



IVEL VALLEY SCHOOL TRAVEL PLAN

Version 2.0

JULY 30, 2020

HITCHMEAD ROAD

Biggleswade, Bedfordshire, SG18 0NL

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1 Introduction

The Ivel Valley School Travel Plan addresses the issues associated with the transportation of pupils, staff and other visitors to and from the two main sites of the school. Our aim is to reduce private car use and congestion whilst improving safety, health and fitness.

The objectives of the plan are:

- A reduction in the number of parents and staff who drive to school or between school sites and increase the number that travel by a sustainable means of transport by addressing issues that may discourage staff, pupils or parents from walking, sharing or using public transport to school;
- To ensure everyone on or around the site is safe when there moving vehicles on site; and
- To minimise the impact on local residents and those using nearby roads.

The Travel Plan is available on the school's website: <https://www.ivelvalley.beds.sch.uk/>

2 Our school

Ivel Valley School is a special school under the control of Central Bedfordshire Council. It is based on three sites across Biggleswade. It was previously two schools – Hitchmead School and Sunnyside, which merged in 2010.

Following a major reorganisation during summer 2018 the main school site is on Hitchmead Road (previously the secondary site) and has pupils from 3-16 years old. The College site is on The Baulk (previously the primary site) and caters for 16-19 year olds. We also have three satellite classes based at Biggleswade Academy for pupils who benefit most from being co-located with mainstream school pupils.

The major reorganisation of the school resulted in more pupils being on the Hitchmead Road site and resulted in more vehicles accessing the site but it was considered to be necessary in the interests of the pupils. All pupils aged 16 and under now have access to the school field, gardens and facilities on the site. The 16+ pupils are now based at a site that is nearer to the town centre and transport links and therefore ideal for helping them to work towards independence.

2.1 Pupils and staff

We cater for pupils from 3-19 years of age. All pupils have an Education, Health and Care Plan (formally known as a Statement of Educational Need) and many have a range of complex needs including autism, medical and mental health problems.

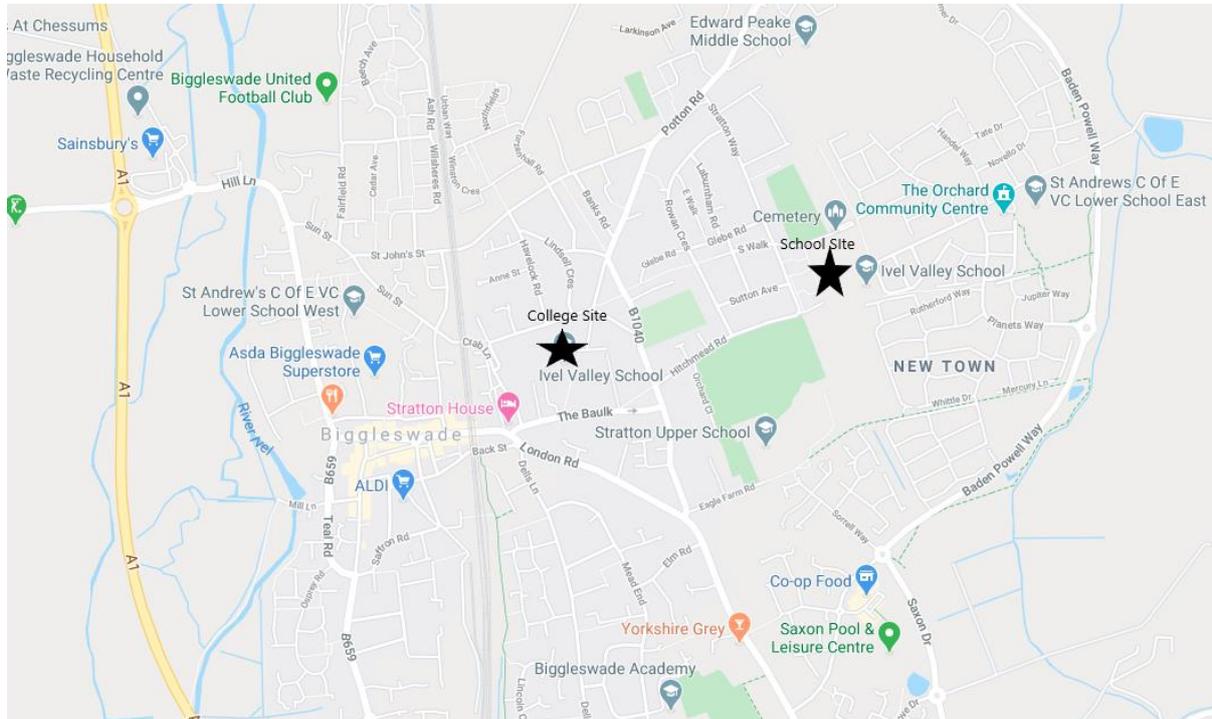
Numbers of pupils fluctuate during the year but there are usually around 190-200 pupils. In September 2020 the numbers of pupils and staff based on the different sites are expected to be:

	Pupils	Staff (full & part time)
The Baulk site (College site)	32	38
Hitchmead Road site (School site)	134	117
Satellite classes – Biggleswade Academy	32	17

The staff numbers includes many cleaners and midday supervisors who do not access the school at peak times.

2.2 Location

Ivel Valley School is located in Biggleswade in east Bedfordshire. The site map below shows the immediate area around the two sites:



School site – Hitchmead Road

The Hitchmead Road site was previously on the edge of the town but several housing developments have gone up around the school so there are now houses bordering much of the site.

In 2018 and 2019 two temporary buildings were installed to allow for the increase in the number of pupils following the school reorganisation and moving all pupils up to the age of 16 on the Hitchmead Road site. These buildings have planning permission for five years. Another temporary structure was installed in 2016 also has planning permission for five years. Further planning permission will be sought for all buildings. No other significant changes to the building or pupil numbers are expected in the foreseeable future.

The school site is quite large as it has a large school field and garden area. The buildings are all one-storey.

College site – The Baulk

The College Site is in a very built-up area nearer the town centre. It is in a drive off The Baulk in a collection of buildings that includes Maythorne (children's hostel), an NHS building and a nursery. Behind the College is Lawnside primary school. Part of the College site is let out to the Central Bedfordshire Council Children with Disabilities team.

The College has a playground but no playing fields.

2.3 Public transport

The train station is about 20-minute walk from the School site and about 10-minute walk from the College site. This provides trains north to Sandy, Peterborough and south to Arlesey, Hitchin and Stevenage.

There are several local bus services that stop near both sites. These go to the town centre, Potton and Sandy.

There are no school crossing patrols near either site.

The follow map shows the bus routes going near the school and train station.



2.4 Access and Parking

School Site – Hitchmead Road

The main school gate is open from 6.30am until 6pm Monday to Friday during term time and is the only access for staff, pupils and any other visitors to the site. There is also a rear gate but this is usually locked and only used for contractors requiring access to the rear of the school and for emergency access. There is an intention to have electronic security gates to improve security and safety on site.

Fortunately the school is situated at the end of Hitchmead Road which is a turning off the main road. Most vehicles continue onto Stratton Way so traffic is much lighter in the area leading to the school gate.

There is a one-way system around the site to avoid congestion and improve safety.

There is parking for 46 cars, three minibuses and an additional three disabled parking bays within the school fence. There are an additional 12 parking spaces immediately outside the main gate. There is insufficient parking spaces on the site, resulting in many cars having to double-park or park on the grass.

All other deliveries and contractors use the main school gate and should park within the marked parking bays.

There is a sheltered cycle rack on site for staff or pupils with space for seven bikes. Fewer than five bikes are ever parked there and the area tends to be used for storage of other items needing disposal. If additional cycle storage is required this will be organised.

College Site – The Baulk

Most people and deliveries come to the front reception via The Baulk. There is a small car park with just three spaces for staff. Any other staff arriving by car must park in the shared car parks further up the drive but there are often no spaces so staff have to double-park or park in undesignated areas.

There is no cycle rack for the College site so bikes tend to be left at the front of the building. A bike rack is planned.

There is a rear gate that goes into the playground that is usually locked during the day.

2.5 School opening times and extended school services

The school day begins at 9am and finishes at 3.30pm.

An after school club run by the school operates from 3.30pm to 5.30pm every Monday to Wednesday during term time and there is usually about 20 pupils. This is only for pupils of the school and a school minibus collects those attending from the other site at 3.30pm and brings them back to Hitchmead Road site. They are collected by parents/carers or by pre-arranged transport organised by the local authority.

During the holidays the school is open most days for a small number of staff, contractors and a holiday club takes place for three to four weeks of the Easter and summer holidays. Again, this is run by the school and is only for pupils of the school and there is usually 30-50 pupils. Pupils are dropped off and collected by parents/carers or a school minibus transports them to and from home.

2.6 Catchment area

The school has a very large catchment area due to it being one of only two special schools in the Central Bedfordshire area (the other being The Chiltern School in Houghton Regis). We cover the whole of the north of the Central Bedfordshire Council area, stretching as far as Cranfield in the west of Bedfordshire.

We also have around 20 pupils who travel from other local authorities including Hertfordshire, Cambridgeshire and Bedford Borough. Due to the large catchment area and taking out of county pupils we have many pupils who travel long distances to get to school.

2.7 Community use

The school is used by two local groups supporting children with special needs and their parents. These take place on Saturday morning. The site agent opens and closes the school for them.

2.8 Transport of pupils

Most pupils travel to the school by transport organised by the local authority. This will either be by minibus or taxi, depending on the needs of the pupils and number of pupils travelling from a particular area. Each vehicle will have a driver and an escort. Due to the complex needs of the pupils and distance travelled, very few are transported by their parents and even fewer walk to school. Some pupils require a vehicle to themselves and are unable to share with others due to their behavioural or health issues.

The Central Bedfordshire Council (CBC) transport team and transport teams from other boroughs are responsible for organising all routes and deciding on how many vehicles are needed. They also plan whether the vehicles need to visit more than one Ivel Valley site. Any issues with the transport have to go directly to CBC.

An annual travel survey is completed and the results submitted to CBC.

School Site – Hitchmead Road

All pupils and staff access the school via Hitchmead Road. There should be at least one person supervising the main gate whenever pupils are arriving or leaving the school. This ensures traffic is controlled to allow space for vehicles to park safely, turn round and leave the site without causing any obstructions. They also try to make sure pupils use the pavements and paths leading into the school so are not at risk of injury from moving vehicles. However there have been ongoing concerns about the segregation of vehicles and pedestrians. Pavements are narrow and only partly raised and there are no barriers between the pedestrians and vehicles. During the summer term of 2020 temporary barriers and markings were put up partly as a result of the Covid-19 risks and the need to introduce a one-way system for pedestrians and partly to try a different way of managing the transport. This trial was very successful and will be made permanent for September.

There are concerns that as the new system allows fewer vehicles on site at any one time this could result in traffic backing up into Stratton Way/Hitchmead Road. To control the number of vehicles on site several are held in Hitchmead Road until space becomes available. With a few exceptions all vehicles dropping off pupils have left the site by 9.10 and those collecting pupils have left site by

3.40pm but this means a lot of vehicles arriving and leaving within a very short space of time. Due to the school being situated on a side road and off the main road any vehicles queuing on Hitchmead Road do not usually cause any congestion on the main road so we will have to monitor this throughout September in case this changes.

Teaching staff meet many of the pupils from their transport and escort them into the school and, at the end of the day, no pupil leaves the gated area unless their transport/parent is waiting for them.

College Site – The Baulk

The number of pupils is much lower at the College Site and some of them arrive independently on foot or bike so the number of vehicles is low and therefore able to be well-managed. Pupils arriving by council minibuses arrive at the rear gate via Lawnside and taxis and parents tend to use the front entrance.

Due to the limited parking there are often vehicles parked on pavements and segregation between vehicles and pedestrians is a problem. This has been reported to CBC on several occasions.

The other main issue is that the rear gate is next to the gate for Lawnside so can be very busy at arrival and pick-up times.

2.9 Staff transport

The majority of staff arrive by car and park on site. There is a minority who walk, car share, cycle or use public transport.

2.10 School vehicles

The school owns four minibuses, all of which are used during the week for activities, trips and taking pupils to college and after-school club. Two have a tail-lift so are accessible to wheelchair users. As a result we do not need to hire coaches or other vehicles. Three are based at the School Site and one at the College Site.

2.11 Journeys made during the school day

Pupils often leave the site during the day to travel between school sites and to a range of activities such as college, swimming, horse-riding, hydrotherapy and other trips as part of the curriculum. They travel by a school minibus, or if nearby, on foot. Risk assessments are completed for all trips, which are agreed by the management team.

Many pupils undertake travel training to help them towards independence. This involves learning to use public transport. Others travel on foot to visit shops and activities as part of the life skills curriculum. Pupils are always escorted by a member of staff and they should only use the pavements and paths.

There are many journeys taken by staff during the day, either to one of the other sites, training, meetings or to visit pupils who are off-site. For many of these journeys there is not a feasible

alternative to the staff using their own cars, although we are now encouraging more walking or cycling between sites.

3 Known travel issues

The table below shows the travel issues that are known to be experienced by staff, pupils and visitors to the site.

Issue	Source	Current status as at July 2020
1. Lack of parking spaces for staff and visitors on some days (both sites) – they end up parking in the disabled bays, double-parking, on grass or in the emergency access areas.	Staff and visitors	Ongoing
2. Insufficient parking for minibuses - we now have 4 instead of 3 and the designated spaces are not wide enough for minibuses.	Minibus drivers (staff)	Resolved – 1 minibus is now based at the College site
3. Staff are required to work over different sites during the day so are tending to drive between sites during the day rather than walking or cycling	Staff	Ongoing
4. There are no incentives to use public transport or to walk or cycle to school – use of private car is seen as quicker and more convenient	Staff	Cyclescheme has had 6 staff take it up
5. Vehicles parked outside the bungalows on Hitchmead Road make accessing the school more difficult for larger vehicles such as minibuses	Minibus drivers (staff and local authority transport) and contractors	Ongoing – Temporary restrictions put in place in June 2020 due to Covid-19 risks. Permanent restrictions under review.
6. 7 spaces at the School site are blocked off for most of the day as they are needed at the start and end of the day for pupil transport. These are much needed spaces.	Staff and visitors	Partially resolved – new system to be tried with parents and visitors to park outside gates
7. The needs of the pupils and distance they travel means there are limited opportunities for encouraging and promoting sustainable travel to and from school.	Staff	Ongoing
8. Parking spaces outside the school site gate may be being used by residents or their visitors – there is no signage that relates to the school.	Staff	Resolved – signage up
9. [new in 2019] Concerns about speed of vehicles using the school site.	Staff	Resolved – 2 speed bumps (5 mph) installed
10.[new in 2020] Concerns about segregation between pedestrians and vehicles at both sites	Staff	Barriers ordered for installation ready for Sept 2020
11. [new in 2020] Due to the need for social distancing and better control over pupils getting on and off vehicles fewer can be on site - this may result in traffic backing up to Hitchmead Road/Stratton Way	Staff	To monitor during September 2020

4 Working Group

Following the completion of the first travel plan in 2018 the Senior Leadership Team, Site Team, PE Team and the Staff Wellbeing Team have been responsible for promoting sustainable travel, reducing the number of cars on site and improving safety on site.

As part of this the Cyclescheme has been actively promoted and as a result six staff have received certificates to purchase a bike.

A study into the travelling distance to school and mode of transport for pupils and staff was also completed to identify where attention should be focussed.

Staff:

The table below shows where staff live. 75 staff live in the town of Biggleswade but all the rest (56%) live outside of the town.

Post code	Number living in the post code
AL7/8	2
CB22/23	2
LU1	1
MK41/42/44/45/46	14
PE19/27	5
SG15	2
SG17	9
SG18 (Biggleswade postal area)	89
SG19	28
SG2/4/5/6/7/8	20
Grand Total	172

Of those who live in the town of Biggleswade over half of them use a private car to get to school. Many of them have reasons why they consider a car to be necessary e.g. needing to transport to/from other jobs before or after their shift, transporting others to schools and nurseries and mobility issues. The remaining staff are those who need to be targeted to reduce use of their cars.

Unfortunately car sharing and use of pupil transport is temporarily being discouraged due to the Covid-19 situation.

Pupils:

The table below shows where pupils live. Of the 55 who live in the SG18 area (Biggleswade postal area) only 43 live in the town. Therefore only 22% of pupils live in the same town as the school, many of which will be more than 30 minutes walk from the school. Therefore the number who can arrive on foot or bike will always be low particularly when taking into account the physical and behavioural issues that affect every pupil at the school.

Post code	Number living in the post code
LU5/6	2

MK40/41/43/44/45	26
SG15	3
SG16	5
SG17	19
SG18 (Biggleswade postal area)	55
SG19	61
SG4/5/6	22
Grand Total	193

Although the scope for increasing walking and cycling to school by pupils the PE team have invested a lot of time and resources into cycling in general. Pupils complete the Bikeability courses and even those with physical disabilities are encouraged to use different types of bikes such as tricycles and tandems. Wheelchair accessible bikes are also being purchased. At the College pupils undertake bike maintenance courses as part of their vocational education. Therefore cycling is a significant part of the PE curriculum which should increase the amount of cycling out of school.

5 Action Plan

The following action plan will be continually updated in each version of the Travel Plan.

Action	When	Who	Update as at July 2020
Establishment of a working group involving the School, parents/carers and representatives of the local community	Autumn term	Vice-principal & Business Manager	Various teams involved in promoting sustainable travel and improving safety.
Contact CBC about road markings in the road leading up to the school entrance to prevent residents and their visitors blocking access	Autumn term	Business Manager	Ongoing - Several applications and emails requesting markings have not been responded to. CBC have now agreed to temporary markings due to Covid-19 risks
Obtain signs for the parking spaces outside of the fence	Autumn term	Business Manager	Completed
Send out information to parents/carers and staff about more sustainable methods of travel including putting it on our website with the accompanying leaflet	Autumn term	Admin team	Completed – another communication to be sent in Autumn term
Produce and put up a leaflet for staff covering sustainable means of travel including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cycle Scheme • Car Share • Bus and cycle routes 	Autumn term	Business Manager	Completed - Cyclescheme is regularly re-advertised to staff. Leaflets are available on noticeboards at both sites.
Surveys completed for staff, parents/carers and neighbours to identify issues and baseline statistics.	Autumn term	Business Manager	Data collected on distance to school and mode of travel to inform where action/attention is needed.

Updating the Travel Plan following the consultation, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Statistics on means of travel for each group • Issues experienced • Proposed solutions • Timescale for action • How changes will be monitored 	Early Spring term	Business Manager	Completed
Annual review of the Travel plan	End of Autumn term 2019	Business Manager	Completed
Monitor use of the cycle racks each ½ term and organise more if required	Each ½ term	Business Manager	Completed and ongoing – never had a full bike rack!
[New for 2020] Monitor transport situation from September 2020 to ensure traffic is not backing up in Stratton Way/Hitchmead Road.	Autumn term 2020	SLT and Site team	
[New for 2020] Working groups to come up with more incentives to get local staff to walk and cycle	Autumn/ Spring terms	SLT and Wellbeing teams	
[New for 2020] To obtain a bike rack for the College site	Autumn/ Spring term	College Assistant Principal	

6 Travel Plan Co-ordinator

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7 Signatures

<u>Principal</u> Joe Creswick	
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