relating to their child's current travel arrangements, their preferred method of travel and the barriers they face in adopting the preferred method.

In a separate survey, we also asked staff about their current and preferred methods of travel.

### *Results of the surveys*

18 members of staff responded, and 107 parents responded.

### **Summary of survey results**

#### **Staff survey (see Appendix 1)**

- 71% of staff come to work by car alone, with only one respondent being involved in a car share arrangement, their reasoning being the distance from school being far, one respondent living 24 miles away.
- 18% (3 staff members) walk to work, and one rides a bicycle, the reasoning being the distance from school being near.
- When asked what their preference would be in transport, most answered either Walking (33%) or Car (alone) (also 33%), with time and distance from school being the main limiting factors;

#### **Parent Survey (see Appendix 2)**

- 40% of the parents who responded confirmed that their child comes to school by car (alone – driven by parent/carer.) For most of these parents this is because of

the distance from school being too far. Most would prefer their child to walk to school or get the bus but list the distance and cost as issues as to why they don't.

- 20% of parents drop off their students at the garden centre.
- The second most popular method of getting to school is by bus, with 41.6% of these students citing distance from school being far as the reason.
- Five parents complained about the reliability of buses to school, as they only come every 40 minutes and often become delayed, resulting in their child being late to school.
- Four parents mentioned a desire for a school bus as this would be a safer and more timely option to get students to school on time.

## Parking strategy

The car park is lit with streetlights and constantly monitored by CCTV which is at the front of the property and covers the car park.

Eight charging points (4 stations with 2 points each) for electric cars have been provided that are available to staff during school hours. There are 8 specific parking bays for those who car share, intended to encourage people to use this method of transportation. All parking bays have been clearly measured and marked out and provide a safe distance between vehicles as well as manoeuvring space.

A one-way system is in place and the car park is kept open after school hours to allow access for lettings. The high level access on Richfield Avenue is closed at 6pm until 6am and is on a timer. The other barrier is closed when lettings end and re-opened the following morning.

For each parking area, the school are committed to always maintaining a safe car park which includes points such as (but not limited to):

- appropriate lighting;
- adequate drainage;
- clear signage;
- be level, firm and not slippery;
- deliveries to the school site and the garden centre will be restricted to outside of core school times (start and end of day).

The car park area is covered by CCTV cameras for security reasons; however, all vehicles are left at the owner's risk – the school does not accept liability for any damage, theft, or vandalism for any vehicles that are left in the car park.

### Follow-up Actions:

- Raise the issue about the frequency of the Buzz 18 bus with Reading buses
- Liaise with Mark Lyford from Sustrans to come in for more assemblies to encourage students to use public transport and bicycles, and promote River Academy's sustainability strategy.
- This document will be reviewed annually whilst the school is growing to ensure we have a full picture of students and staff travel arrangements and can action as appropriate.

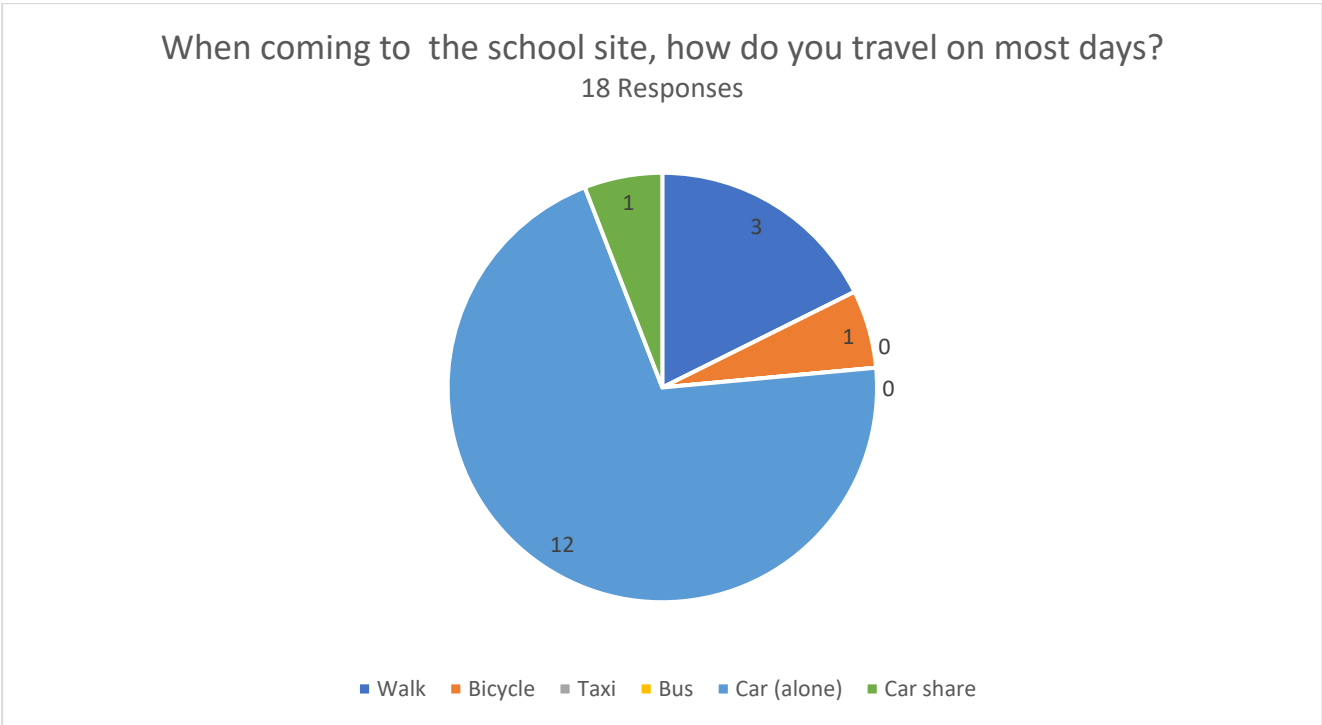
# River Academy Travel Plan January 2025

I confirm agreement to the content of the school travel plan update:

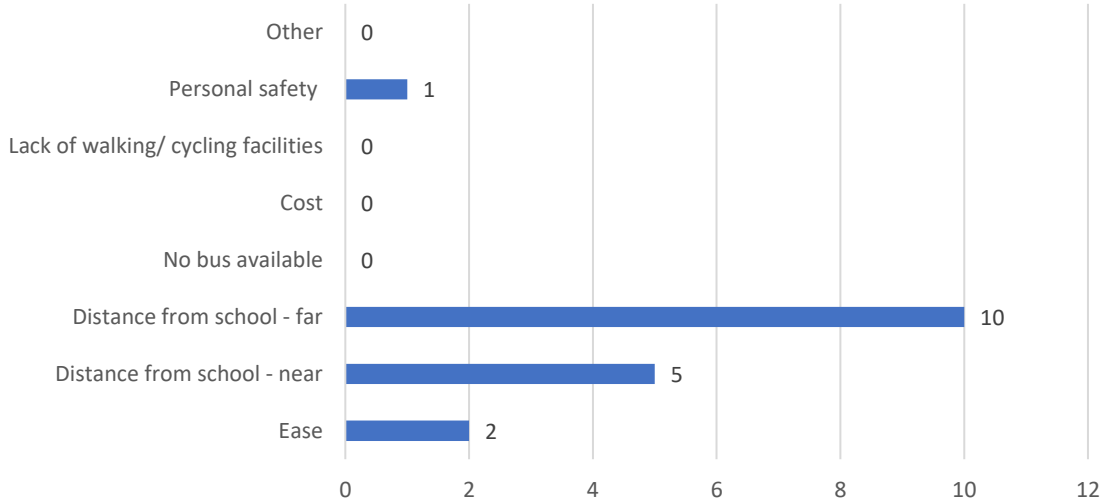
*A. Hartley*  
Andy Hartley  
Headteacher

Date: 30 January 2025

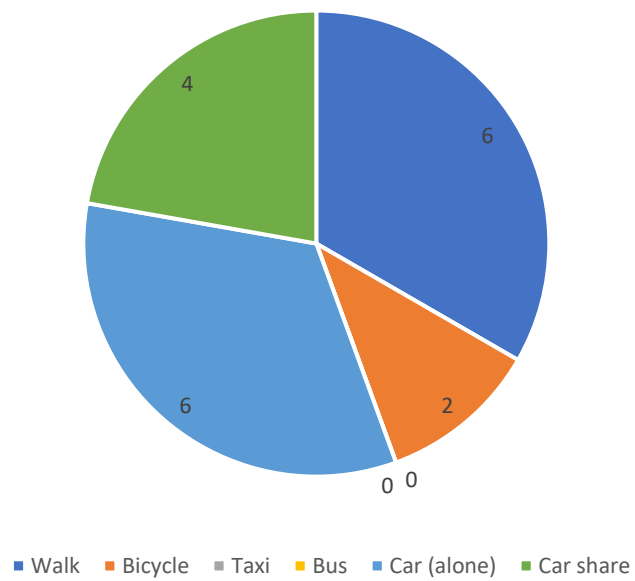
## Appendix 1 – Staff survey



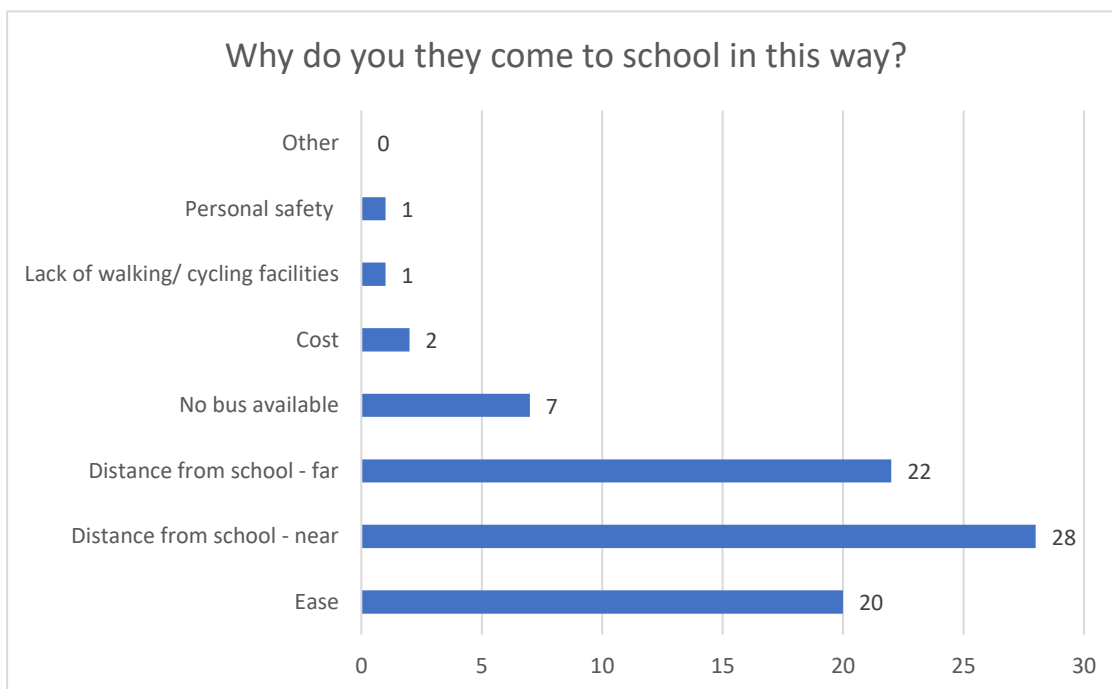
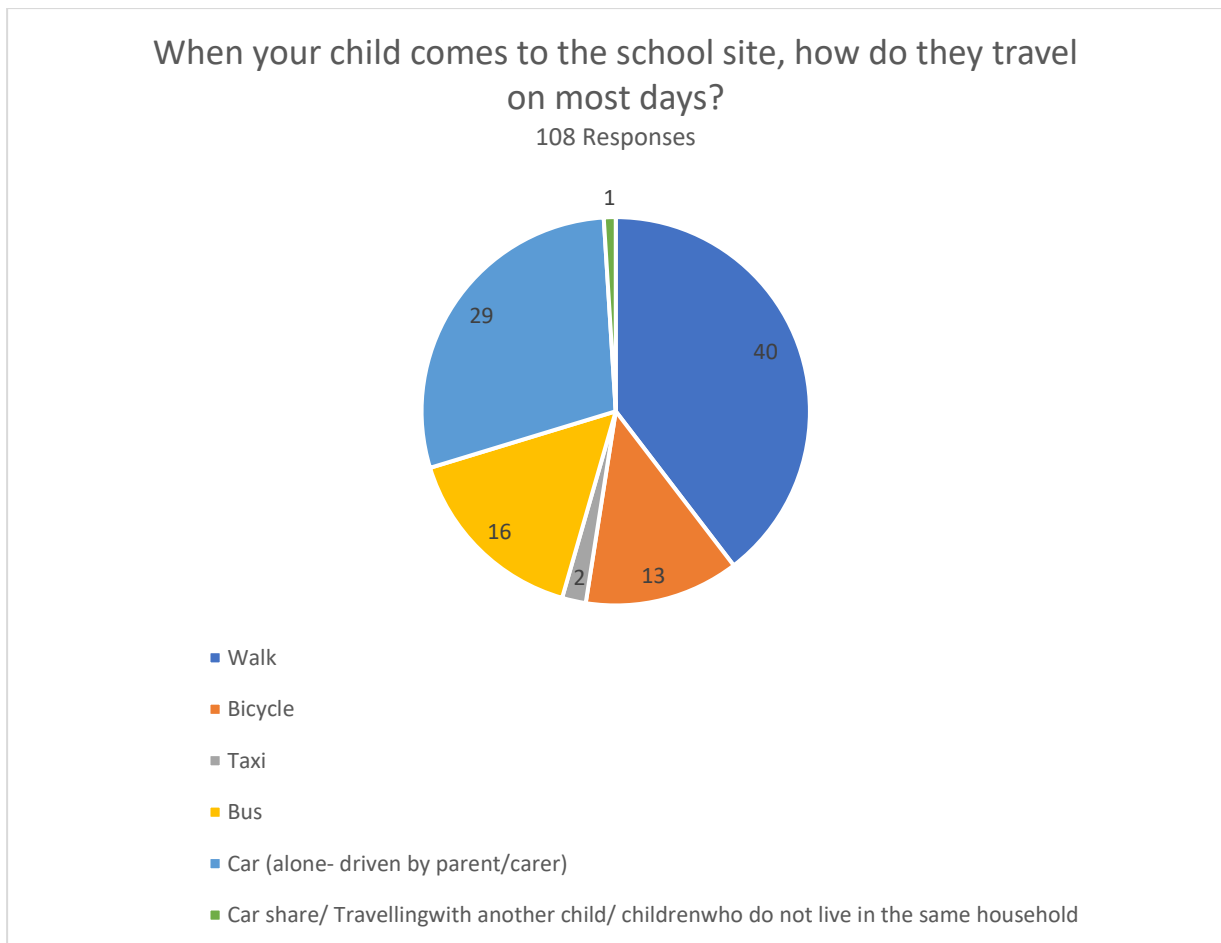
### Why do you come to school this way?



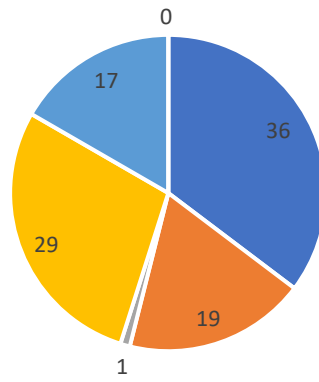
### How would you prefer to travel to school?



## Appendix 2 – Student survey



### How would you prefer for them to travel to school?



- Walk
- Bicycle
- Taxi
- Bus
- Car (alone- driven by parent/carer)
- Car share/ Travelling with another child/ children who do not live in the same household